

# Glacial Lakes Astronomers and Stargazers Society

## Organizational Charter and Mission Statement

### About this Document

This Charter and Mission Statement defines the organization called Glacial Lakes Astronomers and Stargazers Society (hereafter referred to as “GLASS”), its purpose, and how it operates.

### Who GLASS Are

GLASS consists of anyone in the Glacial Lakes, MN area, who wishes to participate in events associated with GLASS. Everyone is welcome, regardless of their age or level of knowledge in amateur astronomy and related subjects, and who is interested in learning more about our night (and day) sky and sharing their interest in astronomy with others.

People involved in GLASS events are simply interested in meeting with other people sharing their interest in amateur astronomy on a free, open, and non-obligatory basis.

### Purpose of GLASS – The GLASS Mission Statement

GLASS’ primary purpose is to provide a common means for amateur astronomers to meet for organized star parties. A secondary (though no less important) purpose is to educate the public about astronomy and how it affects us. This can be done through various events held by GLASS, such as regular viewing sessions and special public and private presentations done by request.

Part of GLASS is public outreach; therefore anyone representing GLASS should conduct themselves in an enthusiastic and positive manner that encourages audience participation and curiosity.

### Membership

Though the term “member” is used in this document, this is not to imply a process or any requirements to associate themselves with GLASS. In the context of this document “member” simply refers to anyone who is involved with GLASS on a regular basis.

There is no formal membership process to “join” or “belong” to GLASS. No equipment, dues, or regular attendance are necessary – only an interest in astronomy, however slight.

### Governance and Rules

No organization starts without the initiative of individuals. Though people have taken the initiative to start GLASS, there are no leaders. Though some people may attend more GLASS-related events than others, this also does not imply any leadership roles have been taken on by individuals.

Additionally, there are to be no officers or any otherwise defined group of individuals who set out to define rules. GLASS’ only document defining any “rules” will be this charter. There will be no dues, no officers (elected or otherwise), and no business meetings.

### GLASS Activities

At a minimum, GLASS will meet on a regular basis to hold an observing session of the night sky – a “Star Party”.

#### When

Typically GLASS-sponsored star parties will be held once a month on a pre-determined Saturday of each month. Ideally the Saturdays chosen will be nearest the New Moon phase. Though immediate weather conditions will dictate, generally, star parties will be conducted from March through November.

#### Where

GLASS star parties will be held at Glacial Lakes State Park near Starbuck, MN.

Other activities may include (but are not limited to) presentations to groups such as Scout troops and school classes, and other public demonstrations on the subject of amateur astronomy when the opportunity arises. Anyone may conduct these events under the name of GLASS, so long as the main goal is to educate the audience about anything related to astronomy.

As GLASS has no treasury or treasurer, GLASS as an organization can not and will not distribute money for events. Any activities conducted in the name of GLASS that require any money to be paid out will be paid by anyone involved on an entirely individual and voluntary basis.

Any activities carried out under the name of GLASS should be undertaken with the GLASS Mission Statement as the sole guideline.

### **Communication of Events and News to GLASS and the Public in General**

For the purpose of relating current news and information to the public about GLASS and its events, news and events related to GLASS will be made public at the current GLASS website (<http://glass.glaciallakesmn.com>).

The Web site should provide basic amateur astronomy information to direct people who visit GLASS events where to go to for more information about what they are exposed to at the events. Items to offer on the site can include upcoming events, reports on recent GLASS activities, contact information for GLASS representatives, information valuable and interesting to the beginning amateur astronomer, links for visitors to learn more, and any other information that may be helpful to visitors and help further the goals of GLASS.

If no members of GLASS are able to provide, update, or otherwise change information on the current GLASS website, it is recommended that, at the very minimum, a message board at a Web site such as Yahoo! or Google groups should be set up.

### **GLASS' Philosophy on GLASS as an Organization and on Governing, Rules, and Membership**

The statements in this document are intended to be guidelines only. They are not to be viewed as “rules” per se. It is the intention of the founders of GLASS to foster a friendly, open, educational, and fun environment with few, if any restrictions, no leadership, and no treasury – fully autonomous in its operation. If any people regularly involved in GLASS events feel that changes should be made to this charter, this should be done so, at a minimum, with the verbal agreement of at least two people and with the best interests in meeting the goals of the Mission Statement.

As outlined in the section “Governance and Rules”, there are no officials within the GLASS organization, however when any group of people, however small or large, meets with a common goal that requires and/or encourages others to participate in an organized manner, it is helpful, if not necessary, to put forth a set of statements that define for those involved the purpose of the organization and how those involved may best carry out the goals of the organization.

It is the view of GLASS that its purpose, as defined above, can best be served if there were no governing body, elected or appointed officials, dues, constitution, or any related means of imposing restrictions and/or rules on the actions of those that choose to associate themselves with GLASS.

“Membership” implies a sort of status. If a person must be allowed to join a group, then it stands to reason that someone can also be denied association with the organization, which directly conflicts with GLASS’ purpose. A non-membership, open policy will help promote the idea (and GLASS’ belief) that no level of knowledge, no equipment – nor anything else – is necessary to be involved in GLASS events, save for curiosity about the subject of astronomy, for a person to consider themselves a part of the GLASS mission and events.

In the eyes of the general public, the subject of astronomy is often thought to be inaccessible – only for NASA scientists. Because of this, there is much misinformation about the objects in our night sky. The fact that newcomers confuse astrology with astronomy supports this observation. This is the reason for the secondary goal of GLASS: To educate the public. The use of a name (Glacial Lakes Astronomers and Stargazers Society), a logo, a website and similar things that are visible to the public are not intended to imply a membership-based group. GLASS can more easily relate to the public if the public has a means to easily recognize a name and logo – to have a Web site to go to where they know they can find information about GLASS and its activities.

### **Changes to this Document**

Only three items in this document are never to be altered: the Mission Statement, and the statements on Membership and Governance. These are the foundation of the GLASS philosophy and under that philosophy they are paramount to carrying out its goal.