



# PAEO Status & Overview

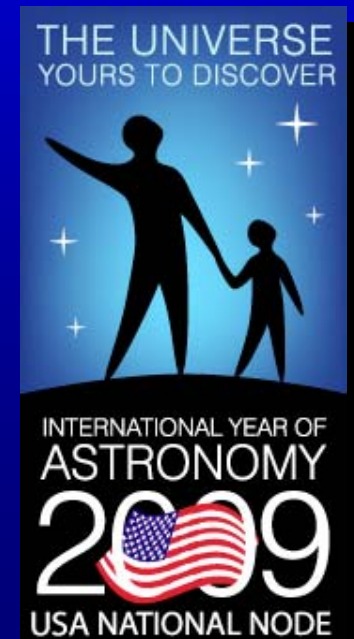
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NOAO Users Committee – October 2008





# PAEO Organization

- **Public Information:** Web, Media, Graphics
- **Educational Outreach:** Teacher Professional Development, Optics Education, Astronomer/Teacher Partnerships, Local Outreach, Spanish language activity
- **Public Outreach:** Kitt Peak Visitor Center, CADIAS Center in Chile, Informal Education, Special Events, Film Crew Liaison, Connections to Tourism and Development
  - Dozen people in Tucson, including four “scientists” (three full-time outreach) and three people in Chile (coord. with Gemini)
  - Recognized as local/national/international leaders, with numerous active partnerships: AAS, ASP, SPIE/OSA, NASA, Spitzer, STScI, IAU, Tucson Assoc. of Museums, U. de Catholica, U. de La Serena...and Las Cumbres? DCT?



# PAEO: Strengths & Spinoffs

- **Excellent people**
- National (now international!) reputation for success
- Increased Visibility of NOAO [and NSF]
- Positive++ local relations in both hemispheres
- Flexible tool for promotion & branding
- Demonstrating a positive taxpayer return on investment every day

**Announcing ALTAR - Access to Large Telescopes for Astronomical Instruction and Research**

ALTAR will conduct a study of the US community's needs for capabilities on large telescopes, the next step beyond the aperture range considered by the Renewing Small Telescopes for Astronomical Research (RSTAR) committee. Chaired by Larry Ramsey (Pennsylvania State University), the ALTAR committee will include about 15 astronomers representing a broad range of science interests and backgrounds.

Following their first meeting in June 2008, ALTAR will solicit input from the community through a number of mechanisms. ALTAR will synthesize general principles to guide further development of the large-telescope piece of the US optical-infrared system, including the roles of Gemini and the non-federal observatories.

**The Gemini Opportunity**

Although the United Kingdom has announced that they will remain in the Gemini Observatory partnership, it is likely that there will be an opportunity for change over the next few years, and perhaps months. The UK Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) has indicated their interest in selling some of their Gemini time, although Gemini Board approval would be needed.

**Two key questions for the US community:**

- Bearing in mind that any purchase will need to be accompanied by a marginal budgetary commitment, is there a strong need for the US to acquire additional nights on Gemini and should this be set as a high priority for NSF?
- Is there a benefit in seeking to acquire these through an additional share of Gemini as an alternative to simply buying nights?

Send any input on these issues to the new NOAO electronic newsletter *Currents* at [currents@noao.edu](mailto:currents@noao.edu), and watch our newsletters for developments.

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## Recent Highlights

- NSF Senior Review very positive for outreach (and KPNO and CTIO) > + AST 2007 “inventory”
- Strong progress with Tohono O’odham outreach
- Two successful proposals to Science Foundation Arizona (\$350,000 total) – optics education and image processing for rural teachers/students (B&G Clubs)
- Positive & visible local media coverage
- Multiple leadership roles for NOAO in planning International Year of Astronomy 2009 (people and projects – Galileoscope, Dark Skies, etc.)
- **“Engaging the Community”** internal working group co-chaired by Isbell and Saha; several positive developments and more on the way



# IYA2009 @ Dragon\*Con: New Audiences!



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## Engaging the Community - PAEO

- First-class REU programs in both hemispheres being augmented by NSF PAARE
- Edit and produce the *NOAO/NSO Newsletter*
- Design and print almost every NOAO meeting poster, special graphics, handouts, logos...
- Press releases and graphics for NOAO and Gemini users
- PAEO Web designer handles NOAO home page, special meeting pages, all outreach pages
- Arrange all aspects of the NOAO booth at AAS meetings, AURA member reps. meetings, etc.
- Operate Kitt Peak Visitor Center and CADIAS [Chile]
- Variety of support for LSST; two GSMT demo projects



## Engaging the Community Working Group

- Est. in July 2007 by Todd Boroson
- Charge: Develop comprehensive plan for:
  - New material about NOAO program
  - Distribution
  - Feedback and metrics
- **Co-chairs:** Doug Isbell and Abi Saha
- **Members:** Verne Smith , *Sidney Wolff*, Tod Lauer, Chris Miller, Nicole van der Blik, Dara Norman, Steve Howell, Joan Najita, *others TBD*
- Meetings bi-weekly; briefed scientific staff, observatories council, new director...



## ECWG: Accomplishments

- More cohesive presence at January 2008 AAS meeting (single booth, town hall, NOAO poster...); beginning prep for Long Beach
- *Currents* eNewsletter – five issues (and counting) to widespread acclaim [Najita- ed.]
- Web and graphics support for ReSTAR and ALTAIR committees
- Glossier look for hardcopy *Newsletter*
- Initial visits to regional meetings with NOAO general presentation



# AAS Booth, Currents and Poster

**The National Optical Astronomy Observatory**  
 @ the AAS 211<sup>th</sup> Meeting - Austin, Texas

**NOAO Town Hall meeting**  
 Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008  
 10:30 - 1:45 pm  
 Ballroom F

The NOAO town meeting will discuss the future direction of the NOAO program in optical-infrared astronomy. The NOAO director will present the new five-year plan for the national observatory, which responds to the recommendations of the NSF Senior Review, including:

- The Renewing Small Telescopes for Astronomical Research (RSAR) committee's list of capabilities needed on small and mid-sized telescopes
- Investments in ESO and SDSS
- A plan for access to an optimized suite of high-performance telescopes of all apertures
- Continued participation in the science investigations for the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope
- Continued investments in proposed large telescope projects (such as the Thirty Meter Telescope and Giant Magellan Telescope)

The new NOAO program establishes a balance among facilities of different sizes and capabilities, and that balance will be guided by continuous community input. Come help shape the future!

**Mini-Presentations @ the NOAO Exhibit Booth**

Learn more about the new NOAO-built wide-field infrared camera MCFITS, the next telescopic optics capabilities at the Gemini Observatory, current and upcoming science programs at the SOAR 4.1-meter telescope, and opportunities to participate in science collaborations for the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST).

Five minute talks with Q&A to follow.

**Schedule**

**Tuesday, January 8**  
 Morning Coffee Break - Gemini AO  
 Evening Reception - SOAR

**Wednesday, January 9**  
 Morning Coffee Break - RSAR/RSI  
 Evening Reception - LSST Science Collaborators

**Thursday, January 10**  
 Morning Coffee Break - SOAR  
 Evening Reception - Gemini AO

**Friday, January 11**  
 Morning Coffee Break - LSST Science Collaborators  
 -- No talks

This image of Pickering's Triangle (part of the Cygnus Loop supernova remnant, which includes the red nebula) was obtained in September 2007 using the NOAO Gemini 8-mirror on the National Science Foundation's Mauna Kea 4-meter telescope at Kitt Peak National Observatory near Tucson, Arizona.

Credit: D.A. Hesterman/University of Arizona, Arichir, H. Schwabert and MACHAU/ARUP

**NOAO CURRENTS**

**NOAO**  
 National Optical Astronomy Observatory

**NOAO offers merit-based access to the U.S. system of telescopes**

**Deep spectroscopy and imaging on 8-m class telescopes**

**Resources for wide-field spectroscopy and imaging**

NOAO offers data products from the ROTO Survey Program

Access ROTO data and the Virtual Observatory through the ROTO Data Portal

Community Access to Future Initiatives

Apply for telescope time through ROTO

To learn more and help shape the future, visit [www.noao.edu](http://www.noao.edu)



## ECWG: In Progress

- ‘AIRhead’ program to provide human contact for visiting observers
- Short visitor sabbaticals for key members of community
- NOAO marketing brochure in draft
- Scoped process for redesign of NOAO Web presence, split for public/astronomers, etc.
- Formal electronic Help Desk system designed
- Studied several concepts for “observing school”



## ECWG: Opportunities & Issues

- NOAO booth & town hall meeting @ January 2009 AAS meeting in Long Beach
  - *what is our main message?*
- IYA2009 [April 2-5 = “100 Hours of Astronomy”]
  - *role of professional astronomers?*
- KPNO 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008-2010
  - Building momentum for Visitor Center expansion, Tohono O’odham engagement
  - *role of past observers? science conference fall 2009?*
- NOAO/Gemini study – CADIAS, joint PIO
- **What have we missed???**