



AstroFestival & Expo

August 14-16, 2026

Featured Speakers & Lectures

Friday, Aug 14

1 PM—The Science of Black Holes ft. Cameron Hummels; Research Scientists & Astrophysics Outreach at CalTech

Once a staple of science fiction, black holes have become one of the most exciting frontiers of modern astronomy. These extraordinarily dense objects warp spacetime so severely that nothing, not even light, can escape once it crosses the event horizon. Join us as we explore the science behind these cosmic enigmas and discover what black holes can teach us about gravity, the universe, and the limits of modern physics.

2 PM—Expanding Our View with NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope ft. Dominic Benford; Program Scientist for Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope

NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is launching on August 30! Traveling a million miles away and orbiting the Sun, Roman will settle essential questions about dark energy, exoplanets, and astrophysics. Come learn about this amazing mission, its goals, and how you can share in the excitement!

Saturday, Aug 15

1 PM— Dark Skies: Our Relationship and Responsibility to the Stars

ft. Michael Rymer; Dark Sky Communities Program Manager, DarkSky International

Michael Rymer was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, where he seldom saw the night sky in its natural state. Later in his life, he came to discover a love for astronomy and astrophotography, searching for dark skies and how he can help protect them. He joined the DarkSky Advocates Network in 2021 and has continued to learn how he can talk with others about the dangers of light pollution to us and our world. Michael has a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Oklahoma and an M.S. in Recreation and Tourism Management from the University of Northern Alabama. He now lives in Denver, Colorado, where he not only can enjoy the beautiful night skies of the Rocky Mountains, but also cultivates native plants to enhance the beauty of nature during the day.

2 PM—Is Anybody Out There? - The Search for Life Beyond Earth

ft. Brandon Holloman, Astrophysicist; Amid the Stars

Brandon is a mountain local who has always loved anything to do with outer space. His passion of learning the secrets of the universe led him to study astrophysics at UCLA and eventually to open Amid the Stars, a guided stargazing experience near Big Bear.