

The Schiele

Museum of Natural History

A Natural Adventure

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“All-American” Eclipse Takes Aim at the Carolinas

The Schiele Sheds Light on this astronomical event

On August 21st, 2017 the world will experience The All-American Eclipse, an awe-inspiring total solar eclipse that will pass through much of the United States (hence the name). The Schiele Museum of Natural History and Planetarium is excited to use this opportunity to educate and inspire the community about astronomical events such as solar eclipses as well as other concepts involving outer space. The education team at the Museum happily agreed to answer common questions regarding the eclipse as they prepare for their Eclipse Weekend Extravaganza on August 19th – 21st.

What is the All-American Eclipse?

On August 21st, 2017 a total solar eclipse will be visible in 14 states across the continental United States and a partial eclipse visible across all of North America. It's been almost 40 years since a total solar eclipse was visible in the continental United States and nearly 100 since it crossed so many states. Gastonia, NC will experience a 98% partial eclipse on August 21st, meaning that only 2% of the sun will be visible. While it's not like a total solar eclipse, it will be spectacular!

How does a total solar eclipse form?

A total solar eclipse occurs with the precise alignment of the Moon between the Sun and Earth so that the Moon blocks all sunlight for a few brief moments, casting a narrow band of shadow on Earth. Along the narrow path (only about 60-70 miles wide), known as the path of totality, the Sun will be completely hidden by the Moon, causing the sky to go dark, stars to become visible, and animals to react like it is night time. Outside of the path of totality, a partial eclipse, where only a portion of the Sun is covered by the Moon, can be observed along a much wider path.

Why is there not an eclipse every month?

About every 28 days (aka a “moonth”) the Moon completes its orbit around the Earth. The Moon's orbit is slightly tilted (5 degrees), meaning, that most months the Moon's position is just above or below the Sun's position. If they aren't perfectly aligned, no eclipse forms. Once or twice a year the Sun and Moon's paths line up and create an eclipse – somewhere on Earth. On average, a single location will see a total solar eclipse every 375 years.

How can I safely view the eclipse?

Gastonia will observe a partial solar eclipse in the early afternoon from approximately Noon to 3 PM on August 21st. During this time (or any time really) do NOT look directly at the Sun, as it will damage your eyes. Everyone who wants to view the eclipse MUST wear eclipse glasses or use certified safe viewing devices (not sunglasses). Certified eclipse glasses will be available for purchase at the Museum Store.

Where can I learn more?

The Schiele Museum will host an Eclipse Weekend Extravaganza from Saturday, August 19th through Monday, August 21st. All day festivities include safely viewing the sun through a solar telescope, special planetarium programs, and a variety of family friendly activities. On Monday, stop by and let experienced educators help you safely view the eclipse. Check out www.schielemuseum.org or the Museum's Facebook page for more information and tips throughout the summer! Have a question that can't wait? Call 704.866.6900 and ask to speak to the Eclipse Team!

Don't be left in the dark, join in the fun at the Schiele Museum's Eclipse Weekend sponsored by Choice USA Beverage and SunDrop on Saturday August 19th – Monday August 21st!

The Schiele Museum of Natural History: Inspiring wonder and appreciation of the natural world, The Schiele provides the region with a unique educational resource. Whether through formal instruction or visiting the various exhibits, visitors to The Schiele gain insight into the marvels of the world around. To find out more, visit www.schielemuseum.org.

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Find images of the path of totality on NASA's site:
<https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/eclipse-maps>