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Fri, Mar 26, 2021 at 6:54 AM

Good morning everyone,

I would like to update you on plans for our outreach program in light of Governor Ducey's Executive Order 2021-06, issued yesterday.

Lowell Observatory is an institution of science, and as we have done since March 13, 2020, we will follow the science of viral transmission and the minimization thereof to guide our actions. For the past year, I have relied repeatedly on information from Dr. Dave Engelthaler (TGen), Dr. Anne Newland (North Country Healthcare), and Dr. Paul Keim (NAU) to guide our decision-making. Dave, Anne, and Paul have been unfailingly generous with their time and expertise. It has been invaluable to have guidance from experts, and I'm most grateful to them.

Our plan to enter Phase 2A of our reopening (<https://lowell.edu/visit/phased-reopening-plan/>) on April 2 remains unchanged. Our tours and telescope viewing will be by-reservation-only, each group restricted to 10 persons or fewer. Masks will be required of all visitors on our central campus and on all tours. Following the language in yesterday's executive order, we will continue to deny entrance, without exception, to visitors who refuse to wear masks.

To our hikers and dog-walkers on Mars Hill Road, our new "mini-loop" road, and Section 17 trails: You remain welcome, and on those highly isolated roads and trails, masks are not required (though of course you may wear one if you wish). But if your walk takes you toward our central campus or near any of our tours where people are in tighter groups, please be ready to don a mask so we can model consistent and respectful behavior toward each other. We have asked our staff and volunteers to do the same.

We watch the AZ Covid-19 data daily, and we are using the CDC gating criteria and an estimate of the level of partial and full immunity in the state to determine when can responsibly reopen our Phase 3 general admission programs with their larger crowds. Despite the several weeks of encouraging trends in the data, we are not there yet. I hope our advancement to Phase 3 will be soon; but if there is now a new case surge in Arizona due to the newly and excessively relaxed protocols, we will stay right where we are, in Phase 2.

We're *almost* there. After a grueling year, just a few more months of caution, discipline, and keeping our distance and wearing the admittedly miserable masks will pay huge dividends as immunity continues to rise. We at Lowell can't eliminate Covid-19 by ourselves, but we will do our part to see that normality returns sooner rather than later.

Lowell's staff and volunteers are intensely looking forward to opening fully and to welcoming residents and visitors back to our campus to see the marvels of the cosmos. May it be soon indeed.

All the best; and hang in there, Flagstaff.

Jeff Hall  
Director  
Lowell Observatory