



Sun-Earth Day 2005: *Ancient Observatories, Timeless Knowledge*

Over the past six years, the NASA’s Sun-Earth Connection Education Forum has sponsored and coordinated education and public outreach events to highlight NASA’s Sun-Earth Connection research and discoveries. Our strategy involves using celestial events, such as total solar eclipses and the Transit of Venus, as well as *Sun-Earth Day* during the March Equinox, to engage K-12 schools and the general public in space science activities, demonstrations, and interactions with space scientists.

In collaboration with partners that include the Exploratorium, Maryland Science Center, NASA Connect, Sun-Earth Connection missions, and others, we produce webcasts, other multi-media, and print resources for use by school and informal educators nation-wide and internationally. We provide training and professional development to K-12 educators, museum personnel, amateur astronomers, Girl Scout leaders, etc., so they can implement their own outreach programs taking advantage of our resources. A coordinated approach promotes multiple programs occurring each year under a common theme.

The Ancient Observatory theme for 2005 features solar alignments with structures that mark the equinoxes and/or solstices. In partnership with the Exploratorium, Ideum, and NASA Connect, NASA’s Sun-Earth Connection Education Forum is producing video and webcast programming that will be shared with formal and informal education audiences nationally. The programs will feature several sites including: Chaco Canyon (New Mexico), Hovenweep (Utah), and Chichen Itza (Mexico). Many of these sites present unique opportunities to develop authentic cultural connections to Native Americans, highlighting the importance of the Sun across the ages. We will involve Sun-Earth Connection scientists, their missions, and research programs to share NASA solar research with diverse audiences.

Our goal is that participants of our program will benefit from the following key understandings:

- The Sun is a dynamic, magnetic star that impacts the Earth and other planets in our solar system
- Understanding the mysteries of the Sun has been a primary motivator for Sun watchers over time
- Human beings use technology (past, present, and future) to understand the Sun and the Universe beyond
- Light has always provided a means of investigating the Universe
- Human beings from diverse cultures have viewed the Sun as the source of life

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