THE HALIBURTON SKY WATCHER'S FIELD GUIDE

A Dockside Companion for the 2026 Perseid Meteor Shower

THE MISSION

On the night of Wednesday, August 12 into the early morning of Thursday, August 13, 2026, planet Earth will pass through the debris trail of Comet Swift-Tuttle.

This year offers a once-in-a-decade viewing opportunity: the peak aligns perfectly with a New Moon, meaning the night sky will be ink-black with zero moonlight interference. Under dark Haliburton skies, you can expect to see 60 to 100 meteors per hour.

Grab your blankets, head down to the dock, and use this field guide to host the ultimate family star party.

DOCKSIDE SETUP & PROTOCOLS

The Dock Advantage: Tree canopies block up to 70% of the night sky. Set up your viewing station directly on the dock or an open lawn for a full 360-degree view.

Gravity Chairs or Air Mattresses: Avoid neck strain. Lying flat on your back looking straight up is mandatory for long-duration viewing.

The 20-Minute "Red Light" Rule: White light (cell phones, flashlights, headlamps) instantly destroys your eye's night vision. It takes 20 full minutes for your eyes to re-adapt to total darkness. Tape red cellophane over flashlight lenses or use a red-light mode.

Go "Lights Out" for the Lake: Be a good steward of our dark skies. Turn off exterior floodlights, motion sensors, and landscape lighting, and close blinds on lake-facing windows to eliminate indoor light bleed.

NOTICE: This guide is provided for general informational, educational, and recreational purposes only. Ensure all dockside activities are conducted safely with adequate footing, water safety awareness, and adult supervision in the dark.



THE METEOR LOG & DEEP SKY HUNT

1. The Official Meteor Tally Log

Keep a tally of everything you spot between 11:00 PM and 3:00 AM:

Object Type	Tally Marks	Total
Standard Meteor ("Shooting Star"): Quick, bright flashes across the sky		
Fireball: Exceptionally bright meteor that leaves a glowing vapor trail		
Satellite: Steady, non-blinking point of light moving in a straight line		
Commercial Aircraft: Blinking red and green lights traversing the sky		
Unidentified (UFO): Anything moving in ways you can't explain!		

2. Binocular Deep Sky Hunt

Grab a standard pair of birdwatching binoculars and sweep the night sky for these two deep-space wonders:

- ☐ The Milky Way Core: Look straight up. Under Haliburton's dark sky, you will see a dense, cloudy "river" of white light spanning the entire sky. Through binoculars, this cloud resolves into hundreds of thousands of individual stars in our home galaxy.
- ☐ The Andromeda Galaxy (M31): Look toward the northeast. Find the "W" shape of the constellation Cassiopeia. Just below it, look for a faint, fuzzy oval smudge. You are looking at a neighboring galaxy 2.5 million light-years away — the furthest object human eyes can see without a telescope!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS:
Print this page and attach it to a clipboard. Use a red-filtered flashlight to fill out your log as you spot objects in the night sky!

MISSION BRIEFING: THE SCIENCE & STEWARDSHIP

BE THE DOCKSIDE EXPERT: Use these science facts to share the magic of the cosmos with your family and guests.

The Science Behind the Show

What are we actually seeing? Meteors are not "shooting stars." They are tiny specks of space dust and rock—most no larger than a grain of sand—left behind by Comet Swift-Tuttle.

Why do they light up? These tiny particles enter Earth's upper atmosphere at an astonishing speed of 59 kilometers per second (132,000 mph). The extreme friction compresses and superheats the air in front of the rock, causing it to glow brilliantly for a fraction of a second before vaporizing.

Why "Perseids"? If you trace the paths of the meteors backward, they all appear to originate from a single point in the constellation Perseus (low in the northeastern sky). This origin point is called the radiant.

Dark Sky Stewardship in the Highlands

Haliburton County is blessed with some of the clearest, darkest skies in Southern Ontario, but light pollution is increasing every year. Artificial light disrupts wildlife behavior, harms nocturnal aquatic ecosystems, and masks the beauty of the stars.

Three Simple Ways to Protect Our Skies Year-Round:

- Shield Your Fixtures:
  - Ensure exterior lights point downward toward the ground, not outward or up into the sky.
- Use Warm Bulbs:
  - Choose warm-toned LED bulbs (2700 Kelvin or lower) rather than harsh, blue-white lights.
- Use Timers & Motion Sensors:
  - Never leave exterior cottage lights burning all night long when no one is outside.

STEWARDSHIP IS OUR STANDARD — KACABA COTTAGE CARE

At Kacaba Cottage Care, we believe that caring for a cottage means caring for the entire environment—from the lakebed below to the night sky above.

Whether we are clearing property, maintaining structures, or preparing an estate for seasonal shifts, we take pride in protecting what makes the Highlands so special.

Enjoy the show, and clear skies from our team to yours!

Interested in more local stewardship guides, seasonal property checklists, and cottage insights? Join our free newsletter, The Cottager's Compass, at www.kacabacottagecare.com/tcc-sign-up