

PLANETARY SCIENCE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AT THE FARMERS MARKET. Amanda R. Hendrix¹, Timothy Holt², Anne Verbiscer², Katherine Primm², Kelsi N. Singer², Emilie Royer¹, Rob J. Wilson³, Anya Portyankina³, K-Michael Aye³, Alex Parker², Joel Parker², Brian Keeney², Cathy Olkin², Michelle Kirchoff², Katherine Kretke², Raphael Marschall², Marc Buie², Rebecca Schindhelm⁴, John Keller⁵. ¹Planetary Science Institute, Tucson, AZ (arh@psi.edu); ²Southwest Research Institute; ³LASP/Univ. Colorado; ⁴Ball Aerospace; ⁵Fiske Planetarium

Introduction: The Boulder area has a thriving planetary community, including institutions such as PSI, SwRI, Ball, LASP, SSI and Fiske Planetarium. This year, we started a fun new planetary science outreach program in our area: engaging with the public at Boulder County Farmers Markets. We think that other communities, with reasonable-sized planetary science groups, might be interested in establishing such an outreach program.

Question: What does planetary science have to do with buying vegetables?

Answer: Nothing! But the farmers market is a great opportunity to engage a diverse community, hand out stickers and swag, talk about the latest mission results, and answer questions.

You can do this too! Here are the steps to take in setting up your own farmers market outreach program, based on the steps we took in Boulder.

1. Fill out an application with the farmers market in your town. Boulder County Farmers Markets (BCFM) runs five markets; we applied to set up a "community table" and were allowed to request a maximum of 6 dates throughout the market season. We opted for 3 dates at the Boulder Saturday market and 3 dates at the Longmont market. As a community group (as opposed to a "vendor"), there was no application fee; for each market, we had to pay \$30. We had to make up a name for our group, so we chose "Boulder County Planetary Scientists."

2. Once approved, set up a Google spreadsheet to sign up volunteers in your planetary group for each market day. We found that it was good to have a minimum of 3 people staffing the table at any one time. (It gets busy!)

3. Make a banner to advertise your group. We designed a simple, reusable banner (on vinyl) at Kinko's. We put strips of velcro on the back of the banner, and on the front of our 6-foot table, so that the banner hung at the front of the table. On the banner, we included "ask a scientist!" along with logos of our institutions and some neat planetary images (see Fig 1).



Figure 1. Enthusiastic planetary scientists staff a community table at the Boulder County Farmers Market.

4. Get a table and possibly a tent; check the allowable size for your community table. For the Boulder market, we were allowed a 6-foot table and were not allowed a tent. For the Longmont market, tents are allowed (with weights in case of wind) and recommended due to sunny situations.

5. Round up swag! We used planet globes, 3D print models of solar system objects and spacecraft, and various handouts, bookmarks and stickers. Interactive activities are good too. We contacted EPO people on missions and at NASA centers and asked them to send boxes of swag.

6. Show up early on market day to set up your table. We found that the public was always very interested in talking about NASA missions and planetary objects and results, and loved that the stickers were free!

7. Enjoy! Share your love for planetary science and solar system exploration with the public, while meeting interesting people. (And don't forget to buy your veggies.)

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