

Rachel Smith, Ph.D.

Dr. Rachel Smith is an astronomer specializing in star formation, particularly the chemistry of carbon and oxygen in protoplanetary disks, and how these chemical pathways connect to the early solar system. She primarily uses large ground-based telescopes to observe a range of star-forming environments across the Galaxy.

Rachel is Head of the Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Lab and Curator of Meteorites at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, NC. She is also an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Physics & Astronomy at Appalachian State University, and Adjunct Professor at UNC-Chapel Hill. Rachel got her PhD at UCLA in 2011 and did a postdoc in Planetary Science at Caltech.

In addition to her research and teaching, Rachel works to engage the public in science and the excitement of research and discoveries. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her 3 miniature donkeys, 2 horses, 3 goats, many chickens, and one turkey. Read more about Rachel's professional background and interests at naturalsciences.org/staff/rachel-smith.

