

Dark-Sky points for the KSB Summer Quarterly Newsletter

June 13, 2016

Joanne Kendrick

According to Arizona State University, Center for Meteorite Studies, a bright fireball was witnessed by several Valley of the Sun residents in the early morning hours of June 2, 2016. Reports describe a bright flash of light around 4 a.m., and some were awakened by a loud bang.

According to Center Meteorite Curator Laurence Garvie, this could be a single meteor burning up as it entered the Earth's atmosphere, and radar footage shows that meteorites may have fallen to the ground early Thursday morning near the eastern Arizona community of Cibecue.

The definition of a *Meteor*: A trail of light produced by a meteoroid as it passes through an atmosphere. And the definition of a *Meteorite is a* meteoroid that was naturally transported from the celestial body on which it formed to a region beyond that body's gravitational field, and that later collided with the surface of a celestial body larger than itself, such as Earth. (Rubin & Grossman, 2010.)

In May the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) announced Flagstaff Area National Monuments – Sunset Crater Volcano, Walnut Canyon and Wupatki – have been designated as an International Dark Sky Park by the IDA. The monuments and their immediate environs produce little light pollution of their own, with minimal amounts from Walnut Canyon and Sunset Crater Volcano and almost no light pollution at Wupatki. The monuments are near Flagstaff.

In June, the IDA and the National Park Service announced that Grand Canyon National Park is now an IDA International Dark-Sky Park. Scott Feierabend, IDA Executive Director, stated that designating Grand Canyon National Park an International Dark-Sky Park is an important step in ensuring the Colorado Plateau remains a protective harbor for some of the best night skies in the county.

Arizona has four International Dark-Sky Communities and four International Dark-Sky Parks. Please see the list below.

- i. International Dark-Sky Parks in Arizona
 1. Oracle State Park, Silver tier, 2014
 2. Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Gold tier, 2014
 3. Flagstaff Area National Monuments, silver tier, 2016, which include:
 - a. Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument
 - b. Walnut Canyon National Monument
 - c. Wupatki National Monument
 4. Grand Canyon National Park, Provisional, 2016 (provisional status gives park officials 3 years to retrofit 2/3 of the lights to meet strict IDA standards)
- ii. International Dark-Sky Communities in Arizona
 1. Flagstaff, 2001
 2. Sedona, 2014
 3. Thunder Mountain Pootsee Nightsky, 2015
 4. Big Park/Village of Oak Creek, 2016