

November 14-15, 2015: International Dark-Sky Association Annual Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

Birgit Loewenstein and Joanne Kendrick, KSB Dark-Sky Committee members, attended the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) Annual Conference in Scottsdale in November. The themes were “Impacts of Light Pollution to Fish and Wildlife Resources” and the “Mitigating Role of Emerging Lighting Technologies.” There were speakers from the United States, Australia, and Great Britain.

One of the presenters, James Fisher, PhD, a philanthropist and dark sky advocate, discussed the magical world of fireflies and the serious ecological implications of light pollution to these gentle and mysterious insects. Dr. Fisher showed us a stunning short film, “Brilliant Darkness” (<http://www.brilliantdarknessmovie.com/>), which shows how fireflies speak in the language of light. They flash to signal for mates. They may flash to drive away predators, claim territory, and communicate with others of their species. But firefly populations are dwindling. One reason is light pollution.

Another presenter discussed the good news that LED lighting systems for outdoor lighting applications continue to evolve, as do strategies to mitigate light pollution upon regional astronomical and ecological assets. A common misperception is that LED lights are automatically dark sky compliant and better than conventional lights, when they can sometimes be a worse choice. White LED lighting often has significant levels of potentially hazardous blue light. Outdoor lighting with high blue light content is more likely to contribute to light pollution because it has a significantly larger geographic reach than lighting with less blue light. Blue-rich white light sources are also known to increase glare and compromise human vision, especially in the aging eye.

Another speaker explained improvements in luminaire designs that include adaptive controls like dimmers, timers, and motion sensors.

At the IDA conference Joanne was honored to receive the IDA Dark-Sky Defender Award on behalf of her work for Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek. The Dark-Sky Defender Award is given to individuals and organizations in appreciation of their efforts on behalf of IDA and its mission to preserve night skies by promoting quality outdoor nighttime lighting.