

NIGHTSCAPE



The 2014 Annual Report Edition

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International Dark Sky Places Program Has Record-Breaking Year

Learn about our newest additions to our flagship program.

Our International Dark Sky Places program had an amazing year. Thanks to our generous supporters, we were able to certify 13 Dark Sky Places in 2014, more than any other year. We now have more than 3 dozen places across the globe with protected night skies. The following are Dark Sky Places that were added since our last issue of *Nightscape*.

TOWN OF BEVERLY SHORES, IND., USA

Nights along the south shore of Lake Michigan are a little darker thanks to the dedicated residents of Beverly Shores. The town is fortunate to be surrounded in three directions by the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore with Lake Michigan to its north, which is why locals refer to the town as “The Island.”

Town residents worked for several years to improve nighttime lighting, including transforming the town-owned street lighting to dark sky friendly fixtures. Local residents raised \$8,000 toward the total project cost of \$9,350.

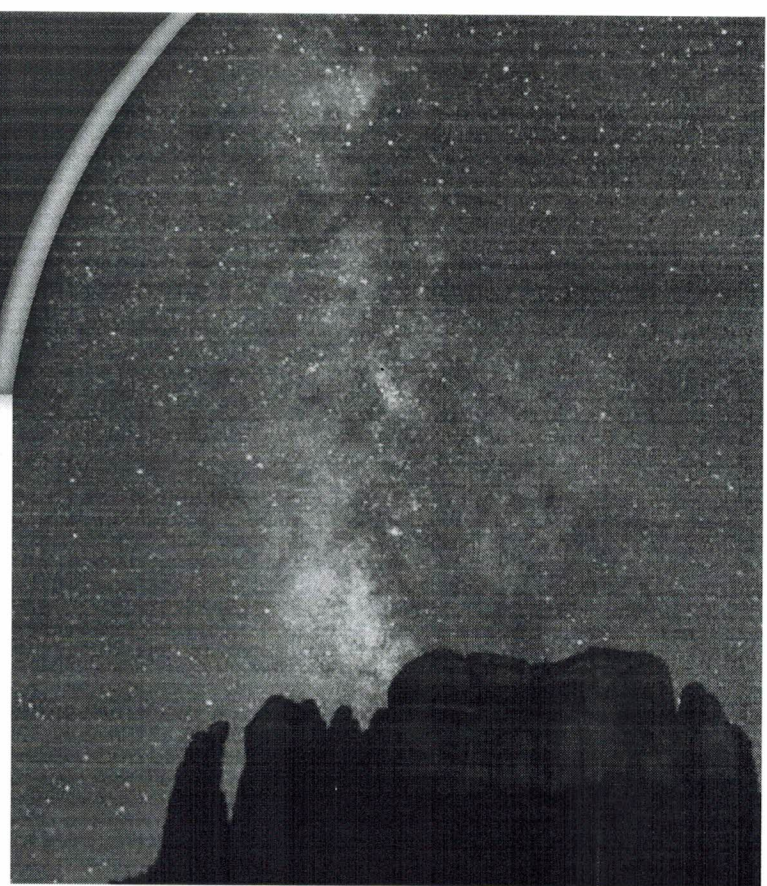
Beverly Shores’ improved lighting helps protect many species living in the Dunes. The National Lakeshore hosts some of the greatest biodiversity in the Midwest among its beaches, sand dunes, black oak forests and savannas, wetlands, open prairies and shrub swamps.

Garry M. Traynham, the acting superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, said the National Park Service applauds the town’s progressive steps to limit light pollution in the area and pledges to support the town’s continuing efforts.

COPPER BREAKS STATE PARK & ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA, TEXAS, USA

In August, IDA did a “Texas two-step,” naming two Dark Sky Parks in the Lone Star State on the same day. Copper Breaks State Park in the Panhandle Plains and Enchanted Rock State Natural Area in the Hill Country are the first Texas state parks to receive the IDA designation.

Copper Breaks has hosted monthly “Star Walks” for nearly 20 years and recently replaced many of its outdoor lights with efficient, fully shielded fixtures. Enchanted Rock, named for its giant pink granite dome, began holding star parties in 2011 and has worked diligently to comply with IDA’s strict outdoor lighting requirements for Dark Sky Parks.



Enchanted Rock State Natural Area is one of two Texas state parks receiving the IDA designation in 2014. Photo by Rob Greebon (RobGreebonPhotography.com).

The designations galvanized the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department to promote dark skies across all 95 Texas state parks in an effort to protect wildlife and enhance tourism. The department is developing policies and lighting management plans and partnering with the McDonald Observatory and the Texas IDA chapter to audit the parks’ night skies and implement the lighting plan recommendations.

The buzz created by the dark sky designations has inspired several other Texas parks and communities to express interest in applying for the designation.

CITY OF SEDONA, ARIZ., USA

Sedona was the second Dark Sky Community named in 2014. A community of more than 10,000 people, Sedona is a prime tourist destination featuring a variety of outdoor activities set against the backdrop of its iconic Red Rocks. The city hopes to underscore its commitment to dark skies preservation as a more visible draw for new residents and businesses.

The protection of Sedona’s landscape and natural resources is nothing new, beginning with the founding of the nonprofit Keep Sedona Beautiful in 1972. In recent years, the nonprofit’s members began considering light pollution as an environmental issue. The organization was instrumental in helping improve Sedona’s outdoor lighting code and recruiting community support leading to the IDA designation.