

**Big Park–Village of Oak Creek AZ**

**2021**

**International Dark–Sky Community  
Annual Report**



Photo Credit: Dr. Gary Stouder, Dark-Sky  
Committee member. Whirlpool Galaxy 23 million LY  
away with companion Galaxy

**Submitted by Dark–Sky Committee Chairman, Kirk Smith  
Big Park Regional Coordinating Council, Inc.**

The Big Park-Village of Oak Creek Dark-Sky Committee, formed under the Big Park Regional Coordinating Council, Inc., is pleased to report our community's Dark-Sky activities from October 2020 through September 2021. Big Park-Village of Oak Creek is an unincorporated community in rural Yavapai County, Arizona in the greater Sedona area. In February of 2016, it was designated the world's 14th International Dark-Sky Community. The community features incomparable natural beauty and is a popular place to visit or reside for many reasons. One reason is the magnificent dark night skies. The community places high value on this natural resource, and is committed to protecting and preserving it for future generations. Specific mention is made of its importance in the community's Vision Statement.

In November 2020, the Big Park Regional Coordinating Council established a standing committee dedicated to the community's Dark-Sky program. The committee's purpose and scope are as follows:

**PURPOSE:**

To uphold the IDA Dark-Sky Community designation on behalf of Big Park/Village of Oak Creek.

**SCOPE**

- Perform the maintenance activities and reporting as required, including the yearly submission of a written report to the IDA summarizing activities:
  - ❖ Description and dates of interpretive events, outreach, and educational efforts;
  - ❖ Description of lighting retrofit projects;
  - ❖ Description of new construction projects;
  - ❖ Night sky measurement report.
- Coordination of educational activities and events for Big Park/VOC.
- Collaboration with the other International Dark-Sky communities and committees in the Verde Valley.
- Collaborate with Yavapai County government and other local IDA groups to support existing lighting ordinances and updates to the ordinances.
- Foster Dark-Sky curiosity among residents and visitors.

The committee is open to interested individuals and meets monthly, or as needed, to advance in-process projects. Meetings are presently being held via Zoom.

At the August 2021 committee meeting it was decided to create a dedicated public website to provide helpful information for residents, businesses and tourists on the enjoyment and preservation of the local dark sky, as well as information on events, committee activities, how to join, and the IDA.

Postings of this and prior annual reports will be maintained on the new site: [www.BigParkDarkSky.org](http://www.BigParkDarkSky.org).

## EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

### **Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In light of safety concerns, during the reporting period local astronomy clubs and International Dark-Sky Community groups were still unable to resume a normal schedule of public events. The population of the Verde Valley region (which includes Big Park-VOC, Sedona, Camp Verde and Cottonwood IDA designated communities) is largely the most vulnerable 60+ age demographic. Public venues, community centers and government facilities restricted access for public events such as star parties and group meetings.

The Camp Verde IDA community did produce a public star party on June 11, 2021 at the Rezzonico Family Park, drawing strong attendance. The Big Park-VOC Dark-Sky committee promoted that event to our community, and had representation at the event. A local club, Astronomers of the Verde Valley, continues to meet via Zoom, and has not resumed public events. Various local companies also offer private star parties to visitors worldwide.



*Photo Credit: Dr. Gary Stouder, Dark-Sky Committee member. Bubble Nebula 11,090 Light Years away.*

## OUTDOOR LIGHTING ISSUES

The Big Park-VOC Dark-Sky committee continues to work with Yavapai County to update the lighting ordinance, bringing it up to current standards. County officials have stated they are working towards the goal of completion by early 2022.

A monument sign communicating the Dark-Sky Community designation of Big Park-Village of Oak Creek was funded in June 2021 by a local businessman and a local non-profit organization. A prominent location on public land is being pursued with the US Forest Service and Arizona Department of Transportation.

During this reporting period, there has been no new commercial development or re-development impacting lighting in the community.

## SKY QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

The Big Park-Village of Oak Creek Dark-Sky committee takes Sky Quality Measurements to ensure that Sedona continues to protect its dark night skies and reduce light pollution. The measurements were taken in three locations on April 22, 2020 and June 20, 2020. The readings were taken at the same locations as in previous years. Measurements are below:

Sky Quality Readings in VILLAGE OF OAK CREEK Performed on APRIL 10, 2021, NEW MOON									
TIME	LOCATION	Percent of Cloud Cover	First Sky Quality Reading	Second Sky Quality Reading	Third Sky Quality Reading	Fourth Sky Quality Reading	Fifth Sky Quality Reading	Sixth Sky Quality Reading	Average Sky Quality Reading
22:20	Jacks Canyon Rd/SunCliff Dr.	0%	21.20	21.23	21.22	21.28	21.31	21.24	21.25
22:38	888 Saddlehorn Rd	0%	21.56	21.56	21.53	21.56	21.50	21.51	21.54
22:47	Bell Rock/Red Butte - North of Golf Club	0%	21.51	21.41	21.49	21.55	21.50	21.41	21.48

Sky Quality Readings in VILLAGE OF OAK CREEK Performed on September 6, 2021, NEW MOON									
TIME	LOCATION	Percent of Cloud Cover	First Sky Quality Reading	Second Sky Quality Reading	Third Sky Quality Reading	Fourth Sky Quality Reading	Fifth Sky Quality Reading	Sixth Sky Quality Reading	Average Sky Quality Reading
21:30	Jacks Canyon Rd/SunCliff Dr.	0%	21.21	21.23	21.25	21.29	21.29	21.31	21.26
21:40	888 Saddlehorn Rd	0%	21.56	21.50	21.55	21.54	21.57	21.51	21.54
21:55	Bell Rock/Red Butte - N of Golf Club	0%	21.41	21.52	21.47	21.50	21.50	21.43	21.47

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