



International Dark-Sky Association

"... to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies"

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INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES STATE PARKS IN NEW MEXICO AND WASHINGTON FOR NIGHT SKY PRESERVATION EFFORTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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29 June 2010 - Tucson, AZ: The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) Board of Directors and Dark Sky Places Committee announced the designation of two International Dark Sky Parks at its 22nd Annual General Meeting and Conference in Tucson, Arizona, USA. Clayton Lake State Park in northeast New Mexico received Gold Tier recognition of their efforts to preserve and protect the nighttime environment while Goldendale Observatory State Park in southern Washington received provisional status for a Silver Tier designation.

Recognition as an International Dark Sky Park (IDSPark) requires more than just a star-filled sky; strenuous long term planning, retrofitting, and preservation efforts are required to fulfill the application prerequisites. A lighting management plan, examples of retrofitting/building under the plan, and energetic public awareness regarding the night sky as a natural resource must be demonstrated. The IDSPark program is recognized as a permanent commitment to the nighttime environment and an important achievement in conservation. Both parks worked diligently with the Dark Sky Places Committee after originally applying in 2009 to meet the exacting standards. These parks join Cherry Springs State Park (PA) and Geauga Park District's Observatory Park (OH, Provisional) as models for night sky conservation within the U.S. State Park system. Globally they join Natural Bridges National Monument (UT), Galloway Forest Park (Scotland, UK), and the Zselic Landscape

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Protection Area (Hungary) as parks dedicated to preservation of a natural night.

Clayton Lake State Park, located in Union County, New Mexico hosts approximately 65,000 visitors per year, many of whom attend star parties at the park's observatory facility. Park staff and volunteers worked closely with the Town of Clayton and the New Mexico State Parks system to ensure quality lighting guidelines both within the park and in the surrounding community. In 2010 the park completed lighting retrofits to conform 100% with the shielding and spectral considerations for low-light areas. The *Reach for the Stars* program, initiated in 2004, promotes the night sky as a valuable educational and economic resource for New Mexico.

David J. Simon, director of New Mexico State Parks, states, "We are grateful for this recognition and hope that Clayton Lake State Park is merely the first of many New Mexico State Parks to achieve this distinction."

Goldendale Observatory Park houses one of the nation's largest public telescopes and acts as the primary night sky interpretive site in the State of Washington's State Parks system. Providing a history of astronomy, telescopes, and the space program to visitors, the park wholeheartedly embraces the public education component of an IDSPark. The Dark Sky Places Committee has granted Goldendae provisional status to encourage park personnel and the surrounding community to enact permanent measures that will secure the longevity of dark skies within the community and the state parks system. A small number of lighting retrofits must also completed prior to full designation.

To review the submissions for the parks, please visit <http://docs.darksky.org/DarkSkyPlaces/IDSPClayton.pdf> for Clayton Lake State Park and <http://docs.darksky.org/DarkSkyPlaces/IDSPGoldendale.pdf> for Goldendale Observatory Park.

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