



International Dark-Sky Association

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

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Goldendale Observatory State Park Named a Silver-Tier IDA Dark Sky Park

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 May 2013 – Atop a hill just outside of the small town of Goldendale, WA sits a small observatory in a spot of darkness gazing at the Milky Way. Recently, the Goldendale Observatory State Park fulfilled the International Dark-Sky Association's (IDA) requirements to be named a full status, silver-tier International Dark Sky Park.

Goldendale Observatory State Park is home to one of the nation's largest public telescopes and acts as the primary night sky interpretive site in the Washington State Parks System. The park was given provisional status as an International Dark Sky Park in 2010 in part for its efforts in providing education about astronomy, telescopes, the space program, and the importance of truly dark skies to its many visitors.

After fulfilling requirements for documentation of night sky quality, IDA added Goldendale Observatory as a full-fledged International Dark Sky Park with a silver-tier night sky quality. This designation means that their skies are minimally impacted by light pollution. Astronomical phenomena such as the Milky Way, meteor showers, and occasionally even the zodiacal light (a glow often seen at sunset or sunrise caused by sunlight scattering on dust in space) are visible. It is a truly exceptional place within easy access to a large population.

Being just a 2-hour drive from Portland, OR means that the observatory offers stargazing opportunities to over half a million people—something not readily available in many populated areas. Goldendale Observatory hosts viewing through their 24.5-inch telescope and other events can be found on their website at www.perr.com/gosp.html.

Stephen Stout, manager of the observatory, says, "I am very pleased that Goldendale Observatory State Park has been named as an International Dark Sky Park. My efforts to preserve a small part of land on Earth where visitors may come and gaze up in wonder and appreciate a dark and star-filled sky have been finally recognized. The local community will benefit from the Dark Sky Park status as more dark sky tourists from around the world learn of this place through the IDA and use the local hospitality services."

Bob Parks, IDA Executive Director, welcomes the observatory's full-status saying; "It's great to have Goldendale Observatory officially join the ranks as a Dark Sky Park. Their skies and educational programs are a priceless resource. Goldendale's proximity to a big city means that many people have the chance to easily enjoy their programs and appreciate the value of a dark sky."

More information on IDA's Dark Sky Places program is available at www.darksky.org/idsp

IDA is the only non-profit working to address light pollution around the world. Among its efforts, the organization provides information brochures, workshops, a model lighting ordinance, manages a night sky conservation program, and awards the distinguished IDA Fixture Seal of Approval to applicants with lighting fixtures that are dark-sky friendly.

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