

IDA Designates Sedona, Arizona, the World's Eighth International Dark Sky Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TUCSON, Ariz., and SEDONA, Ariz. (4 August 2014) - The red rock scenery of Sedona has long been an iconic setting for Hollywood films about the Old West and a popular magnet for artists and tourists alike. Sedona is committed to preserving its small-

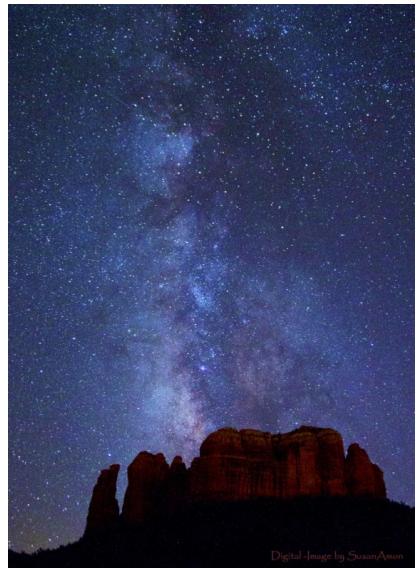
town charm, and thanks to the sustained efforts of concerned residents, its dark night skies. In recognition of Sedona's efforts protecting this important natural resource, the International Dark-Sky Association has designated the city of Sedona the world's eighth International Dark Sky Community.

"We are pleased to honor the dedication and hard work of the many Sedona citizens committed to protecting the nighttime environment," said IDA Acting Executive Director Scott Kardel.

Sedona, a community of more than 10,000 people, is a prime tourist destination featuring a variety of outdoor activities. The city hopes to highlight its commitment to dark skies preservation as a more visible draw for new residents and businesses.

"Sedona is known worldwide for its spectacular natural environment," explained Sedona Mayor Rob Adams. "It is my personal goal to take a leadership role in establishing Sedona as a model city in sustainability and environmental stewardship. Preserving our dark skies is just one component of this goal."

The events culminating in today's announcement began more than 40 years ago. Sedona residents founded Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB) in 1972 to address rapid growth and a lack of regional long-term planning. Over time, KSB members began to consider light pollution as pressing an environmental issue as air and water quality and the protection of the Red Rocks.



The Milky Way rises above
Cathedral Rock outside Sedona.
Credit: Susan Amon

Fifteen years ago, city staff began working with KSB, the business community, and local citizens to identify problem outdoor lighting installations and to incorporate solutions into a revised code. Lessons learned from policy changes enacted in Flagstaff, Arizona - the world's first International Dark Sky Community - guided efforts to update and strengthen the Sedona code language. The new outdoor lighting ordinance became law in 2001.



Photo by Susan Amon

"Over the years KSB has worked with various government jurisdictions and conducted educational outreach to help protect our skies from light pollution," said KSB Past President Tom O'Halleran. "KSB is committed to continuing those efforts in the future."

As part of the process of becoming a Dark Sky Community, the City of Sedona appropriated funds to bring City Hall into full compliance with the code and to provide resources for lighting retrofit projects such as that carried out at Posse Grounds Park. In 2012-13 the city's Outdoor Lighting Small Grant Program provided 50 percent matching funds totaling \$10,000 to encourage businesses to bring their grandfathered outdoor lighting into compliance with the ordinance. Earlier this year Sedona approved further protections that expanded the use of adaptive controls and light curfews for city-owned lighting.

The dedication of Sedona residents and city officials has certainly paid off according to Dr. Stephen Leshin, a physician with a retirement home in Sedona. "Living here, it's hard to imagine how many millions of people who live in light polluted cities can't even see individual bright stars," he said. "We are fortunate and grateful here in Sedona to have dark skies to enjoy."

Images

The Milky Way rises above Cathedral Rock outside Sedona.

Credit: Susan Amon

Low-resolution: darksky.org/idsp/Images/Cathedral_Rock_MW_Amon_72dpi.png

High-resolution: darksky.org/idsp/Images/Cathedral_Rock_MW_Amon_300dpi.tif

Skywatchers enjoy the dark skies of Red Rock State Park near Sedona.

Credit: Susan Amon

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About the IDA Dark Sky Places Program

IDA established the International Dark Sky Places conservation program in 2001 to recognize excellent stewardship of the night sky. Designations are based on stringent outdoor lighting standards and innovative community outreach. Since the program began, eight Communities, 17 Parks and eight Reserves have received International Dark Sky designations. For more information about the International Dark Sky Places Program, visit darksky.org/international-dark-sky-places/about-ids-places.

About IDA

The International Dark Sky Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona, advocates for the protection of the nighttime environment and dark night skies by educating policymakers and the public about night sky conservation and promoting environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. More information about IDA and its mission may be found at <http://www.darksky.org>.

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