

## **Dark Night Sky Report 2015 Death Valley National Park**

### **General**

Alternative contact name: Linda Slater [linda\\_slater@nps.gov](mailto:linda_slater@nps.gov) 760-786-3279

Site visitors: 1.1 million. The park presented 43 night sky/astronomy programs. Approximately 3,500+ participated in these programs. Two external astronomy groups came to the park to give public programs.

### **Lighting**

The Scotty's Castle project in the northern part of the park has been completed this year: replacement of light bulbs, flood lights removed, timers put on fixtures, and many lights on out-buildings taken out completely. The Grapevine housing area and Ranger Station have also had new fixtures installed, both with timers and more space appropriate lighting.

### **Sky Quality**

No sky quality data was taken this year.

### **Conservation /Research**

Although much research takes place within the park, none are involving night skies at this time.

### **Funding**

We have been lucky to receive two "Astro VIPs" from the National Park Service's Dark Sky Program. These amateur astronomer volunteers have incredible knowledge that they love to share and have brought great expertise to our staff and added depth and breadth to our programming and outreach.

### **Planned Programs**

We are exploring a new site to have night sky programs in, and have funding to do some research about suitable locations. Our goal is to have an area that is not impacted by vehicle headlights and is safe and accessible for visitors.

### **Outreach**

We have continued with both night programs and solar (day) programs thanks to our Astro VIPs. These programs continue to be extremely popular and offer additional educational events.

### **Community and Media Relations**

Death Valley's night skies are often the topic of media accounts. A partner that has re-engaged this year is Xanterra, the private resort within our boundaries and borders the core area of the park (Furnace

Creek). Through a change in personnel, they have taken an active interest in the night sky programs and are on board to be a cooperating partner. This year, they have retrofitted lights at a gas station which had provided some relief from light trespass to our nearby campgrounds in the park.

Thanks to the International Dark Sky Association for all your great work and support!