

General

- *Current information for the site IDA contact(s)*

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Parks/Reserves:

- *Estimate number of site visitors in the last year. Of those, how many participated in dark-skies programming?*

An estimated 1,000 visitors participated in Dark Sky related activities and events over the past year in the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve including the Messier Marathon, Star Gazing Training Workshops on Valentia Island, International Space University Visit, Skelligs Star Party, Lecture by Bro. Guy Consolmagno, Director of the Vatican Observatory, as well Special Astronomy and Star Gazing Weekends hosted by the Royal Hotel, Valentia and Mooring Hotel, Portmagee.

Lighting

Parks/Reserves:

- *Were any new lighting projects completed this year? If so, describe.*
- **Kerry County Council retro-fitted 61 no. SON public lights with LED Dark Sky Compliant lights in the villages of the Ballinskelligs, Caherdaniel, Dungeagan and Castlecove during 2017. Funding has also been secured to retro-fit a further 44 no. public lights with Dark Sky compliant lights in the village of before the end of 2017.**

The retro-fitting of public lights (132 no) in the town of Waterville is programmed for 2018.

The total public investment is in the order €200,000.

Communities:

- *Were any changes made to local/municipal outdoor lighting policy in the past year? If so, describe and include text of any code language added or changed.*

All new planning approvals in the Dark Sky Reserve have a stipulation that external lighting is to be dark sky compliant.

Sky Quality

- *Were sky quality data taken in the past year? If possible, include a table or figure showing the information.*

No new measurements were taken in 2017 but this is planned for early 2018 when the reduction in light pollution by the installation of dark sky compliant lighting will be recorded and included in our next IDA Report.

- *Is a permanently mounted sky monitor installed, or are there plans to install one?*

A Dark Sky Monitor has been purchased and will be installed in Coláiste na Sceilge, Cahersiveen, the only high school in the Reserve before year end.

Conservation and Research (Parks/Reserves)

- *Any ongoing conservation and/or research programs at the site?*

Primary consumer research was carried out among visitors to the Reserve during August/September 2017 as part of the market assessment for the development of an observatory. The results of this survey will be available towards the end of 2017.

KIDSR is also part of the CIT/Blackrock Observatory led EcoSTARS project. This comprises is an EU inter-region group of Atlantic based Dark Sky Reserves. An application for funding has been applied for which includes trans-national research initiatives.

Funding

- *Currently administering any grants related to dark-skies programming? If so, describe.*

The main source of funding comes from Kerry County Council in the form of capital funding for the retro-fitting of public lighting and grants for the training of local star

gazing guides and events like the Messier Marathon, visit of the International Space University, press visits, and the visit of Bro. Guy Consolmagno, Director of the Vatican Observatory. Funding support is also provided by Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Tourism Authority, towards media and press visits. Support 'in kind' is provided by University College Cork and CIT/Blackrock Observatory Cork.

- *Were any new grants won this year?*

Grants were secured from SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) and CLÁR, rural small works infrastructure scheme, for the retrofitting public lighting in Portmagee.

Grants were also secured from Government, matched by Kerry County Council, to examine the feasibility of a Mobile Observatory, as a shared resourced between the Dark Sky communities in the Reserve.

Are there plans to apply for any future grants?

KIDRS are constantly pursuing local, national and EU funded schemes.

Arts and Culture

- *Is any programming ongoing or planned blending the arts/culture with dark skies?*

Yes. The University College Cork accredited Star Gazing course, includes a module in archaeology and, in particular, focussed on historic sites that may be aligned on solar and lunar events like stone alignments of which there are several in the Reserve.

The Caherdaniel Dark Skies Committee secured Government and Kerry County Council funding for a Solar Trail that places sculptural objects, representing the planets in the Solar System, along a local walking trail at scaled distances. This project will be in place by year end.

Outreach

- *Were any new outreach programs started this year?*

There were a number of outreach programs involving Coláiste na Sceilge Secondary (High) School involving visits by a team from Blackrock Observatory, Cork and a poster competition organised through local national schools to raise awareness about astronomy and the Dark Sky Reserve.

Following contacts made through the Messier Marathon with the *Observatoire de Paris* students from Paris are planning a study visit to the KIDSR in the Spring of 2018 to complete a number of joint projects with students from Coláiste na Sceilge.

Community and Media Relations

- *Any new media coverage you would like us to know about? May include e.g., PDFs as attachments,*

There has been several national and international features on the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve including a special feature in Astronomy Now, The Irish Times, local press and interview with Steve Lynott on *Newstalk* – the Irish National Independent radio station. Copies are attached as pdfs.

KIDSR Reserve was part of the Kerry Tourism Promotion with Tourism Ireland at the CTM Consumer Travel Fair in Stuttgart, Germany in January, in Boston and ITB Berlin in March and upcoming promotional visit to Berlin from Nov 2-5.

Any engagement with local governments, community organizations, or private landowners in the past year to report?

A new Dark Skies Committee, representing all local communities, is being formed as part of the Skellig Coast Tourism Network established by Fáilte Ireland and supported by Kerry County Council. The Skellig Coast Visitor Development Plan (2017) and Kerry County Tourism Strategy, 2016-2022, contain specific objectives on the conservation and enhancement of the night skies over South Kerry and the promotion of astro-tourism in the region. The prominent featuring of Skellig Michael, the iconic world heritage site adjoining the Reserve, in the new Star Wars trilogy of movies is drawing considerable international attention to the KIDSR.