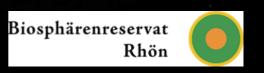
International Dark Sky Reserve Rhön UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Annual Report 2016-2017

Sternenpark im Biosphärenreservat Rhön







Summary

Three more communities, one of which outside the boundaries of the reserve, adopted the lighting management plan (LMP). Two energy suppliers, who cover the biggest part of the reserve, changed policy and only offer dark sky friendly luminaires for the public sector – even outside the reserve. This provides a sense of security in relation of the public lighting. Yet, LED seems to seduce to a higher luminance than necessary. Also, LED used in advertising lighting seems to be on an increase as well as illumination with LED.

The last twelve months were again characterized by a high level of public events. There was a much higher demand for star guiding tours and a steady interest in lectures on light pollution. Many people could be reached this way.

One hope expressed in last years report has not yet been fulfilled: a better organizational structure and collaboration of the different Rhön institutes. One of the main drawbacks concerning management and protection of night sky are still unclear responsibilities within the institutions related. This is partly due to the fact of the federal organization of the Rhön, which remains a challenge and involves a high time consuming input on the part of the one employee management.

Yet, a positive development is that for the first time since designation a cross-border collaboration meeting took place with the intention to install identical information boards throughout the reserve.

General

The Rhön UNESCO Biosphere Reserve was designated as an IDA Dark Sky Reserve on August, 7th 2014. It spreads over the three federal states Bavaria, Hesse and Thuringia and five county districts. It is situated in the center of Germany. The applicant, the ARGE Rhön, which is a cooperation of the heads of the five county districts and the three Biosphere Reserve administrations, is the institution in charge concerning all matters of the Dark Sky Reserve Rhön (Sternenpark Rhön).

Contacts

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Twitter: Sternenpark Rhön

Non-profit support association:

Verein Sternenpark Rhön e.V. <u>www.verein-sternenpark-rhoen.de</u> New administrative office: Bubendbader Straße 6, 36145 Hofbieber

UNESCO Biosphärenreservat Rhön

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Winter at the Hohe Geba. Picture by Gerda Wynant



Visitors to the Sternenpark

Our dark sky experience program includes regular public and private star guiding tours, lectures on astronomical topics, workshops on dark sky issues, star festivals and information talks on light pollution in and outside the dark sky reserve. With our events we reached in total and directly more than 3,500 people. As a large share of our events is of public nature, it is difficult to estimate how many of these participants are visitors to the Sternenpark and how many are locals. Due to our voucher-system and the many requests for our flyers, we are convinced that the Sternenpark does attract visitors who come especially to the Rhön in order to experience dark skies.

Furthermore, our astronomical observation site on the mountain Hohe Geba attracts a lot of amateur astronomers from all over Germany.

Lighting

Within the last year some conversions on public lighting took place. Most of which due to funding programs. Because of the sheer size of the dark sky reserve and the fact that many energy suppliers are involved, we plan to install a prober documentation system including pictures for the next reporting period. If this system turns out to be useful, it might as well be used by other reserves and dark places.

Although many municipalities have not yet adopted the LMP, they still have spoken out for meeting the demands of our LMP in order to protect the night. It seems kind of internalized. This is due to the good work of the energy suppliers involved. Some of them do not over any other than complying lighting. This is a very encouraging sign.

Bischofsheim: Installation of shielded 3000 K (Phillips Luma) in the core town as well as

several districts. Reduction of 50 % between 11 pm to 5 am.

Sondheim, Stetten, Conversion from old luminaires for fluorescent tubes* (Peitschenleuchten) Bastheim: with ULR of 0,055 to shielded 3000 K (Phillips Luma) in all three

municipalities as well as all of their districts. Reduction of 50 % between 11

pm to 5 am.

Burglauer: Installation of shielded 3000 K (Phillips Luma) in the core village as well as in

several districts like Niederlauer. Reduction of 50 % between 11 pm to 5 am

Petersberg, Poppenhausen. Rasdorf:

Installation of fully shielded amber LED in several streets, replacement for

for high pressure sodium luminaires. Reduction during the night.



Petersberg: golden orange amber LED



Poppenhausen: amber LED



Rasdorf: amber LED

Dörrensolz: The small village of Dörrensolz never had public lighting. As the main

borough suggested in Summer 2017 to install public lighting, the inhabitants approached the management of the Reserve and as a result have opposed getting lighting installed at all. This is the biggest success in the last year.

Kaltenwestheim: Unfortunately and due to the fact that in the Thuringian part of the Rhön local

electricians rather than energy suppliers are appointed with conversion, retrofits with ca. 6000 K were installed. Talks with the local building authority took place. They honestly thought doing the right thing. There are plans for

an awareness-raising event in early 2018.

In summary it can be stated, that public lighting is gradually getting more and more compliant to the LMP. At the same time, however, it can also be observed, that private advertising lighting as well as private illuminations are on the increase – it seems that this is because of the many application possibilities of LED and the sheer cheapness of light produced by LED. This so called rebound effect is something to be taken care of.

Also, as being told by an "insider", the advertising industry visits companies and deliberately promotes bright white lighting ("neon signs") in order to distinguish from the compliant public lighting within the reserve. This is very disturbing. It seems high time for the lawmaker to specify upper limits of light density.

Luckily, some communities like Hofbieber and Fulda recently determined upper limits in their local building statutes. Mainly in order to get back the sovereignty over the appearance of their village and city cores at night. This is a very important and future-orientated step in order to deal with an excess of private lighting within the municipalities. The communities should not become cheap billboards at night.

Changes in Lighting Situations (selection):

Photographs taken at the same location over a couple of years allow a comparison of the lighting situation:

1.) Location above the municipality of Seiferts looking down to the villages of Seiferts, Thaiden and Batten in the Hessian part of the Reserve: The very bright an dominating lighting source of the stone quarry was switched off from 2014 to 2016. Unfortunately, it was switched on again in 2017, September. Talks with the owner are planned for the winter time.

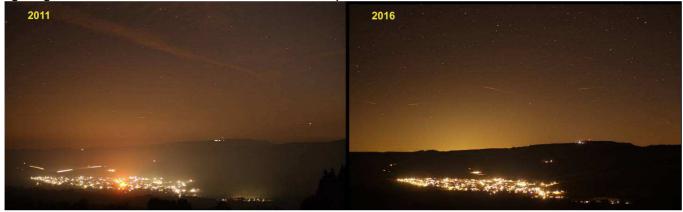
The much warmer light colour temperature of Thaiden in 2016 can be a result of the conversion to warmwhite LED tubes and the removal of one tube per luminaire.



2.) Looking down on Seiferts it seems that the misaligned illumination of the church is Seiferts was either corrected or switched off.



3.) Location above Seiferts looking towards Wüstensachsen: Very evident is the turned off illumination of the church. Also, the conversion to warmwhite tubes in the sector of the public lighting seems to cause a much warmer colour tempeture in total.



4.) Location Hohe Geba, looking towards the protected area oft he long Rhön. Striking is the switch off of the church of Brüchs. There seem to be no other changes.



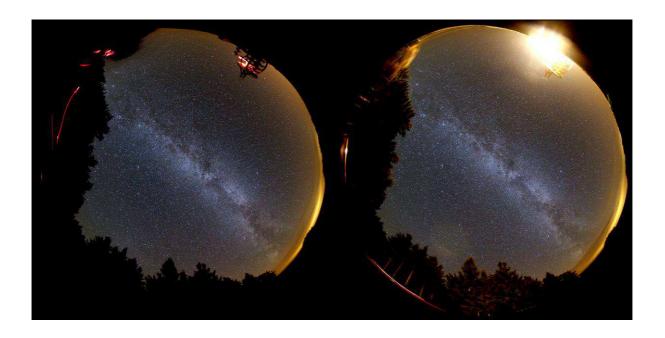
5.) Carpark lighting at a supermarket in Hilders before conversion (left picture, taken 22nd April 2012, probably metal halide lamp) and after in 2016 (right picture) with 4000 K. This is a typical example of misunderstanding and misuse of LED. Talking to the owner he was shocked about the pictures we presented and wished, he had known before the conversion. He trusted the electrician to follow the LMP and was sure, that installing LED was the prober thing to do; in relation to efficiency. At least, the parking lot is being switched off after 10 pm.

2012 2016



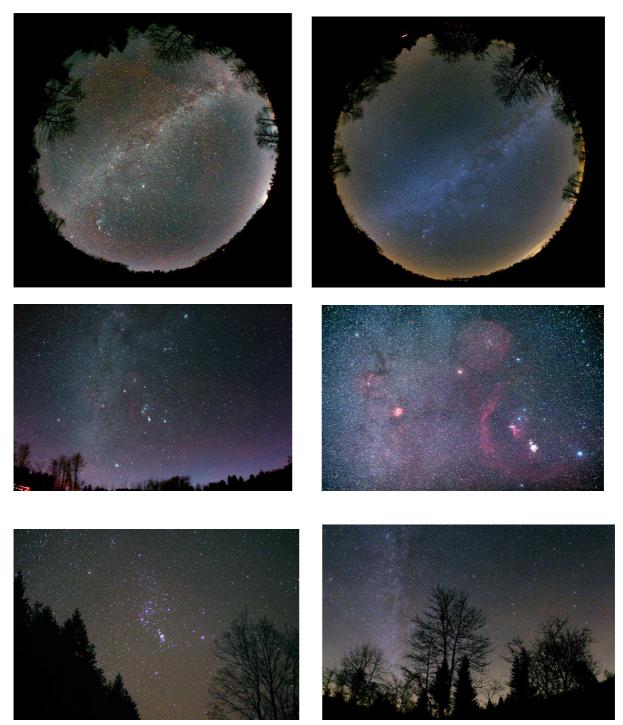


6. Ellenbogen, Lange Rhön: A very big disappointment is a new tourist attraction in the Thuringian part of the Rhön. A wooden sail called "Noah's sail" with a massive slide was build at the once unaffected and completely natural habitat of the Ellenbogen. Although the municipality has not adopted the LMP, talks about exterior lighting started well before it was being build. Clear instructions for safety lighting were given and the ecological value of the special location was pointed out. The architect as well as all other players agreed and even boasted about having installed dark sky friendly lighting during the opining ceremony. Yet, checking there at night shortly after the opening it became clear, that the instructions were not followed and poorly shielded lights were installed with a very sensitive movement sensor. First talks on improving the lighting situation took place. Last information is that the movement sensors are being switched off after closing hour as well as a bag is being placed upon the slide lights, which alternate between red and blue.





Some positive impressions of the Rhön night sky – taken by Dr. Andreas Hänel in the Black Moore 2016, December $\,$



New territory / New Sternenpark Municipalities

Within the last 12 months three more municipalities adopted the LMP:

Unterweid in the Thuringian part within the UNESCO Biosphere Rhön: A small village with 480 inhabitants. Yet, as promoting dark sky matters seems to be quite difficult in the Thuringian part, this is a sign of hope.

Künzell, outside the boundaries of the UNESCO Biosphere Rhön and close to Fulda, with more than 16.000 inhabitants.

Hünfeld. Hünfeld has some districts within the boundaries of the UNESCO Biosphere Rhön. For these districts the LMP was adopted. They now consult about adopting the LMP for the whole municipality. Nevertheless, the city council has declared to follow the LMP for the public lighting.

Sky Quality

In comparison to last years report some positive developments in terms of regular measurements can be reported about. In a cooperation between the University of Applied Sciences of Fulda, our non-profit association Verein Sternenpark Rhön e.V. and the reserve management a project for a sustainable and scientific way of collecting sky quality data was compiled. The University sponsored in total five SQM; three handheld and two SQM-LE, which are being tested at the moment. Furthermore, the University of Fulda is writing a program for data logging and publishing. So far, two student works were written about this subject.

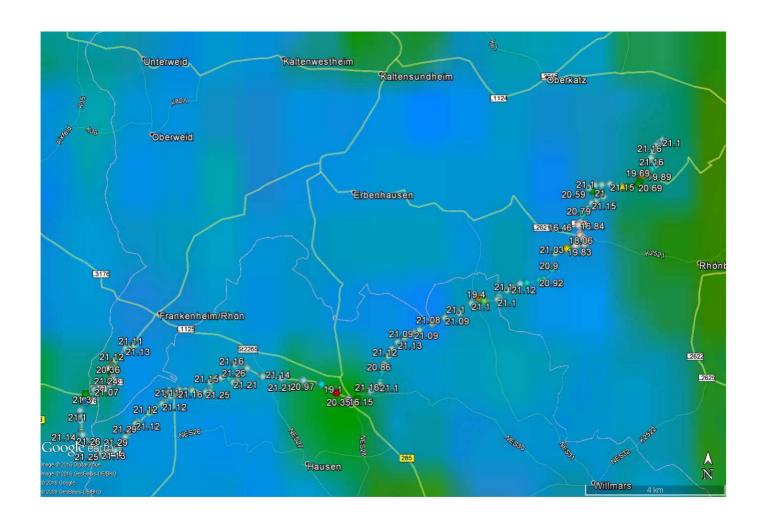
The two handhelds are now being used on a regular basis (clear skies) at two places within the municipality of Hofbieber. One of which at the edge of the reserve to measure the impact of the surrounding area. The other is placed in one of the darkest areas within the reserve. It is planned to install the two SQM-LE on a permanently basis within the next few months.

Other than that, some measurement tours have taken place:

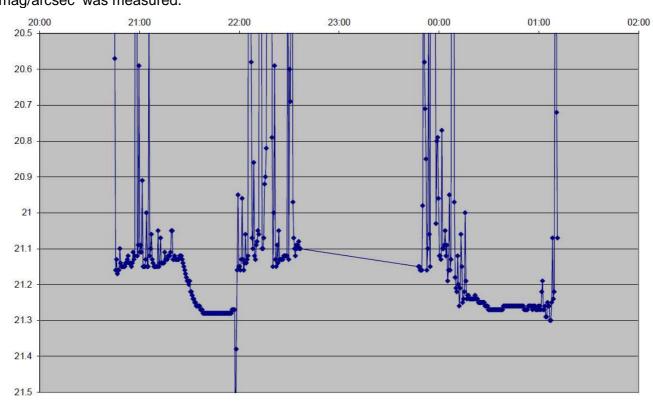
In the from December 3th to 4th 2016 a SQM test run took place covering the distance from the parking lot north of Birx to the Black Moore and further on to the Hohe Geba and back to the Black Moor. SQM-Handheld measurements:

Datum	MEZ	Ort	Länge	Breite	Höhe	mas	mcd/m²
2016-12-03	19:30	P Birx	10.05363	50.53630	778	21.00	0.43
2016-12-03	20:55	P Grenze	10.04910	50.54930	792	21.20	0.36
2016-12-03	21:00	P Birx	10.05363	50.53630	778	21.22	0.35
2016-12-03	21:50	Schwarzes Moor	10.07110	50.52450	780	21.23	0.35
2016-12-03	23:20	Hohe Geba	10.27020	50.58880	740	21.20	0.36
2016-12-04	0:30	Schwarzes Moor	10.07100	50.52450	780	21.30	0.33
2016-12-04	23:00	Schwarzes Moor	10.07110	50.52450	780	21.30	0.33
2016-12-05	21:50	P Holzberghof	10.01020	50.43950	776	21.30	0.33
2016-12-05	22:10	Schwarzbach	10.01020	50.43950	838	21.45	0.28
2016-12-05	22:35	Rasenberg	10.06090	50.48770	839	21.40	0.30

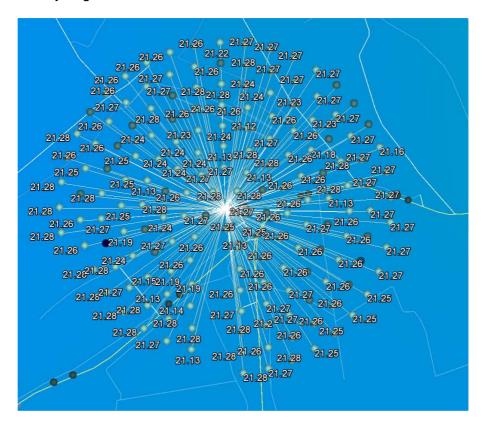
Data taken by the SQM-Roadrunner covering the above mentioned distance and over lied by the new light pollution atlas 2016 by Cinzano et al.:



The data plotted against the time: During the first stay at the Black Moore (ca. 21:20-22 pm) sky brightness reduced from 21.13 to 21.28 mag/arcsec². At the Hohe Geba from 21.1 to 21.15 mag/arcsec² (22:30 to 23:35 pm). At the second stay at the Black Moore from 00:15 to 1 21.28 mag/arcsec² was measured.



During the first stay that night in the Black Moore these data was taken and give an impression of the stability of the sky brightness:



More data was being captured at the two permanent (handheld) locations from October 2017 onwards:

1. At Hofbieber Danzwiesen:

 $https://www.google.de/maps/place/Bubenbader+Str.+6, +36145+Hofbieber/@50.54672, 9.9038228, \\ 19z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x47a33ed7830a13e9:0x3c5c9cd9612a5442!8m2!3d50.54672!4d \\ 9.90437$

Datum	MEZ	Location	Longitude	Latitude	Height	mag/s	Wheather Humidity
2017-10-14	22:00	Danzwiesen	09.54231	50.32478	712	20.9	hazy
2017-10-15	22:00					21.0	hazy
2017-10-16	22:00					21.1	clear
2017-10-17	22:00					21.1	hazy

2. At Hofbieber Village on the balcony (clear moonless nights only):

https://www.google.de/maps/place/Haus+Fuldablick/@50.5898528,9.8439636,18z/data=!4m8!1m2 !2m1!1shaus+fuldablick+google+maps!3m4!1s0x0:0xf61b37269f9027ef!8m2!3d50.5897215!4d9.8 446083

	MEZ	Location	Longitude	Latitude	Height	mag/s	Constellation	Humidity %	Temperatur °C
2017-10-15	01:20	Hofbieber	09.83769	50.58731	450	21.08		85	13,9
2017-10-15	20:15					20.78		65	17,1
2017-10-15	22:50					21.01		72	13,4
2017-10-16	04:35					20.89		77	15,1
2017-10-17	22:08					20.90	Pegasus	69	16,3
2017-10-18	21:45					20.89	Pegasus	66	15,0
2017-10-19	22:10					20.77	Pegasus	67	14,6

Also, please find attached an assessment of the sky quality, compiled by Werner Klug, board member of the non-profit support association Verein Sternenpark Rhön e.V.

In general it seems that our nights are getting more humid and hazy – maybe due to climate change - which leads to more scattered light from the surrounding area of the Dark Sky Reserve. Especially the measuring station in Hofbieber at the edge of the Reserve in the proximity of Fulda and situated above the village of Hofbieber gives a good indication for this presumption. In order to protect the core zones it is important to promote dark skies far behind the boundaries of the Reserve. Deeper into the reserve and in clear dry nights, though, our sky is marvelous.

IV. Conservation and Research

In November 2016 a colloquy with the University of Fulda took place. Our SQM-measurement project resulted from this new partnership. Also, together with the Technical University of Berlin we applied for funds for a project on insect friendlier lighting, which is due to be carried out in the floodplains of Fulda.

Next to that, several bachelor theses were written on dark sky matters and many expert interviews took place.

V. Funding

Funding is still provided mainly by the Hesse Part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The ARGE Rhön finances 20 hrs/week manpower, the borough of Fulda another 19,5 hrs/week. Also, the borough of Fulda finances office, printing information material, car etc.

There are concrete plans for applying funds (LEADER) in 2018 in order to put up information boards throughout the Reserve and in order to build some observation platforms.

VI. Arts and Culture

In 2016 some events blending arts/culture with darks skies took place: impressing pictures and lyric written by Roland Müller, member of the non-profit association. Using this combination of stunning pictures, explanations and lyric two star festivals (Sternenfeste) were carried out in the village of Ebersburg and on the iconic Kreuzberg Mountain.



The festival in Ebersburg on July, 8th 2017 was designed to reach all generations within the village and especially the young, who organized food and drinks and gave their creations funny astronomical names. The event started with astronomical games, crafting and poetry for the younger children. For adults, specially written lyric about the dark sky reserve Rhön and night topics were combined with pictures of Hubble Space Telescope and pictures taken from amateur astronomers in the Rhön. The official program ended with observing the moon through a telescope. This combination worked really well and was reappraised positively.

A similar event took place on July 15th 2017 on the iconing Kreuzberg mountain in the Bavarian part of the Reserve – on 928 m height: The visitors were rewarded with a stunning clear night sky after the official part. A Dobson was organized and the visitors were thrilled about the objects being observed. When the moon rose after midnight, people where thrilled even more and couldn't get enough.

Another big honor was to deliver the "fire" speech at the summer solstice party of the huge Rhönclub. Greek mythology was combined with lyric by Roland Müller and Goethe.

Also, astronomical lectures on topics like "Comets and Rossetta", "Bethlehem's Star", "The comedy of errors in astronomy" were held.

For 2018 a "Dancing-in-the-Dark-Sky-Festival" is planned.



Outreach

Sky Beamer:

In cooperation with the local Hessian nature conservation authority a letter was send to all communities in the Hessian part of the Reserve insisting on banning sky beamers. As there is no legal ban on sky beamers this move was an important one in protecting night skies and birds.

Workshops:

a) December 2016 – a two days special sensitizing workshop for environmental teachers took place in the Rhöniversum in the Bavarian part of the reserve. For the coming winter a workshop called "telescope license" is being held.





b) Also, in late 2016 the non-profit association "Verein Sternenpark Rhön e.V." carried out the workshop "Licht" for star guides, electricians and energy suppliers.

c) In March 2017 the first gathering of dark sky places and aspirants in the German speaking parts of Europe took place in Fulda and included a visit of the luminaire sample street (amber LED) of the RhönEnergie in Fulda and a speech given by Mr. Hahner, winner of the IDA lighting design award 2016. The designation of Mr Hahner led to a bride media coverage and respect in his company.





Both pictures taken by M. Seidel



The designation of Mr Hahner led to a bride media coverage and respect in his company.

d) In April and October 2017 the workshop "Save the night" for children aged 8 – 12 years was developed and took place. Aim was to learn about day and night and how nocturnal animals cope with artificial light; as well as diurnal animals. Also, the children learned about dark sky friendly lighting and how to improve bad lighting. Also, a dark sky friendly town was build with cardboard, batteries and little lamps. At night a lamp safari was carried out and the children learned how to assess luminaires by using a specially developed form. The next day letters where written and handed over to the polluters (with the effect, that one light was mounted horizontally right away). This exercise aimed to enable the children to stand up for dark sky matters.







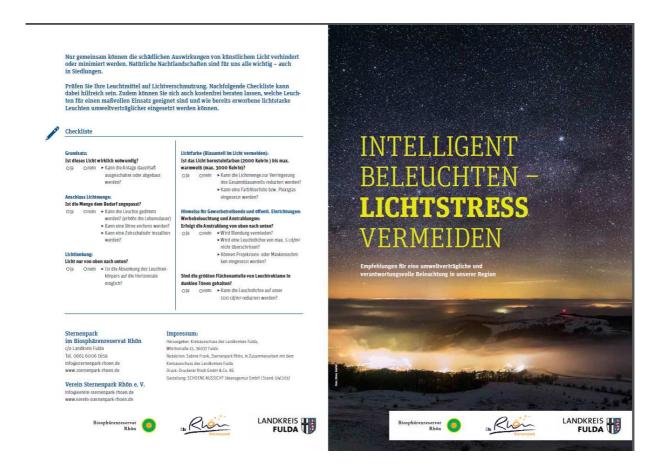
More workshops "Save the night" are planned for 2018. Also, as it is important to sensitize, all material can be asked for:

info@sternenpark-rhoen.de

Information Material

A new information leaflet for private and commercial lighting with a self check list was developed and introduced to the mayors of all municipalities in the Hessian part of the reserve. The introduction was a huge success and the local building authorities now attach the leaflet to the building applications.

The other parts (Bavaria and Thuringia) of the reserve will reprint the leaflet in the near future.



Important information speeches, guidance etc.

- General Vicariate Archbishops building authority about church light
- BUND one of Germanys biggest nature conservation organization helping compiling a letter to the German Association of Towns and Municipalities about dark sky friendly lighting
- Hessian Association for the Protection of Birds and Nature
- guiding several small nature conservation organizations
- guiding several students
- supporting Dr. Hänel and Dr. Schmidt by compiling the very important broschure for the Hessian Department of Environment
- guiding the UNESCO Biosphere Rhön on compiling their new frame concept
- guiding the cross border collaboration of the regional LEADER Managers by
- guiding the city of Fulda: on dark sky issues relating to their new inner-city lamination plan and on Dark Sky Community issues

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Community and Media Relations

Media/PR:

Our astronomical sky preview written by Roland Müller of the nonprofit support association is still published on the websites, Facebook etc. every month and printed in several papers.

Flyer and information material has not changed.

There was also a fair media coverage including several interviews on dark sky issues. Here a selection:

A resume on the first three years in April 2017



About Astrotourism Summer 17



Galaxien mit bloßem Auge erkennen







A full page in the renowned national Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung, 04_17



A very important radio broadcast in the nationwide Deutschlandfunk about light pollution:

http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/sternenpark-rhoengegen-die-

<u>lichtverschmutzung.1001.de.ht</u> ml?dram:article id=389893

http://www.infranken.de/regional/bad-kissingen/Am-Tag-der-Astronomie-von-der-Rhoen-aus-ins-Weltall-blicken;art211,2578723

https://www.mainpost.de/regional/rhoengrabfeld/Foerderprojekte-Laendergrenzen;art765,9493743

http://www.mdr.de/mediathek/fernsehen/a-z/sendung730410_ipgctx-false_zc-ba8902b5_zs-73445a6d.html

http://www.nordbayern.de/region/warum-nachtliche-lichtverschmutzung-ein-echtes-problem-ist-1.6168223

Starguiding Tours and Astronomical Events

Our astronomical program was well received. Especially in 2017 we experienced a strong demand for private star guiding tours and all of our public tours were completely booked out. Considering this, we will broaden our public program in the following period. There is still care being given to conduct public events in all three federal states and to reach as many municipalities as possible. Positive is, that usually there is a good sky quality just outside most of the municipalities. Yet, we experienced that a good sky quality doesn't necessarily go along with a good path. Our star guiding team consists of 10 active certified guides.

In total we conducted 14 public star guiding tours and 84 private tours within the past report period. This is a big increase compared to the period before. On top of that the environmental education institute Rhöniversum in Oberelsbach conducted another 32 tours with a total number of participants of 526.

Reporting period 1st October 2016 – 31th October 2017:

Public events, free of charge, like German Astronomical Day, star festivals, lectures on astronomical topics	est. 450 participants
13 public star and moon guiding tours, some of which with two guides:	472 participants
84 privately arranged star and moon guiding tours:	1,584 participants
32 tours at the environmental institution Rhönversum	526 participants

Public lectures on dark sky issues

In total 17 information lectures on light pollution were conducted in and outside the Reserve; reaching approx. 30 participants per event.

Exhibitions "Loss of Night" (Forschungsverbund Leipniz Berlin)

The exhibition was displayed all year in the environment educational center "House of the Black Mountains" in Wildfllecken.

This report was compiled to give you a summary of our activities and about the things that went well and wrong. Is was compiled by the management of the Sternenpark Rhön, Sabine Frank, in October 2017 and with the help of the non-profit support association Verein Sternenpark Rhön e.V.. Special thanks to Roland Müller, Dr. Andreas Hänel, Jens Müller and Werner Klug – all of which are members of the Verein.

All pictures – if not stated otherwise - taken by Dr. Andreas Hänel and Sabine Frank.

If there are any questions, please contact:

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