



International Dark Sky Park Annular Report – 2017 Zselic Starry Sky Park

Conservation and research

The most important recent and future development related the Zselic Starry Sky Park, is a new project led by the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Savaria Campus. The 3.7 million USD project “Development of international research environment for light pollution studies” promote complex scientific research in a cooperation of three Hungarian universities (ELTE, University of Kaposvár and Eszterházy Károly University). Two “Living Lab for Lighting” will be created, one of them at Bárdudvarnok, a village next to the Zselic Starry Sky park. The lighting system in the village will be totally replaced with a new system by luminaries with controllable luminous flux and spectral composition. During the project, it will be used as a test site (later it will work as normal lighting with this extra feature: In rush hours with 3000K white light, then during the night with amber light with reduced flux). There will be a possibility at the test site for light pollution and bio-monitoring. The reaction of different species will be monitored at different lighting conditions. During the project a hunters house at an other location, at one of the darkest place of the Park, will also be remodeled for an environmental research center – mostly for dark sky and light pollution related studies. The project has just started, the result will be reported during the following years.

Lighting

There were no changes in the park related to lighting devices. However due to the above project, we will expect improvements in the neighborhood of the park

Sky quality

There are 2 permanent SQM-LE devices at the boundary of the park – inside a village (Bárdudvarnok) and also in a suburb location representing the sky quality of the Park. The data of these devices are continuously available online at the Globe at Night – Sky Brightness Monitoring Network <http://globeatnight-network.org/map.html>. We have not found any significant change during the last year in the zenith sky brightness.

In our research project we also continue the monitoring of the night time environment by digital cameras.



Participants of a star watching walk during observations

Arts and culture

Our presence in the “Soul of Zselic Festival” has become a tradition, in 2017 we presented a program on the connection of arts, astronomy and the dark sky parks.

Outreach

The visitor center (“Zselic Park of Stars” - <http://zselicicsillagpark.hu/en.php>) is open 6 days a week. They have interpretive programs, which include public talks, planetarium shows and telescopic observations. There are special full dome shows about the Park and light pollution. Besides the very important role of the visitor center in public outreach, the Duna-Dráva National Park Directorates, the Hungarian Astronomical Association and other NGOs still and continuously organize joint events in the Park. In addition to the monthly walks organized by the staff of the visitor center, the National Park organized two additional stargazing walks. An important fact, that the visit of school groups in the Park has become a standard event due to the help of the visitor center.

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