

Cosmic Campground International Dark Sky Sanctuary (CCIDSS)  
Annual Report  
September 1, 2017

**General**

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

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*Does the site currently have a Provisional status?* No

**Parks/Reserves:**

*Does the site plan to apply for a tier status upgrade in the future?* No

*Estimate number of site visitors in the last year.*

In the first 12 months of operation the traffic counter installed and maintained by the Gila National Forest on the Cosmic Campground IDSS road recorded more than 3539 hits. A conservative analysis suggests that 555 vehicles came and went suggesting that approximately 3,000 people visited the site.

In the period since the IDA certification more than 12,000 visitors have come to the Cosmic Campground IDSS website. Approximately 1/3 of them are from large metro areas within a days driving time from the Cosmic Campground IDSS.

*Of those, how many participated in dark-skies programming?* All came to see the natural night sky.

**Lighting**

**Parks/Reserves:**

*Were any new lighting projects completed this year?* No

**Communities:**

*Were any changes made to local/municipal outdoor lighting policy in the past year?* No

*Were there any new municipal lighting installations?* Yes

The local electric provider, the Navopache Electric Cooperative has a program to replace older light polluting light fixtures with full cut off LED night lights that meet IDA specifications. So far, dozens of these upgrades have been made in the nearby communities of Alma, Glenwood, Luna, and Reserve. These include several businesses and the Glenwood Public Library. We understand this is happening over the 30,000 square mile Navopache Electric Cooperative service area. This is quite significant since they serve an area which still has for the most part a natural night sky.

**Sky Quality**

*Were sky quality data taken in the past year?* Spot Checks with an SQM and a SQM-L indicate that the sky remains natural without any measurable human influence.

*Did sky brightness increase over the previous year?* No

*Decrease?* Yes as solar activity declines the night sky becomes darker.

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

There is currently no permanently mounted sky monitor at the Cosmic Campground.

A Special Use Permit Application for a Permanent Solar Powered Night Sky and Weather Data Station at the Cosmic Campground was submitted to then Glenwood District Ranger Anne Casey. Unfortunately she left her post to take another one with the USFS in Mississippi in March of 2017. She was unable to start the permit process. The permit application is now undergoing the FS permit process. Efforts continue to this date to obtain approval for this facility. The Application is now in the hands of Forester John Baumberger USFS who is tasked with processing these requests.

The purpose of this project is to build and operate an automated, remotely accessed, weather and night sky observing station at the [Cosmic Campground International Dark Sky Sanctuary](#).

### ***Conservation and Research (Parks/Reserves)***

*Any ongoing conservation and/or research programs at the site? If so, who runs them, and what are the goals? No*

*Are there any new research results to report? Have any been published this year?No*

### ***Funding***

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

*Were any new grants won this year?*

*Are there plans to apply for any future grants?*

We are forming a 501-c3 to facilitate obtaining funds for the Cosmic Campground.

### ***Arts and Culture***

*Is any programming ongoing or planned blending the arts/culture with dark skies? If so, describe*

There is a continuing number of astrophotographers documenting/publishing their work done at CCIDSS.

### ***Outreach***

*On Going Outreach Programs*

The Cosmic Campground IDSS website is a work in progress.

In the past year 7,233 users have visited the site. People interviewed at the site tell us that they were attracted to come to the Cosmic Campground IDSS by our website. The following table shows the top 10 cities the Cosmic Campground website users logged in from.

City	Sessions % Sessions
1. Albuquerque	1,171 11.65%
2. (not set)	514 5.11%
3. Phoenix	494 4.91%
4. Silver City	433 4.31%
5. Dallas	269 2.68%
6. El Paso	267 2.66%
7. Los Angeles	266 2.65%
8. Tucson	239 2.38%
9. Las Cruces	197 1.96%
10. Denver	161 1.60%

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

**March 30, 2017 Aldo Leopold Students**

47 total.

**Gila National Forest Website**

After several years of negotiations we were able to persuade the Gila National Forest to include the Cosmic Campground with a link to the IDA on their website.

*If so, are they complete or ongoing? On Going*

*Are statistics available (e.g., how many visitors served, donations, etc.)?*

***Community and Media Relations***

*Any new media coverage you would like us to know about?*

**July 25, 2017 4 Remote Camping Destinations for New Mexico Nature Lovers**

**June 4, 2017 Cosmic Campground Day**

**Travel and Leisure May 23, 2017**

**DCHIEFTON March 12, 2017**

**August 25, 2016 9 Rustic Spots In New Mexico That Are Extraordinary For Camping**

KJZZ August 11, 2016

**PRI's The World August 1, 2016**

**New Mexico Magazine June 2016 Best Star Gazing Spots**

**Time Magazine May 30, 2016**

**Silver City Daily Press January 25, 2016**

**October 15, 2015 Silver City Daily Press**

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

## Catron County Commission

Catron County in which the Cosmic Campground IDSS is located has adopted "dark starry nights as one of their economic attractions."

In January of 2017 we were invited to be members of a newly formed Catron County Economic Development Committee. We agreed.

## Discover Socorro and Surrounding Areas February 2017

Has been published by El Defensor Chieftain Socorro New Mexico.

10,000 copies are being distributed through out New Mexico.

The Catron County section was paid for by the Catron County Commission who values dark sky tourism. Below is the description of Catron County:

2017 DISCOVER SOCORRO

## Catron County

It's been called New Mexico's secret treasure. It's Catron County; a destination for lovers of the outdoors, offering an unparalleled experience for hiking, camping, fishing and even big game hunting. With Gila National Forest encompassing a large part of the county, no other region in the state can come close to the clean air, dark skies and abundant wildlife that Catron County offers.

Catron County plays a large part of Socorro's history, since it was a part of Socorro County until 1921. There is much to see and do in this "undiscovered" corner of New Mexico, from the pies of Pie Town to one of the best preserved ghost towns of the west, Mogollon.

Mogollon, off Highway 180 south of Reserve, was settled in the 1880s in support of the gold and silver mines bordering Silver Creek Canyon and in its boom days boasted a population of over 1,500. Many of the original structures still stand, including the Silver Creek Inn Bed and Breakfast which was renovated in 1980 and is open for business.

A few miles going east from Mogollon in Gila National Forest's White Mountains is scenic Snow Lake providing camping and fishing in a beautiful spot at an elevation of 7,313 feet.

While you're in the neighborhood, check out The Catwalk National Scenic Trail high above Whitewater Creek, a challenging one mile trail along the historic water line route from the 1890's.

The charming mountain community of Glenwood is nearby with a cozy motel and places to eat, drink and shop. The annual Glenwood Dutch Oven gathering is held every year where dozens of participants show off their open fire cooking skills the way it used to be done. This year the cook-off is April 8 in Glenwood Community Park and the public is invited.

The Cosmic Campground, 12 miles north of Glenwood and 25 miles south of Reserve, has one of the darkest natural night skies on earth. Situated between the Gila Wilderness and the Blue Range Primitive Area, the Campground features a basic infrastructure to support campers, offering a 360-degree unobstructed view of the night sky. As the nearest significant artificial light is 40 miles away in Arizona, Cosmic Campground was officially designated as an International Dark Skies Sanctuary in 2015.

Nearby Alma was the address of the renowned WS Ranch, whose hired hands included cowboys Butch Cassidy and members of the Wild Bunch (when they weren't robbing banks or trains). History records Cassidy and his gang as being well mannered when in Alma.

Speaking of the 1880s, Reserve, the county seat, was the scene of the legendary shoot-out between self-appointed Socorro Deputy Sheriff Elfeño Baca and some 70 cowboys from the WS Ranch and surrounding area. It seems Elfeño was held responsible for the death of a cowboy connected with the arrest of a man for shooting off his pistol in a reckless manner in the street. Elfeño took refuge in a small house nearby, and over the course of two days held off the angry mob, and although several hundred bullets were fired into the structure, in the end he emerged without a scratch. A bronze statue of Baca commemorating the event stands in the heart of Reserve.

The Village of Reserve (formerly Milligan Plaza) boasts a population of around 300 and is the center of Catron County government. It has restaurants, arts and crafts and the historic Uncle Bill's Bar, which first opened in 1878.



Scott Turner — El Defensor Chieftain

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Here is our section in this publication:

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**El Rito Quemado C-Store**

Fuel • Ice • Gifts  
Snacks • Coffee  
Beer • Liquor  
Wine

Hwy 60  
Quemado, NM  
505.773.4664



**Michelle's STORE**

Gas • Food • Ice Cream

575.533.6488  
109 Main Street • Reserve, NM 87830



**BLACK GOLD**  
EMPORIUM

Oddments & Vendibles

575.533.6538  
109 Main Street • Reserve, NM 87830



**Cosmic Campground**  
International Dark Sky Sanctuary

[cosmiccampground.org](http://cosmiccampground.org)

**Cosmic CAMPGROUND**

GILA  
*National Forest*

ida  
INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY ASSOCIATION

U.S.  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY SANCTUARY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Glenwood, NM 88039  
575.539.2481

New Mexico State Senate

53rd legislature - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - first session, 2017

## **Cosmic Campground Site Development**

The following statement was sent to us, in an email, by Silas Davidson our official contact with the Gila National Forest:

“Regarding the phone conversation I had last week with Ann, I was describing the current status of the Cosmic Campground CIP (Capital Investment Process) proposal. CIP is a forest service program designed to fund large scale projects. The forest service holds back funds from our national allocation to go towards expensive projects that local units (individual forests) would not otherwise be able to fund with their annual budget. In Region 3, any project estimated to cost over \$100,000 is required to go through the CIP process. The CIP process is the fundamental reason the we have spent so much time planning and preparing documents, so that we can compete competitively for this national pot of money. Currently, Region 3 has reviewed the Cosmic Campground CIP packet and has approved it as a project that should move forward (as compared to other Region 3 projects) and compete with other Regions top projects. I have not been through this process before but would expect that project awards will not be until sometime in our next fiscal year, even then there are years when CIP is not funded due to budget restraints, all indicators suggest 2018 may be a tight budget year.”

The Figure Below is the Signed Official Site Plan for the Cosmic Campground.

