

Dark Night Sky Report 2018 Death Valley National Park

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In 2018, Death Valley National Park hosted approximately 1.3 million visitors.

Lighting

Death Valley National Park continues to maintain compliance with the lighting management plan. Our park neighbors in Death Valley, including Xanterra and the Timbisha Tribe, recognize the value of the night sky and have modified their lighting. The Furnace Creek Resorts are undergoing extensive renovations, including a name change to The Oasis at Death Valley. During construction, night time lighting increased from normal operations, but Xanterra has been receptive to feedback from the park and reduced lighting.

Outreach

The park features a night sky calendar in the park newspaper.

Park staff presented 48 night sky programs and two major events that included telescope viewing. Approximately 2,700 people participated in these programs. Night sky programs continue to be the park's most popular interpretive programs. To that end, two seasonal rangers were hired specifically for their background in night sky programs. A night sky specialist volunteer also spent several weeks in the park providing programs.

The park also hosted our annual MarsFest in which representatives from NASA, SETI, AMES and other organizations gave talks, interpretive walks, and presentations to the public.

Data Collection

Due to staff turnover, data was not collected over the past year. However, the park has contacted staff and volunteers who created Death Valley's SOP for tracking the Sky Quality Measurements. They have agreed to come back to Death Valley in November, take measurements and train new staff on the protocols.