

International Dark Sky Places

Joshua Tree Annual Report

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Park

At this point the park does not intend on requesting a tier status upgrade. Many changes within and outside the community would have to take place in order to improve our night sky viewing. We are currently working with San Bernardino County on reviewing their lighting ordinance and code enforcement office.

Last year Joshua Tree experienced the highest recorded visitation in the history of the park. Over 2.85 million visitors entered the park last year. During that time we offered two night sky viewing events. The first was our annual night sky festival and the second was evening programs for the Perseids meteor shower. During the night sky festival over 6500 visitors attended the event at multiple locations. I have attached a summary of the 2017/2018 night sky festival.

Lighting

No new infrastructure projects were implemented since Joshua Tree became an IDSP. One new project may be implemented (new entrance station at our west entrance to the park). The new station is slated for 2020. This entrance station will meet the highest standards for the preservation of our night sky.

Communities

There were no new large scale developments that were implemented within the last year. However, one large scale residential and light industrial development is in the planning process along the south end of our park. We have been working diligently with the developer in reviewing their lighting management plan. The developer is very much on board with employing IDA lighting standards and willing to implement these standards (if) when construction begins.

Joshua Tree staff is collecting night sky (quality) baseline data in the vicinity of development and will continue throughout development (if) when the project is fully approved. Currently the project has not been approved by the county of Riverside but, there is a potential that the project may receive approval in 2021.

Sky Quality

No new data has been collected during the past year. However, a new data set (at five locations) along with spot SQM data will be collected in fiscal year 2019 (December 2018).

Community Relations

The physical science branch is a member of the San Bernardino County Night Sky Alliance. Typically meeting once or every other month (in the county office) with members of the county code enforcement team. The alliance has been reviewing the county ordinance and making recommendation to the county supervisor and enforcement staff on ways to mitigate light pollution. Another main goal of the alliance is to offer practical ways for county enforcement of the lighting code already in place. Due to the loss of a key member the alliance has been meeting on a less regular basis.

Joshua Tree has recently become a part of the Basin and Range Dark Sky Cooperative. This coop cuts across multiple parks and is focused on light pollution issues at a landscape scale. One main objective and goal is to engage stakeholders across the region that have an interest in protecting and preserving our night skies for future generations.