



"Southern Skies Over Newport" by Denny Moutray

IDA

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

NEWPORT
STATE PARK
ELLISON BAY, WISCONSIN

CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Newport State Park
475 County Road NP, Ellison Bay WI 54210
920-854-2500

Manager:

Michelle Hefty

Michelle.hefty@wisconsin.gov

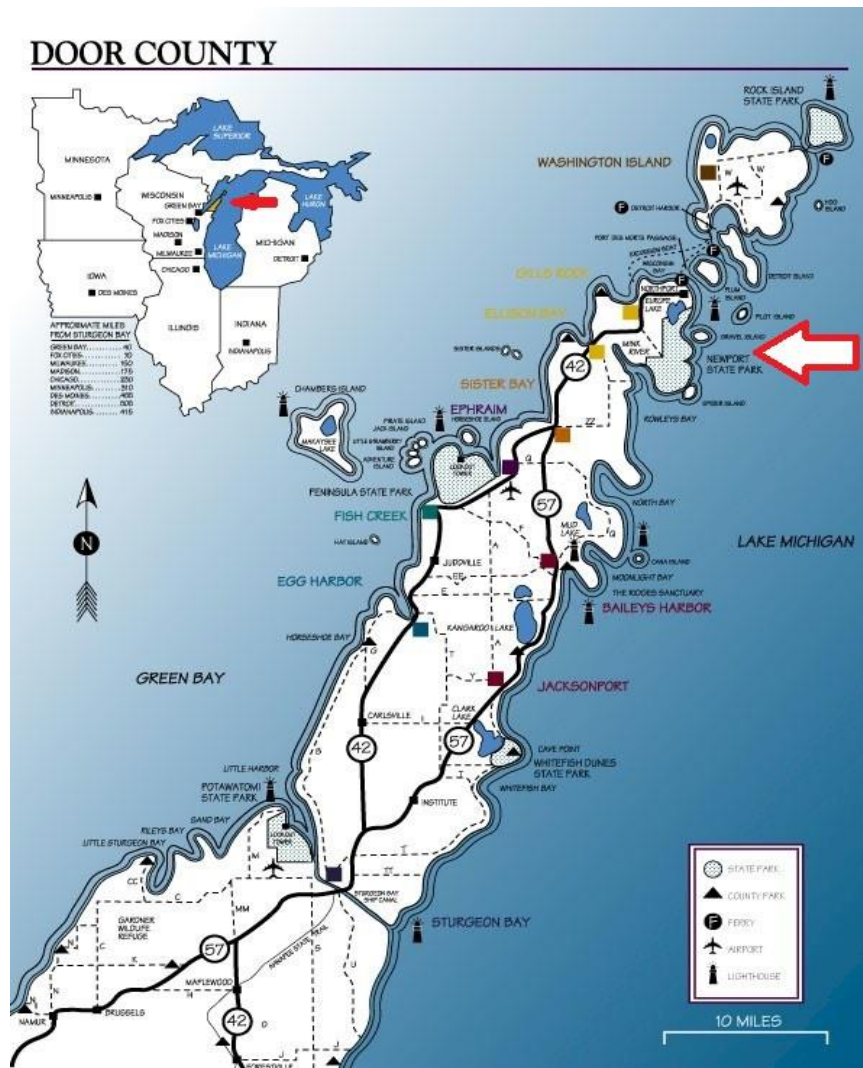
Report submitted by:

Beth Bartoli, Naturalist

Beth.bartoli@wisconsin.gov

PARK INFORMATION

Since this is our first annual report, I'd like to share some information about Newport State Park. The park is located along a rugged shoreline near the north east end of Wisconsin's Door Peninsula. Designated a Wilderness Area by the Wisconsin DNR, it offers almost 30 miles of hiking and biking trails. With areas of boreal forest, wooded uplands, meadows and miles of shoreline, there is something for everyone.



Being managed as a wilderness park makes us a quieter sort of park and an ideal place for sky viewing. We are committed to keep things as natural as possible, so an IDA designation was a good fit. Situated at the end of a peninsula which sits at an angle, much of the park juts out into Lake Michigan, giving Newport 11 miles of shoreline. All of the eastern borders are DARK! We are located at least 5 miles from 2 very small communities, Ellison Bay on the Green Bay side and Gills Rock to the north at the end of the peninsula. Newport received Silver status in April of 2017. There are no plans to apply for status upgrade at this time. In addition, Newport is 100% compliant with all lighting within the park.



With our greatly anticipated Dark Sky park recognition came much excitement and, to be honest, some growing pains. Although we had lighting, educational and community outreach aspects in place, the amount of interest was staggering. We quickly realized that visitors needed information on where to go, what to do, where to find program information, how to behave and what to expect, all in a clear, concise manner. All this had to be done in a manner that is not only consistent with IDA's standards, but also those of our governing body, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

First thing that went up was the sign at the entrance of the park, bringing more visitors, and questions. Next came new maps, a brand new International Dark Sky Park brochure, telescope pads, reflective strips to mark paths to viewing areas and new viewing equipment. And the visitors just kept coming.

As far as numbers go, we saw our visitors increase about 6% after we received our Dark Sky Park designation. An interesting statistic comes from comparing number of visitors in August of 2017 to those visiting in August of 2018. Summer in Door County brings many visitors, with August being our busiest month. Newport hosts an event on August 12th every year during the Perseid Meteor Shower. It is one of our biggest programs of the year. In 2017, we had 318 people join us for the event. In 2018, that number increased over 70% to 973.

Comparing 2017 to 2018, our total August numbers increased by 7000 visitors. With our annual attendance count coming in at around 178,000 people (2017), I believe this shows how much interest our dark sky park designation generates.

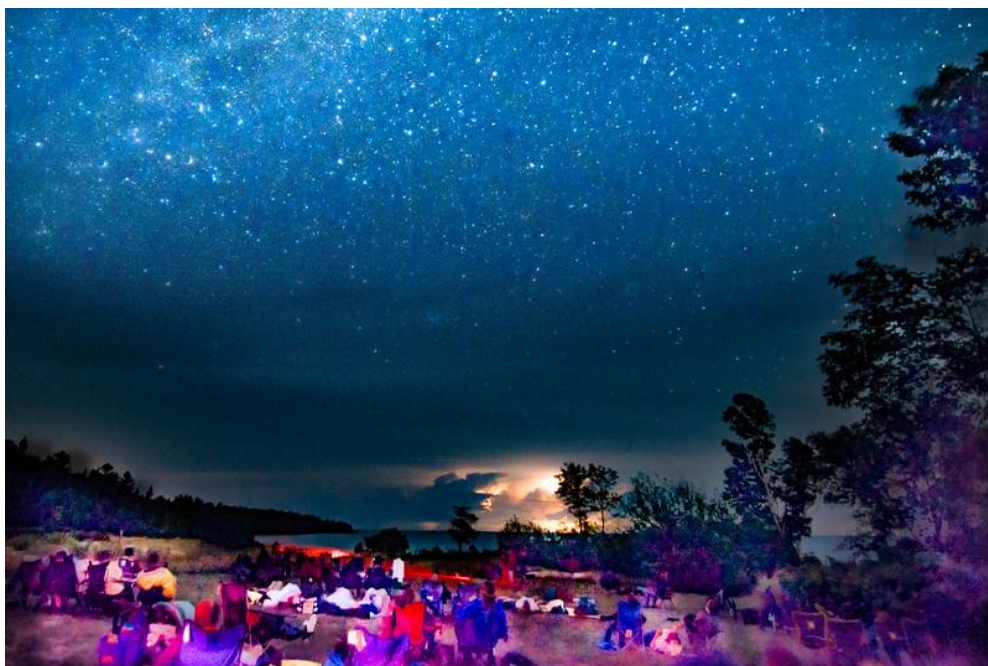


Photo by Denny Moutray

The photo above was taken at a Perseid Meteor Shower event at Newport. A storm had blown through earlier, leaving us with this beautiful view of not only the passing storm over in Michigan, but of a beautiful, starry sky.

The photo below shows star trails taken over Lake Michigan, our eastern border. There is a buoy light in the distance.



Photo by Denny Moutray

SKY QUALITY

Date	Area	GPS Coordinates	Unihedron Sky Quality Meter	Dark Sky Meter iPhone app
2/10/2016	Park Entrance	N45.2347° W86.9978°	21.56	18.66
“	Maintenance Road Intersection	N45.2349° W86.9960°	21.72	19.09
“	Parking Lot #2	N45.2339° W86.9893°	21.67	18.55
“	Parking Lot #3	N45.2380° W86.9878°	21.71	18.74
“	Sugarbush	N45.2482° W86.9988°	21.79	19.08
“	Europe Bay	N45.2594° W86.9861°	21.82	19.09
9/10/2018	As above	As above	21.54	20.89
“	“	“	21.91	21.23
“	“	“	21.62	21.01
“	“	“	21.56	21.11
“	“	“	21.58	21.08
“	“	“	22.25	22.14

FUNDING

As with many of the Wisconsin State Parks, we rely heavily on our friends groups for funding of projects and programming. Newport Wilderness Society, the parks friends group, provides funds for many things related to our dark sky park. NWS has generously supported the purchase of telescopes, binoculars, eye pieces, power supplies, brochures and signage. Newport Wilderness Society received a grant from The Wisconsin State Parks System Enhancement Project for funds to put toward a new informational kiosk that is to be placed in our main viewing area. (See drawing depiction at end of report). This new kiosk is not only interpretive, but gives much information like where to go for optimal viewing, what to look for and viewing “rules” and etiquette.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Newport State Park is nestled at the northern end of Door County, an area rich with artistic history. It is a haven for artists, musicians, photographers and writers from all walks of life. It is evident from the photos accompanying this report that there are photographers that gravitate to our dark skies. Denny Moutray has been more than generous with his photos, as he allows us to use his images in all of our ads, brochures and merchandise.

Newport is the only park that has a Poetry Trail, a 1 mile loop that features the work of local poets and/or students. The poems are changed 4 times a year. The newest addition to the Poetry Trail are a wonderful series of poems written by poets from Write-On Door County, a local writing school. Writers gathered here at Newport during the full moon to write poetry and then came back to read them during twilight of new moon. Some stayed to view and be inspired for new poetry.



Poetry Trailhead, Newport State Park.

An example of one of the poems on Poetry Trail.

At Newport Beach Beneath a Harvest Moon

by Thomas Davis

"The storyteller moon," the old man said.
We sat upon the long-grassed beach and stared
Into a sky now dark, the fiery red
of sunset flung at stars the sky had snared
Into a symphony of silver stained
Into a river of eternal light
Above the song of waves that, lapping, trained,
Like time, into the shores of moon-struck night.

"No, not a storyteller moon." He sighed.
"That comes just as the winter starts to howl.
That's when you tell the stories that are tied
Into a tree frog's peeps or black bear's growl."

Moon-struck, star struck, we heard the lullaby
Of waves absorbing us into the sky.

OUTREACH

Speaking at civic and community meetings has been an ongoing priority of the staff at Newport. We have used IDA's "Loosing the Dark" video as well as "Intro to Lighting" PowerPoint program at many events. Some of the organizations we presented to are:

- Kiwanis Club
- Lions Club
- Beach Road Homeowners Association
- Liberty Grove Town Board
- Newport Wilderness Society Board and members
- Scandia Retirement Community
- Drop in programs at the park

Our dark sky programs now account for 1/3 of all of our programming offered throughout the year.

As part of a wider community outreach, naturalist Beth Bartoli was invited to speak at the North Central Region Astronomical League's Annual meeting. This was held in Sturgeon Bay, WI on May 4-5, 2018. The theme was "Dark Skies for Bright Stars", highlighting Newport as an International Dark Sky Park. Following is the program information:

NORTH CENTRAL REGION OF THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

ANNUAL CONVENTION

Hosted by Door Peninsula Astronomical Society, MAY 4-5, 2018

"Dark Skies for Bright Stars"

Following this theme, speakers are scheduled, the venue set, and a very interesting NCRAL 2018 is expected. Registration will open January 1, 2018. Located in Door County Wisconsin, which offers dark sky and beautiful natural surroundings, Door Peninsula Astronomical Society (DPAS) will host the meeting at the Lodge at Leathem Smith in Sturgeon Bay, WI. We will be celebrating the recent designation of nearby Newport State Park as an International Dark Sky Park, the first in Wisconsin and only the 13th in the entire United States. Anyone wishing to visit the site can bring viewing equipment or visit this beautiful park the day before or after the meeting.

NCRAL 2018 Speakers

Kevin Poe is the Green Energy Project Manager at the National Park Service at Bryce Canyon, Utah. He is a second generation Park Ranger and owner of Dark Ranger Telescope Tours. Kevin calls himself the Dark Ranger to make environmental advocacy cool and heroic, and describes himself as a Planet Hugger. Teaching awareness of light pollution and understanding of the universe to people of all ages through lectures and stories is his goal.

Kate Meredith is the Education Director at the University of Chicago Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay, WI. She is currently working on a program for students with low vision and blindness to develop image processing software. The three year project, Innovators Developing Accessible Tools for Astronomy (IDATA) is funded by the National Science Foundation. She will explore what else we can do with invisible data that will allow everyone access to the same quality and quantity of information.

Audrey Fischer works through her organization, One Star at a Time to create star parks in Chicago and around the world. Star parks are designated areas where the lights are off or directed downward. As a Chicago native, she knows that it isn't a perfect place for stargazing, but she is working to return stars back into all cities. Audrey stated during an interview for the Chicago Tribune "Starlight belongs to each and every person in the world. A starry night gives people a reason to look up and to realize that others from around the globe share the same sky. Starlight is the path to closer understanding of our universe, each other and ourselves – and maybe it's even a path toward peace".

Beth Bartoli is the Naturalist at Newport State Park in Door County, our recently designated Dark Sky Site. The designation was awarded after years of work by her, the staff of the park and our Door Peninsula Astronomical Society. She helps conduct astronomy programs at the park and states "We never tire of seeing that 'aha' moment on the upturned faces of our visitors as they gaze toward the heavens". The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Newport State Park are committed to protect our dark sky through lighting projects, community education and outreach.

Tyler Linder is a professional astronomer supported by NASA's Near Earth Object Observations (NEOO) research grants to track and study the Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA) population. His presentation will focus on the information that can be obtained by asteroid characterization, both through light curve analysis as well as visible and near-infrared spectroscopy. The collaboration between amateur and professional astronomers uses middle and high school students as well as undergraduate students.

OUTREACH (CONT.)

Newport also collaborated with Door Peninsula Astronomical Society, participating in a 5 day viewing event. This event showcased our dark sky park, inviting members of the community and reaching out to the many visitors that enjoy Door County in August.

* AUGUST 10 - 14, 2018 @ NEWPORT STATE PARK

5 NIGHTS under DARK SKIES

Explore the Night Sky at an Official International
Dark Sky Park with members of the Door
Peninsula Astronomical Society.

Amateur astronomers and the public alike are invited to join members of the Door Peninsula Astronomical Society (DPAS) and naturalist Beth Bartoli to spend some prime time under the darkest skies in Wisconsin. A staffed, designated viewing area at **Newport State Park** will provide guidance on navigating the northern celestial sphere and views of planets and nebulae through a variety of telescopes. [If overcast evening skies, I/E presentations and/or astronomy videos will be given.]

* * *

What to bring: jacket, camera or smartphone, small telescope or binoculars and Curiosity & Wonder!

* * *

Primitive, backpack camping ONLY at Newport. Camping ONLY at designated campsites. Reservations accepted through ReserveAmerica.com.

In June 2017, Newport State Park was designated an **International Dark Sky Park** by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). Newport enjoys not only low light pollution, but good atmospheric seeing due to the stabilizing effect of Lake Michigan and the surrounding forest.



NEWPORT STATE PARK, 475 COUNTY HWY. NP
ELLISON BAY, WI 54210

CONCLUSION

We look forward to seeing what the future brings to our Dark Sky Park up here at the top of the thumb of Wisconsin. We are encouraged by the interest of people searching for a truly dark sky to gaze at the heavens and ponder the vast universe we are all a part of. We live each day, knowing full well that not even the sky is the limit.

NEW DARK SKY KIOSK RENDITION

