

General

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

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Parks/Reserves:

- *Estimate number of site visitors in the last year. Of those, how many participated in dark-skies programming?*

2018 was once again a very good year for the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve. Over 1,000 visitors participated in Dark Sky related activities and events over the year within the reserve including the Messier Marathon, Star Gazing Training Workshops on Valentia Island, 2018 Skellig Star Party, Space Week 2018 events and Residential Star Gazing Weekends with lectures and observing hosted by the Royal Hotel, Valentia.

Lighting

Parks/Reserves:

- *Were any new lighting projects completed this year? If so, describe.*
- **Kerry County Council continued its ambitious program of retro-fitting its SON public lights with LED Dark Sky Compliant lights to create even darker skies in the reserve. By the end of 2017 the villages of Ballinskelligs, Caherdaniel, Dungeagan, The Glen and Castlecove had been completed. During 2018, 44 no. lights in Portmagee were retrofitted and funding was secured to retro-fit a further 120 no. public lights in the town of Waterville. This work will be completed before year end. The total public investment is in the order €250,000 at this stage.**

Communities:

- *Were any changes made to local/municipal outdoor lighting policy in the past year? If so, describe and include text of any code language added or changed.*
- **The Council is currently preparing a Local Area Plan for West Iveragh, the region that includes the KIDSR. This plan will have a number of proposals that will impact positively on the Reserve including the stipulation that all future external lighting must be dark sky compliant.**

Sky Quality

- *Were sky quality data taken in the past year? If possible, include a table or figure showing the information.*

No new measurements were taken in 2018 but this is planned when work on the retro-fitting of Waterville is completed at the end of November. The reduction in light pollution should be considerable following the progressive installation of dark sky compliant lighting throughout the reserve and the findings will included in our next IDA Report.

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

A Dark Sky Monitor has been purchased by Kerry County Council and is being installed in Coláiste na Sceilge, Cahersiveen, by University College Cork.

Conservation and Research (Parks/Reserves)

- *Any ongoing conservation and/or research programs at the site?*

KIDSR is participating in the national dark skies strategy review being prepared by CHL Consultants, Dublin for Fáilte Ireland that will set out a national vision for the development of dark sky parks and reserves and maximise the benefits for astrotourism.

KIDSR is one of the participants in the CIT/Blackrock Observatory led EcoSTARS project. This comprises an EU inter-region group of Atlantic based Dark Sky Reserves. An application for funding has been applied for which includes trans-national research initiatives. It is a competitive bid process and news is due shortly.

Funding

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

The main source of KIDSR funding comes from Kerry County Council in the form of capital funding for the retro-fitting of public lighting and grant support for the training of local star gazing guides. Events like the Messier Marathon, Skellig Star Party and Space Week are self-funded by the participants. The development of the Solar Trail in Caherdaniel in 2018 was jointly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Affairs under the ORIS scheme and Kerry County Council. Private funding contributed to the visit of Bro. Guy Consolmagno. Funding support is provided by Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Tourism Authority, towards media and press visits. Support 'in kind' is provided by University College Cork, Keery Education and Training Board and CIT/Blackrock Observatory Cork.

- *Were any new grants won this year?*

Grants were secured from SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) and CLÁR, rural small works infrastructure scheme, for the retrofitting public lighting in Portmagee and Waterville. Kerry County Council is contributing approximately 40% of the total cost.

Funding was secured under FLAG programme and the Irish Fisheries Board (BIM), which is matched by Kerry County Council and Failte Ireland, for a study on the development of a Mobile Observatory, as a shared resourced between the Dark Sky communities in the Reserve. This is a major project, dependent on Government funding, that would be of considerable benefit and game changer for the reserve.

Are there plans to apply for any future grants?

KIDRS team is constantly pursuing local, national and EU funded schemes. It is participating in the national dark skies strategy review being prepared by CHL Consultants for Fáilte Ireland which it is hoped will unlock funding for dark sky festivals and events in Kerry and Mayo.

Arts and Culture

- *Is any programming ongoing or planned blending the arts/culture with dark skies?*

Yes. The Skellig CRI / University College Cork accredited Star Gazing course, includes a module in archaeology and, in particular, focussed on historic sites, like stone alignments, that appear to be aligned on solar and lunar events, of which there are several in the Reserve. A national conference on archaeo-astronomy was held in Dublin in September 2018 where KIDSR was represented.

The Caherdaniel Dark Skies Committee secured Government and Kerry County Council funding in 2017 for a Solar Trail - *Walk of the Planets* -that placed sculptural objects, representing the planets in the Solar System, at scaled distances, along a 3.5km section of the spectacular Kerry Way walking trail. This work was completed in the summer of 2018.

Outreach

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

Skellig CRI – the Kerry County Council and UCC supported Research and Innovation Centre in Cahersiveen supported a number of outreach programs involving Coláiste na Sceilge Secondary (High) School involving visits by a team from Blackrock Observatory, Cork and a poster competition organised through local national schools to raise awareness about astronomy and the Dark Sky Reserve.

Community and Media Relations

- *Any new media coverage you would like us to know about? May include e.g., PDFs as attachments,*

There has been several local and national features on the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve including a television programme on TG4 (Irish Language Channel) series Beidh mé ar ais. (*I Will be Back!*) on the importance of the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve to tourism in the area.

KIDSR Reserve was part of the Kerry Tourism Promotion with Tourism Ireland to Berlin in November 2017. Dr. Chris Kyba, former Vice President of IDA, was among the attendees at the presentation in the Irish Embassy. KIDSR was also featured at the CTM Consumer Travel Fair in Stuttgart, Germany in January, in New York and ITB Berlin in March.

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

A new Dark Skies Committee, representing all local communities, has being formed as part of the Skellig Coast Tourism Network and is chaired by Steve Lynott. The Skellig Coast Visitor Development Plan (2017) and Kerry County Tourism Strategy, 2016-2022, contain specific objectives on the conservation and enhancement of the night skies over South Kerry and the promotion of astro-tourism in the region. The prominent featuring of Skellig Michael, the iconic world heritage site adjoining the Reserve, in the new Star Wars trilogy of movies is drawing considerable international attention to the KIDSR and helping to support the residential star gazing weekends.