



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Grand Canyon National Park Receives Provisional International Dark Sky Park Status

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – The National Park Service (NPS) and the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) announced at tonight’s Star Party that Grand Canyon National Park is now a Provisional IDA International Dark Sky Park.

“Tonight’s announcement of Provisional IDA International Dark Sky Park status for Grand Canyon National Park is an important step in ensuring the Colorado Plateau remains a protective harbor for some of the best night skies in the country,” said *IDA person*.

IDA established the International Dark Sky Places conservation program in 2001 to encourage communities around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education. Grand Canyon joins a handful of other national park sites certified by the IDA, most recently the neighboring Flagstaff Area National Monuments.

Grand Canyon’s application is one of the most complicated the IDA has seen, and includes thousands of lights and fixtures on both rims and in the inner canyon. Having “provisional” status gives Grand Canyon three years from the date of today’s announcement to retrofit two-thirds of the park’s lights to comply with stringent lighting guidelines. At the time the park submitted its application, about 43% of Grand Canyon’s lights already met IDA criteria. Grand Canyon plans to complete the necessary lighting improvements to receive full IDA Dark Sky Park certification in 2019- the 100th anniversary of the national park.

“With provisional status during the NPS Centennial year and full certification for the 100th anniversary of Grand Canyon National Park in 2019, the timing could not be any better for this announcement,” said Jane Rodgers Deputy Chief of Science and Resource Management. Rodgers, who submitted the application, also added, “Grand Canyon offers a spectacular night sky that visitors come from all over the world to experience. That experience would not be the same without the help of our staff, community, the NPS Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate, the generous support from Grand Canyon Association, and of course the IDA.” Grand Canyon Association (GCA), the park’s official not-for-profit sponsor, helps fund and sponsor events such as the ongoing Star Party, as well as park stewardship activities including the Night Sky Initiative.

[Insert Susan Schroeder quote, GCA]

The Star Party will continue every night this week until June 11 on both the South and North rims. On the South Rim, stop by the Grand Canyon Visitor Center for slide shows, Constellation Tours, and free telescope viewing any time after dark. On the North Rim, astronomers will set up telescopes on the veranda of the Grand Canyon Lodge and offer slide shows in the lodge auditorium.

In addition to Star Party, rangers offer night sky walks and talks throughout the year. Those programs provide visitors an opportunity to learn about Grand Canyon's night skies and the continued efforts of the NPS, IDA, and GCA.

For more information about the IDA, visit www.darksky.org. For more information about night skies in national parks, visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/night/>. To learn how you can help, visit www.grandcanyon.org.

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