



Groningen, October 7th 2016

Lauwerslake National Park now officially Dark Sky Park

Lauwerslake National Park is by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) officially declared Dark Sky Park. A Dark Sky Park is an area where it is dark, where the darkness is preserved and where visitors are welcome to that darkness at night to experience and to see the stars. The designation for the Lauwerslake is special because The Netherlands is one of the countries with most light pollution in the world.

Stargazing

The province of Groningen and the Forestry Commission (Staatsbosbeheer) have together submitted the request. Deputy Henk Staghouwer: "We are pleased that we got the predicate. In addition to the quietness, space and special nature is the darkness also an important value of the Lauwerslake area." The designation helps to nurture and protect the darkness. This is necessary because many animals depend on the night and need darkness to live. The experience of silence and darkness in nature is special for many people. People also enjoy a clear starry sky. Staghouwer: "It is still little known, but on some days even the northern lights can be seen in the Lauwerslake area."

Light pollution

Real darkness is becoming rarer, because everywhere in the Western world the night lighting increases. Man and nature are somewhat damaged by it. Because of artificial outdoor lighting, the evening and night become shorter. People seem to need darkness for a good night's sleep. Artificial night light can, in many ways, influence the life cycle and behavior of animals. For example, by too little darkness bats search for food reduces.

Darkest places on Earth

With the Lauwerslake National Park, the IDA has now 41 national parks and reserves around the world referred to as Dark-Sky location. About half of them are located in the United States of America. The Lauwerslake area is the second Dark Sky Park in The Netherlands. In 2015 the Boschplaat at Terschelling got the predicate as the first one of our country.

Experience the Dark Sky in the Lauwerslake

The Forestry Commission (Staatsbosbeheer) organizes Friday October 14th a 'I'm not afraid of the dark-walk' in the Lauwerslake National Park, for adults and for children who are allowed to stay up late. The Forestry Commission Ranger guides the exciting walk through the dark forest. The hike starts at 8 p.m. from the activity centre, Rug 1 in Lauwersoog and lasts until 10 p.m. Costs: 5 euro per person. Signing up is desired, please mail to sbblauwersmeer@staatsbosbeheer.nl

Lauwerlake Steering Group

The Dark Sky Park is one of the projects of the implementation programme Lauwerslake 2014-2018 of the Lauwerslake Steering Group, in which the provinces of Groningen and Friesland and the municipalities The Marne, Kollumerland and Dongeradeel work together.

