

Oracle Dark Skies Committee
Minutes May/8/2014, 6:30 pm.
Kannally House, Oracle State Park

Attending: Mike Weasner (Chair), Evaline Auerbach (Recorder), Bill John, Jean John, Anna Lands, Wendy Ostrander, Charlotte Poole, Chip Parfet, and Jennifer Rinio (OSP Ranger)

Introductions of new members: Anna Landis, Cascabelle, Lower San Pedro River; Wendy Ostram, Oracle, volunteer at OSP; Charlotte Poole, Oracle, interested in light reduction within the Oracle.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the April 24 meeting, taken by Mary Helen Vasquez, were reviewed by members online and were approved. Chair Weasner signed them and will bring them to be signed by Vasquez at a future meeting.

General Agenda Topics:

- Outreach: Weasner reported presenting information at the April 27 “Music in the Park” program at OSP and at the Riverfest at Winkelman on May 3. At both, he found a high level of interest in the ODS project. At the Riverfest, Supervisor Pete Rios had said he was supportive of the project.
- Possible future outreach could be programs at Oracle Historical Society (in conjunction with “History of Interest in Astronomy” issues in the community); OWN: Oracle Women’s Network, an organization of primarily businesswomen in Oracle.
- Local compliance with the Pinal County Outdoor Lighting Code. Poole mentioned the lights at the site that was formerly “Liberty Park.” Weasner said that the fixtures were probably in compliance, but if they were left on all night, that would be out of compliance. The question of what to do about this was taken up, with recommendations to contact Jim Walsh and Pete Rios’ office (Lillian Martinez), the latter to find out to whom possible violations were to be reported.
- A discussion of “streetlights” in Oracle, led to Weasner volunteering to make an informal assessment of such lights.”
- Weasner brought up that people would probably be contacting the ODSC to report neighboring lights that “shine in my bedroom,” etc. He said that such a potential violation cannot be successfully reported to the Sheriff’s office currently as, unlike the noise code, the lighting code does not have a clause making it enforceable. Later it was suggested that the Supervisors be asked if an enforcement clause could be added to the code.
- Jennifer Rinio reported on attempts to put together a Star Party at the park on a Saturday Night. The date of May 24 would be ideal for sky conditions, as the moon does not rise until late that night. However, that is Memorial Day weekend, so people might be out of town. On the other hand, people might have company who they could bring to the program. Another problem was the availability of a person to present the telescope event and of a music group. It was suggested that amateur astronomers might be willing to bring their telescopes and give some information to those who want to look through them at certain objects. Rinio agreed to work on the details of such a party on that date.
- Weasner opened a package and presented the ODSC banner to be used at outreach meetings. A discussion followed about ways to attach the banner at various sites.

OSP IDSP Nomination Package discussion: The first draft of the nomination package having been sent to all the then-current committee members and others, the discussion concerned comments. (Chip Parfet had the document on his electronic notebook so it can be presented at the meetings that way. Weasner chose to use his hard copy.)

- Weasner presented comments resulting from an email from and a meeting with Auerbach:
 - What should be the nature of an “executive summary” to be sent out with the proposal to those from whom a letter of support is requested? Should the document be a part of the proposal or separate from it? It was agreed that a one-page summary should be included with the letter sent to potential reviewers, but would not appear in the final, published proposal.
 - Discussion of including a checklist for the items that are needed for the proposal package: Again, should the checklist be included in the final proposal. Weasner will add one in future drafts of the Nomination Package.
 - Considerable editing to put into more technical English had been made by Auerbach. Since the edited wording originated with OSP itself, the question was whether such changes could be made by the committee. Part of the problem is that the original wording is in a copyrighted document. Rinio said she would check with the material author.
- A discussion of copyright followed: the final document will be published online by the IDA (International Dark-Sky Association) so that everything in the document needs to be cleared for reprint before submission. Whether copyrighted material can be edited should be settled at that time.
- Committee Attendees comments followed
 - The whole name of OSP is “Oracle State Park Center for Environmental Education” so that should be on the cover page.
 - Will the proposal include a list of those to whom requests for letters of support have been sent? Weasner said the prospective list would be deleted before sending the document to writers of Letters of Support. Weasner reported that he had begun to receive suggestions and that he thought about 20 letters would be sufficient. He mentioned that one group’s proposal had 200 pages (half its total) listing supporters. This was considered excessive, but was included by IDA in a separate volume, as an appendix.

Weasner presented comments from John Barentine of IDA, to whom the final proposal will be delivered.

- His general comments were that the preliminary proposal was “well on the way” and “has all the hallmarks of a successful application.”
-
- To be included would be two other sections: Light pollution control and Community Projects. Under these, the committee *in situ* discussed the Ford Motor Company and Circle-K as possible places to be approached for assessment and voluntary compliance.
 - Proposed local newspaper articles could include appeals to community members and businesses to report their own compliance or progress toward compliance.
 - Promotions of dark-sky appliances, approved by the IDA which are on sale at the Lowes home-improvement store could be made.
-
- The comments said that OSP seemed to be a “Solid Silver” in its current measurements for dark sky, but that part of the park could occasionally show “gold” readings. With different (less dusty) atmospheric conditions, more of the readings might be in the gold area. A suggestion

was made to ask people to keep the area darker, so the Park can “go for the gold.” The committee will continue to monitor.

- The issue of access by the community after dark needs to be cleared up. As it stands, the Main part of the Park can be accessed only for a special event sanctioned by the Park and those attending would need to pay entrance fees - or have an annual pass. In question, though, is whether the “remote access” parking lot area would be available by reservation, but without charge except for possible “overnight parking”. This area is quite suitable for viewing in all directions at night and could be used by groups who just want to go there and set up their own event at night. The daytime is not a problem as the “official” hours of the Park, during which a ranger would be on duty, are “Sunrise to Sunset”. Rinio Agreed to sort out the policy for using the remote-access parking lot for reserved, private nighttime events.
- The Barentine comments said that the diagram with the location of OSP in relation to light and dark areas was about 20 years out of date but the most current available. That and others will be replaced when updated. Clearer arrows and “targets” will show where the OSP is geographically on some of the maps.
- The section on daytime activities at OSP needs to be moved closer to the beginning or the proposal.
- The IDA “International Dark Sky Park” program guide will be left in for the reviewers for sponsorship and taken out for the IDA.
- A new Media section needs to be included for newspaper articles and so forth.

Next Meeting: Thursday, 15 May 2014, 6:30 PM, at the Kannally Ranch House

Adjourned: about 8:00 pm MST

Attachments: Attendance List 5/8/14/ ODSC banner/ Barentine Minutes

Signed,

/signed/

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

/signed/

Mike Weasner, Chair