

Oracle Dark Skies Committee

Minutes July 2, 2015

Saddlebrooke Ranch - LaHacienda

Attendees: Mike Weasner, Evaline Auerbach, Kay Lanton, Wendy Ostrander, Don Brodear, Nancy Broader, Charlotte Poole, Priscilla Wolf, Jennifer Rinio.

Called to order 6:30 pm by Weasner, Chair, in the Mesa Room.

Updates, announcements -

Scott Kardel of IDA has gone to a new job in California.

Weasner has some good contacts for the proposed Pinal County Dark Skies Coalition he is forming.

Poole brought in some expenses forms such as those used by Friends of Oracle State Park. The committee will review these for next time to see how they might be adapted to the Oracle Dark Skies Committee.

Weasner asked if it was possible to put out a donation jar for ODSC at connected events. Rinio will check on that to be sure it wouldn't interfere with FOSP collections.

Weasner said that he had made inquiries to local electrical utilities regarding incentive programs for using less electricity (turning off lights) but had received no responses.

Public Outreach

- **Past** Weasner and Auerbach attended an information meeting 23 June 2015 about the proposed new Pinal County Peralta Regional Park near Apache Junction. About 100 people attended –an unexpected turnout. One of the attributes of the park is “dark skies access”. Weasner made some contacts for future dark skies cooperation. The park approval is still five years off, requiring a BLM (Bureau of Land Management)t environmental impact study, among other processes.
- **Future** Weasner is forming a Pinal County Dark Skies coalition from various communities. Keith Krueger is the IDA Chapter Lead for the County. Weasner will work with the Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition as well on this.

Events

Past

- John Barentine of IDA recently came to Oracle State Park in June to test some new equipment that can be used for sky quality measurements. The equipment will digitally trace light domes and the Milky Way.
- Arizona Game and Fish wants to monitor sounds and would like to cooperate with the Park to get volunteers to monitor these all night.
- The June 6 storytelling event was “super” - a night talk with telescopes out for viewing.
- The 27 June moon hike was rained out.

Future

- On July 25 at OSP, Joel Diamond will present another “bat night” event. He had a program there last October and wanted to come back. People will need to make a reservation as it is

limited to 50 people. At 7:30 - 8:00 he will present a slide show. He wants to put up a net at the water site a half-mile away to demonstrate the netting of bats, which are then studied and released. He has done this and could do it again at neighbor Susan Woodruff's Cherry Valley Ranch. AG&F is doing education about bats.

- A date will be set in September, the third week-end, for a star party with live music.
- On October 10, Stan Bembenek will have a photography workshop from 10 am - noon.
- On October 17, Mike Weasner will have an astrophotography workshop from 4-6:30. Both these events are at the OSP and reservations will be required. People will be bringing their own cameras.
- Evaline Auerbach will arrange a showing of Adam Black's astrophotography during the month of October. She will meet with Jennifer Rinio to plan the show after August 1.

Old Business

- Friends of Oracle State Park is still discussing a kiosk or other presentation for the Park information, FOSP information, and dark skies information at the Park. Rinio says that within the next year, something will be installed outside the Kannally house to present that information.
- Weasner is working on a brochure for ODSC using the information on the posters. It was also suggested that Weasner needed to have business cards to hand out.

New Business

- It was suggested that ODSC buy a brick for the courtyard where others have done so. Need money in the kitty first though.
- Selling items in the OSP gift store was also discussed. Evaline Auerbach is an official vendor, so if allowed, she can handle it through her business.

There followed a discussion of dark skies compliance and economic advantages of being in a dark skies area:

- Saddlebrooke Ranch is dark skies compliant but some residents are not.
- Decorative lighting can be acceptable if it is low wattage.
- House prices in Phoenix have been found to be lower because it is so bright.
- Ads for houses in Oracle have started being listed with an advantage of "Dark Skies".

Next meeting

The next meeting will be at at 6:30 pm on August 6, 6:30 pm, at Saddlebrooke Ranch.

Signed,

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair