

Oracle Dark Skies Committee

Minutes October 1, 2015

Saddlebrooke Ranch - LaHacienda

Attendees: Mike Weasner, mweasner@mac.com; Evaline Auerbach, evalineja@icloud.com; Stan Bembenek, 520-896-2464, ahab@iinet.com; Jim Hinton, 520-825-4724, jimbevhin1@msn.com; Bob Pritchard, 509-991-4598, pritchard5eaol.com; Zenia Fera, 773-474-6821, xenya3923@hotmail.com; Waldo Vasquez & Maryhelen Vasquez, 520-896-9509, mhv17@hive.com; Dale Readies 520-896-2425, dredies@azstateparks.gov; Chip Parfet, 303-257-9475, cparfet@gmail.com;

The meeting was called to order at 6:41 pm by Weasner, Chair, in the Mesa Room.

Updates, announcements

- Information about the question of having a Dark Skies Reserve with State Land in it: it can't happen. The boundaries of the reserve would have to exclude state land in a Reserve (see last month's minutes regarding a San Pedro Reserve).
- **Financial**
 - Business cards: \$28.
 - At American Flag Event - table. Took in \$40.00 donations, which paid for the "no light pollution" pins.
 - Weasner had not yet reimbursed himself for the pins. Parfet moved and Auerbach seconded that Weasner accept the donation money to pay off the pins.
 - Weasner has still not been reimbursed for the business cards or the donation jar.
 - The group should get \$50.00 for the Oct. 10 Star Party Event through the volunteer sign-in.
- **Brochure:** Readies has some edits to send to Weasner.
- T-Shirts: In abeyance because of lack of money.
- GLOW 17th and 24th. No ODSC participation this year.

Public Outreach

- ODSC had a table at the Oracle Historical Society's American Flag Opening. See Financial, above.
- At the "Dessert in the Desert", the winner of a visit to Weasner's observatory was President of Friends of Oracle State Park, Jim Walsh. As to the ODSC auctioning off such a visit, Jim Walsh, attorney, thinks that ODSC can't hold a raffle because it is not 501c3.
- Circle K lights: As of 1 May 2015, the manager thought the lights would be upgraded to meet current Pinal County Code, but that didn't happen. The new manager checked and said there was a work order. Now the work order has disappeared. At the suggestion of the store manager in August 2015, Weasner contacted Circle K Regional Office two times, with no responses. Weasner then contacted the Circle K Corporate office twice; no responses. Weasner discovered that there was a new parent company for Circle K (located in Canada). He contacted them twice; finally receiving a response on 29 September: "Thank you very much for your email. Management is looking into the concern and will get back to you soon." They are grandfathered in to the old county code, but would be in violation of the new lighting code. In the Oracle State Park 2015 Annual Report to the IDA the difficulties are discussed and that further contacts will be pursued.
- In order to form a Pinal County Dark Skies Coalition, people who might be interested are being invited to come to OSP on October 10 for a meeting prior to the Star Party, in the Ranch living room about 3:00. People coming to the park for the meeting have no gate fee.
- Weasner announced that Anna Lands reports that SunZia is having hearings on putting their electrical line through the area being considered for Dark Sky Reserve. See www.cascabelworkinggroup.org and click on SunZia.

- Yesterday - September 30, Weasner got a phone call from the new Deputy Director of Arizona State Parks to discuss the SunZia issue. Sue Black, Director, had said that it was not a good idea to have these electrical lines so close to OSP.
- Weasner submitted the Oracle State Park 2015 Annual Report, which had previously been submitted to the ODSC and Arizona State Parks, to the IDA: IDA required 4 events; OSP had eight. The report is now available on the IDA website: www.darksky.org/Oracle

Future Events

- Oct. 10 OSP events sponsored by ODSC:
 - @10 am-noon: Bembenek will teach photography of wildlife and landscapes. Free with park entrance. Each limited to 12 and the participant must furnish the camera.
 - @ 4-6 Live Music as part of the Star Party. There will be an IDA table & an ODSC table.
 - @ 6:30-10 pm. The telescopes will be set up for viewing, if conditions permit. Saddlebrooke and TAAA are bringing their own telescopes. Rinio needs have firm information about the "observing field" and the unloading of telescopes and related parking.
 - Volunteers: Auerbach and Parfet at the table 4 - 6; MH Vasquez will help with greeting visitors. Volunteers need sign in and sign out.
 - After Star Party, Weasner will stay to help with a new equipment from IDA to measure sky darkness level.
- Oct. 17 @4 - 6:30 pm, OSP: Weasner will teach "Beginner Digital Astrophotography". Students need to bring own camera. Limit 12. Free with park entrance.
- Nov. 14 - 15. Annual membership meeting of IDA. See IDA website.
- Adam Block events: Rinio and Auerbach are organizing this. Block's astrophotography will be shown at the Kannally house November to December. Block will be present for a program on one of the weekends of the show.
- March 3, 2016 - An appropriate time for a Star Party.
- 4 to 10 April. 2016: International Dark Sky Week. Have invited IDA to do something at OSP. Possible workshop/ talk.

Next meeting: The next meeting, scheduled for the first Thursday of each month, is November 5, 2015 at the same place. Because of problems having the gate open, committee members were given a Special Code to put in for gate entrance: 3333. This is not to be used for anyone else or for any other time than to get to these meetings.

Adjournment: Fera moved and Bembenek seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

After the meeting had adjourned, Adam Block, brought in the artwork that will be displayed for his show Nov. - Dec. The Committee members viewed the photos and liked them. Block left a list of the pictures with Auerbach who will submit them by email to him and to Jennifer Rinio who will be in charge of displaying them for the show. Block will submit information for the cards to display with each picture.

Signed,

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair