

**Oracle Dark Skies Committee
Minutes October 6, 2016
Kannally Ranch House, Oracle State Park**

Attendees: Mike Weasner 520-289-3402, mweasner@mac.com; Evaline Auerbach 520-610-8742, evalineja@icloud.com; Chip Parfet 303-257-9475, cparfet@gmail.com; Jennifer Rinio 520-896-2425, jrinio@azstateparks.gov; Richard Spitzer 520-825-3116, rspitzer@wbhsi.net; Julius Gutierrez 520-664-7615, jeguta@gmail.com; Vince Tramazzo 520-919-1183, vincetra@centurylink.net; Roddy Wilder 520-500-6077, roddywilder@gmail.com; Mary Helen and Waldo Vasquez, 520-955-2914, mhv17@live.com.

The meeting was called to order at 6:46 pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written and sent to the members.

Treasurer's report: The committee doesn't have a treasurer currently, so Weasner is doing the report. See report attached. Balance = \$86.18: Paypal \$20.85 + Cash \$65.33. Donations at September 10 Star Party were \$27.00.

Report from Weasner:

- **September 10: Steward Observatory Centennial Event & Star party.** Dr. Tom Fleming of Steward Observatory presented "History of the Steward Observatory" followed by sky viewing - Tucson Amateur Astronomers Association providing telescopes. There was good attendance: 55 people at the talk.
- **September 16:** Weasner and Anna Lands went to a workshop in Phoenix held by Robert Hobbins of Celestial Adventures as a part of a research project. His goal was to collect information about how to present dark skies information to various people. Attending were representatives from government resource planning, parks, educators, and other people who ranged from having lots of interest and knowledge about the topic to having very little knowledge. He presented questions to the participants before he gave presentations and after he presented. He was trying to see if there was a way to present things differently. He used the same topics that the IDA presents on the reasons to retain dark skies: the astronomy business, human health, wildlife, energy, etc. He wants to come up with scenarios that could present these somewhat complex concepts to people. He had attendees divide into groups and come up with a concept to be presented to a larger group and then lay out the presentation like a script. Weasner's group's concept was to pretend that in the near future Phoenix had an invasion of scorpions because of so many lights. In their scenario, Flagstaff people came down to help show them what to do.
- **September 25:** OSP held a Star Party with music by Heather Hardy. The star viewing was short; most people left by an hour after the music stopped, but those who stayed were really enthusiastic.
- **Annual update to be submitted to IDA:** Members of this committee had received a draft of the OSP IDSP Annual Report update for IDA. Several people presented suggestions/corrections. Those were incorporated and another one sent back out. The report was submitted to IDA on 29 September 2016.

- **Meetings will be held on a rotating basis at three locations in 2017:** Saddlebrooke Ranch, Oracle State Park, and Saddlebrooke on the first Thursday of each month, 6:30pm, per the following schedule:
 - Saddlebrooke Ranch: Jan, Apr, July, Oct
 - Oracle State Park: Feb, May, Aug, and Nov
 - Saddlebrooke, Cactus Room: March, June, Sep, and Dec
- Rinio said that she has had email from a thesis student doing research associated with dark skies and wanting input from the park. Weasner told about the woman who had come to IDA and to the park this past summer and interviewed ODSC members and others.
- Weasner told the new members about how the four telescopes owned by the Park had been donated by various companies in honor of the first designated Arizona State Park.
- The possibility of doing more telescope training was briefly discussed but no decision was made on when the training would occur.

Upcoming Events this year

- **Sat. Oct. 15 - Hike with Music and Super Moon.** There will be instrumental music along the trail at designated spots, which will end at 5:45, and then people will go back to the patio for the views: the Super Moon, along with other dark sky views. Weasner received an email from Chris Mobley of Saddlebrooke volunteering to come up with one of his telescopes. ODSC needs someone to work at the table.
- **Wed. Oct. 26 - Star Party at El Rancho Robles,** local. ODSC will get a \$100.00 donation for doing it. Someone is needed to be at the table for that. There is also an invitation from Zach at El Ranch Robles asking for a star party this **Sat, Oct. 8.** Since rain is predicted, this may be a short one or even cancelled.
- **November:** An art show by Adam Block of Mt. Lemmon Sky Center, astrophotography, had been proposed but has not worked out. Two options are still open for early December or January. It will be left up to Block to decide what he wants to do.
- **December 18.** Celestial Concert by the Oracle Piano Society. The concert is at 3:00; a program about the "Bethlehem Star" at 5:00. Dark Sky viewing will follow. Tickets can be had at <http://www.oraclepianosociety.org/schedule-of-events>.
- **Rinio announced that the Park is now saying that they do accommodate Star Gazers on weekdays** - "just call and ask". A group from Sacramento, CA, wants to come. The Remote Area parking lot is open all night for access to the Arizona Trail and to dark skies viewing. According to state park rules, after 10:00, it's \$12.00 for the night. It's on the honor system, so if people put in \$3.00, or whatever amount, that's what comes in. In the park, the Group Use area is nice and dark, but has more trees. Sky Quality Measurements have been taken at all three of the locations: the Remote is darkest, the Group Use next and the Patio area third. Rinio reported just a while back she had one 21.79 reading, which is very dark (IDSP "Gold" tier).
- **March 18, 2017: A star party is planned for the second anniversary of the designation of the park as an International Dark Sky Park.**

Parfet wanted it entered into the minutes that Auerbach does a lot of work on this committee.

Weasner asked for suggestions for enlisting **local talent to work with the schools** for education about dark skies. Possibilities:

- Casey Eagan - teacher and Friend of Oracle State Park. He may be good for program development and for working with schools under STEM. He has given talks on scorpions at OSP.
- Julia Formo - Teacher at Mt. Vista School has science students interested in getting to come out for programs. Spitzer and Weasner have been judges at the Mt Vista Science Fair for the past few years. Mike suggested that if they could do an astronomy or light pollution related project, the winner could visit his observatory.
- Auerbach mentioned Aravaipa Campus, which has a summer science program for area students.

A new development. Friends of Oracle State Park, the organization, supported the ODSC at the start (2014), paying for some things they needed and its members have also been members of the ODSC. Now they have come up with a way to formalize the relationship between FOSP, a 501(c)3 organization and ODSC. Jim Walsh (former county attorney and FOSP member and past President) drafted a “Proposed motion (or resolution) to be proposed at the Oracle dark Skies Committee and at the friends of Oracle State Park for adoption, or amendment.” (See attached). Donations to ODSC through FOSP would be tax-deductible with this formalization. FOSP would manage the money and support approved expenses. FOSP members will vote on this proposal at their next meeting on the second Tuesday in December.

Adjournment & future meeting

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 pm. The next meeting is **November 3, at Saddlebrooke Ranch in the La Mesa Room.**

Auerbach will be checking in with the Oracle Piano Society regarding meeting with them about the Celestial Concert and with Adam Block about whether he is interested in pursuing having their art in Oracle separate from the concert.

Signed,

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair

Proposed motion (or resolution) to be proposed at the Oracle Dark Skies Committee and at the Friends of Oracle State Park for adoption, or amendment

Whereas the Oracle Dark Skies Committee (ODSC) began with the support and virtual sponsorship of the Friends of Oracle State Park (FOSP);

Whereas ODSC and FOSP have similar if not identical missions to support Oracle State Park (OSP) and its Environmental Education programs;

Whereas ODSC and FOSP wish to continue their relationship and facilitate support for both organizations and for OSP;

Whereas FOSP is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and an Arizona non profit corporation;

It is moved and seconded that,

1. ODSC continue to function and operate in conjunction with and like a committee of FOSP;
2. Members of ODSC are not required to be members of FOSP, but are welcome to join;
3. ODSC shall designate a member to be a voting member of the Board of FOSP, and the President of FOSP shall designate that person as an at-large member;
4. Donations to ODSC shall be made to FOSP and the FOSP Treasurer shall keep track of these designated donations, but shall not open any separate bank account;
5. FOSP shall make available funds derived from ODSC donations to support ODSC and other ODSC activities as designated by ODSC;
6. FOSP is not limited in its ability to support other activities of ODSC beyond the amount of its designated donations, but consistent with the mission of both organizations;
7. ODSC may support activities of FOSP that are consistent with its mission;
8. The FOSP Treasurer's regular reports at meetings of the FOSP Board shall specify the balance of any designated donations to ODSC.