

Oracle Dark Skies Committee Minutes, October 9, 2014 6:30 pm Oracle State Park - Kannally Living Room

In attendance: Mike Weasner, Evaline Auerbach, Bill John, Jean John, Wendy Olander, Stan Bembenek, Charlotte Poole, Steven Hass, Jennifer Rinio, Wanda Winningham, MaryHelen Vasquez, Waldo Vasquez, Anna Lands; Tye Farrell attended by phone.

Minutes of the September 11, 2014 meeting were approved.

This meeting was concerned mainly with plans following the previous week's official designation of Oracle State Park as an International Dark Sky Park.

The group discussed selling sky charts, etc., in the OSP gift shop. Several people are looking into it.

Outreach

- Weasner and, usually, an assistant from the committee were set up at all three GLOW events held so far. The last two times Weasner had his telescope out - about 200 people came to look - mostly at the moon.
- W. also attended the Kartchner Caverns State Park star party weekend [20 Sep 2014]. Weasner told about how it rained and the local astronomy people had telescopes out. One was 500 lbs. so it had taken a crane to set up. Weasner talked to lots of people about Oracle State Park at the event.
- W. will attend the star party at Catalina State Park on October 18th.
- W. talked with Alicia Bristow about a display at the Visitor's Center. The Visitor's Center will have a grand opening event on November 22.

Old business

- The committee had talked about an event about dark skies to be held at OSP that will involve various constituencies involved with light pollution, etc., including hardware dealers, etc. This is something to continue to think about planning sometime in 2015.
- The billboard problem remains. ODSC still needs local meetings about the billboard - needs to meet with Oracle Inn, etc.
- Sponsorship program - no specific program has yet been determined; however, a prospective donor has been identified. A discussion regarding sponsors purchasing specific [compatible?] lights for OSP was held (See below under New Business).
- ODSC needs to purchase the light meter currently on loan for continued updating. OSP will buy it. That way Weasner can measure the light in the winter when readings may be better for updating to Gold level. The update could even be put into the annual report for next year if the readings warrant it.

New Business

Oracle State Park needs to meet the recommendations for the designation even though that designation has been Granted:

- Recommendations for the Designation as an International Dark Sky Park as of Thursday, October 2, were that:
 1. OSP replace the parking lot lighting with lights that are Dark Skies compatible.
 2. Oracle State Parks master lighting plan be adopted sooner rather than later. Haas says that it should be easy to do. Each park has their own master plan.

- The IDA Board of Directors that determines the granting of the designation had 10 days to react. They needed $\frac{2}{3}$. October 8, they got the $\frac{2}{3}$, so it's a "done deal" with the recommendations above.
- A discussion ensued about the purchase of the lights. It might be done by sponsors or by the aforementioned donor.
 - Rinio said that the most suitable lights she has seen would be about \$500.00 each. [Need to determine how many needed.]
 - Sponsors could each buy a light and have their name on it. They could go through the State Parks donation process or make a Friends of Oracle State Park donation.

The next step is a press releases announcing the designation. This will be a joint release of the International Dark-Sky Association with OSP. IDA want to play up the fact that the park is in IDA's backyard.

Hard copies of the nomination package need to be printed and distributed. Stan Bembenek will print the covers and Jennifer and Mike will have the document finished at OfficeMax.

- Oracle State Park
- Oracle Public Library
- ODSC (Mike Weasner)
- Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance
- Arizona State Parks, Phoenix office.

Celebratory event planning

Concerns:

- How big a turnout? Media, politicians. Parking: There were 360 at star party and difficulty with parking.
- What does the event look like? weather, time of year, day or night. Spread it out throughout the day and night
- Should the announcement event be between 11 - 1 or closer to the evening? It would be about five people speaking for 15 minutes each. Besides organization heads, Representative Kirkpatrick and County Supervisor Pete Rios. IDA will invite their appropriate people.

The original suggestion was a November event, but it was agreed that two months was not time not enough time for planning and getting the appropriate people involved. A discussion of dates ensued.

- In 2012, when the Oracle State Park reopened on February 2, the weather was fine, not too cold.
- March 7 is taken at the park.
- State Parks has their Picacho Peak Civil War event 14 & 15.
- It was agreed that **Saturday March 21 (new moon)** -would be the tentative date – an all day event. Details later, pending consultation with IDA.

Planning then began for a "normal" star party in January 2015.

- Jan 20 is new moon. Sat. 24 has a crescent moon.
- Music would be inside; Contact San Carlos Apaches: 928-475-2894 - Herb Stevens - for a presentation on their approach to the stars and astronomy.

- Would road signs be in place for the designation event? This would likely be add-on signs to the Oracle State Park: “An International Dark Sky Park”. Steve Haas will work with Arizona Department Of Transportation. Would it help to contact the local volunteer representative on the ADOT Board?
- The sign for the park itself is easier to handle.
- Farrell can help get the info about OSP becoming an International Dark Sky Park on the OSP website.
- OSP will have a link at the IDA website.
 - OSP will be number 20 in the world! It was approved in record time from conception to approval.
 - The first International Dark Sky Park designation was about three years ago.
 - Nine state parks in the US have the designation.
 - It’s unknown whether any other parks were approved in this cycle.
 - One of the original goals of OSP was to be “Internationally renowned.” This IDSP designation certainly brings that.

Before they left, Bill and Jean John announced that they would sponsor the first of the lights at OSP.

The next meeting is Oct. 23, 6:30, Kannally House.
The committee should celebrate: take it up at the next meeting.

Nov. 1 & 2 (Sat/Sun) Weasner will be working at the Arizona Science and Astronomy Event at Tucson Convention Center. Thousands of people attend this event, which has replaced an expo that was formerly held in Pasadena, CA. Display at this event?

The first Weekend in December is the Cascabel Christmas Fair. ODSC might want to have info on the table with Delight Edgell who does astronomical jewelry.

Signed,

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair