

Attendees: Mike Weasner (520-289-3402, mweasner@mac.com); Vince Micallef (480-244-4910; vmicallef@azstateparks.gov); Don Holder (219-688-9616; astro1z@yahoo.com); Chris Mobley (425-239-2938; chrismobleytelos@msn.com)

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm MST.

The previous meeting minutes were approved as sent out to members.

Treasurer Report: Acting Treasurer Mike Weasner gave the treasurer's report. Donations = Totaled \$22 since the previous meeting. (from star parties held at Oracle State Park on 30 June and 1 September). Friends of Oracle State Park telescope raffle on 30 June raised \$442. Expenses = none
The Current balance for ODSC is \$1253.18.
(See spreadsheet attached.)

ODSC T-shirts to sell was discussed once again. The Committee has previously approved using paintings by local artist and ODSC member MaryHelen Vasquez and her granddaughter. Earlier in 2018 Chip Parfet and Weasner had contacted the Oracle Zipline, who has T-shirt printing capability. We have given up on the Zipline printing as it turns out they can not print in full color, which would be required for the paintings. Other printing options have been discussed but could be expensive. Weasner had previously suggested that we have the artwork nicely framed and put on display at the Kannally Ranch House. Park Manager Micallef reiterated his support of that idea and would hang the paintings in a new (yet to come) "Dark Sky Corner" in the Ranch House living room. The Committee concurred with the decision to frame and display the paintings. Weasner will bring it up at the next Friends of Oracle State Park meeting (10 September).

Other Topics:

Weasner noted that Arizona State Parks & Trails has created a new Star Parties flyer which highlights Oracle State Park and Kartchner Caverns State Parks as IDA "International Dark Sky Parks".

Weasner also noted that the current IDA Executive Director Scott Feierabend is retiring at the end of 2018. A search is underway for a replacement. Dr. John Barentine, who has been IDA International Dark Sky Places Program Manager for the past 5 years has a new position at IDA. IDA has hired his replacement, Adam Dalton, as well as a part-time assistant to Adam, Diana del Solar. The staffing increases at IDA are a direct result of the successful fundraising efforts by Scott.

Community action (IDA requirement):

- Weasner noted that a representative of the Pinal County Lighting Code office visited Oracle several months ago to check on some local lighting. Weasner has not yet received a final report of the results. Monthly inquiries have been ignored so far.

Repair of the Park's Vixen telescope mount

Chris Mobley updated the Committee on telescope mount repair. He has been in discussions with the manufacturer and now has the mount working as well as can be expected. He will return the mount to the Park. Mobley hopes to be able to have Vixen accept a trade once use of the telescope is demonstrated. The Park will use the telescope at the next couple of star parties. Photographs will be taken of Park visitors using the telescopes. Mobley will then send those photos to Vixen.

ASP Flashlights

Weasner had contacted Rigel Systems earlier in 2018 about making a version of their Starlite mini astronomer's flashlight available for sale in State Parks gifts shops. A sample with the ASP&T logo was furnished, which was provided to the Gift Shop Coordinator. A final decision is hoped for by 1 October 2018.

Past Events:

Saturday, 30 June 2018: Star Party and Dark Sky Special Event at Oracle State Park

This was the Live Music, Telescope Raffle, and Star Party at the Park, 5-10 PM. The Saddlebrooke SkyGazers Club provided telescopes. This was a great event.

Saturday, 1 September 2018: Star Party at Oracle State Park, Saturday

This was the semi-annual Star Party at the Park, with telescopes provided by TAAA and the Saddlebrooke SkyGazers Club. Although weather looked doubtful late in the afternoon, during the live music portion the sky cleared sufficiently to allow good viewing of four bright planets, some nebulae and galaxies, and star clusters. Another great event at Oracle State Park.

Upcoming Events:

None scheduled.

There was a discussion of a possible "Astro Camp" event at the Park, maybe in 2019, once camping is fully underway. The event could span 2-3 days and nights with guest speakers from local universities and/or IDA, along with nighttime viewing. Weasner noted that a husband and wife who own the Bubble Huts tent business (in Phoenix; www.bubblehuts.com) attended the 1 September star party at the Park. Their tents are ideal for campers who want to be able to see the night sky while inside the tents. The owners are contemplating moving to the Oracle area and hope to be able visit the Park more. Perhaps their tents could be used at the Park.

Other business:

Park Manager Micallef discussed the approved state budget of \$4 Million for improvements at Oracle State Park. The potential for a new dark sky viewing area, which might also include an observatory, was discussed. Some options and costs for an observatory were discussed.

Ranger Rinio continues to take Dark Sky Quality Measurements for the Park (as required by IDA).

Park Manager Micallef will be responsible for doing this year's Annual Report to IDA, which is due 1 October. Weasner will assist as needed but the primary work will be done by the Park Staff.

Next Meeting:

6 December 2018, 4:00pm MST, at Oracle State Park, Kannally Ranch House

Special Announcement:

Weasner announced that he would be retiring from the Chair position at the next meeting of the Oracle Dark Skies Committee in December. This prompted considerable discussion, along with thanks to Weasner for his work over the past almost five years. Weasner noted that the Committee can be proud of what it has accomplished. The future of the ODSC will depend on filling the positions of Chair, Secretary/Recorder, and Treasurer at the December 2018 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20pm MST.

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair

