

**Attendees:** Mike Weasner (520-289-3402, [mweasner@mac.com](mailto:mweasner@mac.com)); Chris Mobley (425-239-2938; [chrismobleytelos@msn.com](mailto:chrismobleytelos@msn.com)); Don Holder (219-688-9616; [astro1z@yahoo.com](mailto:astro1z@yahoo.com)); Vince Micallef (480-244-4910; [vmicallef@azstateparks.gov](mailto:vmicallef@azstateparks.gov)); Tim Lawler (408-823-5439, [timlawler12@att.net](mailto:timlawler12@att.net)); MaryHelen & Waldo Vasquez and granddaughter Alyssa Vasquez

The meeting was called to order at 4:15pm MST.

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

**Treasurer Report:**

Acting Treasurer Mike Weasner gave the treasurer's report.

Donations = none

Expenses = \$75 for framing two paintings

The Current balance for ODSC held by the FOSP is \$1179.18.

(See spreadsheet attached.)

The Committee and the Friends of Oracle State Park had previously approved framing paintings by local artist and ODSC member MaryHelen Vasquez and her granddaughter Alyssa Vasquez. Weasner showed the framed paintings that will be displayed in a new (yet to come) "Dark Sky Corner" in the Kannally Ranch House living room. The paintings were well received by the Committee members in attendance.

**Community action (IDA requirement):**

MaryHelen Vasquez provided an update on the Arizona Water Co. yard lighting issue in her neighbor. The Water Company was to have contacted SCIP. No action to report.

Weasner once again noted that a representative of the Pinal County Lighting Code office visited Oracle several months ago to check on some local lighting (Ford Dealership uplighting, neighbor floodlights; both of which may violate county code). Weasner still has not yet received a final report of the results on these issues which he raised in late 2017.

The Oracle Partnership for Tourism (OPT) has printed 10,000 copies of a rack card for distribution to community centers, hotels, and other tourism venues around the state. As the President of the Friends of Oracle State Park, Weasner had been a member of OPT in 2018. The OPT members have been incredibly appreciative of the work of the Committee to have Oracle State Park designated as an IDA "International Dark Sky Park" in 2014 and its ongoing public outreach. When Weasner got to see the rack card, having not seen any drafts of it, he was surprised and thrilled to see "Stargaze" listed as the top item in the "things to do in Oracle" list.

**Repair of the Park's Vixen telescope mount**

Chris Mobley updated the Committee on telescope mount repair. After many months of effort and discussions with Vixen support, it has been determined that the motor is non-salvageable and will not work reliably with the otherwise excellent tripod mount. Mobley returned the mount to the Park. He has not requested any reimbursement for costs and time. Thanks for the efforts Chris!

**Past Events:**

None

**Upcoming Events:**

**March 2019.** Semi-Annual star party supported by the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association.

**Oracle State Park Items:**

Park Manager Micallef gave an update on possible star parties in early 2019: TAAA (21 January), Oracle Rumble (26 January), TAAA (March 2019), and Earth Day star party (April).

Weasner said that Micallef had prepared and submitted the 2018 IDSP Annual Report to IDA with minimal assistance from the Committee. Thanks Vince!

Weasner discussed a new automated Night Sky Quality meter that has been provided to the Park by the developer. This TESS Photometer will operate continuously and transmit its data for the Park to the TESS server. The meter should be installed in January 2019 and once operational its data can be viewed at <http://tess-dashboards.stars4all.eu/d/jkaqVCKik/s4a-photometer-network-usa?orgId=1>.

Weasner showed a small version of a large poster that had been presented by the International Dark-Sky Association at the annual Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) Conference, held in Utah in November 2018. This poster discussed whether International Dark Sky Parks had seen any improvement or deterioration in Night Sky Quality since being designated. Oracle State Park was one of the locations highlighted with no change. Hopefully we can have IDA display the poster at the Park at some future event.

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 at the Phoenix Central Office. Unfortunately, she decided to not sell these in the park gift shops. At its December 2018 meeting, Weasner asked the Friends of Oracle State Park if they wanted to sell them in the Oracle State Park with the FOSP logo on the flashlight. The Friends approved a trial purchase of 10 flashlights which would be sold at the March 2019 star party. Weasner will be working with Rigel Systems on the purchase.

Weasner then discussed the proposed SunZia Transmission Line Project in southern Arizona. The Committee had been briefed about the Project several years ago, but other than expressing concern to the briefer about impacts to the night sky quality at Oracle State Park and the IDSP designation, no action was taken by the Committee. In October 2018, Weasner learned that the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) would be voting in November to approve the Project in Arizona, even though the Project has not been approved by New Mexico, from which the energy carried by the Transmission Line is to originate. Weasner, as President of the Friends of Oracle State Park, wrote a one-page letter to the Commission requesting a delay in the vote until SunZia came to Oracle State Park to present the impacts or lack of impacts on wildlife at the 4000-acre refuge, the views of the surrounding terrain from the Park, and the night sky quality. Based on Weasner's and other inputs it received, the Commission decided to delay its vote until its 17-19 December 2018 meeting. Weasner sent them a one-page "thank you" letter and reiterated that as a "potential new neighbor", SunZia should come to Oracle State Park before

any vote is taken. As a result of the ACC vote delay SunZia wrote a nine-page response. That response mischaracterized Weasner's letters to the Commission by stating that he opposed the Project. He did not express opposition to the Project in his letters; he only raised concerns that SunZia had not communicated the impacts or lack of impacts on the Park. Weasner sent the Commission another one-page letter about the mischaracterization by SunZia. It is hoped the members of the Oracle community will be able to attend the ACC meeting in December.

**ODSC Future:**

Weasner had told the Committee at its September 2018 meeting that he would be retiring as Chair at the December 2018 meeting. No one expressed a desire to fill the roles of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Weasner thanked the members for the tremendous support and involvement since the Committee was formed in April 2014 for the main purpose of getting Oracle State Park designated as an IDA "International Dark Sky Park". As he has said many many times over the past nearly five years, Weasner said that he would not have taken on this task without the community's help. Micallef related several positive night sky experiences that Park visitors have expressed to him as a result of the Committee's work. Weasner said that at a recent OPT meeting he raised the idea that Oracle could pursue designation as an IDA "International Dark Sky Community". OPT fully supported that idea and its membership would help. Weasner noted that he will not lead such an effort but will be glad to help.

MaryHelen and Alyssa Vasquez presented Weasner with two paintings in recognition for what he has done for Oracle. Many thanks to MaryHelen and Alyssa!

The final meeting of the Oracle Dark Skies Committee was adjourned at 1715 MST.

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair

