



Experiencing Dark Night Skies

Natural darkness is becoming rare. Across the nation outdoor lights have spilled carelessly into the night causing *light pollution*. This wasted light casts a yellow glow across the night sky for hundreds of miles, drowning out the beautiful view of the stars. National parks harbor some of the last remaining portals of darkness in this country. The NPS has identified dark night skies as an important value and is pleased to share this resource with you.

7 Simple Ways to Enjoy Natural Darkness

Conquer your fears

Admit it, most people are a bit uncomfortable in the dark. Try walking outside in a very dark area while keeping your flashlight in your pocket.

Make a night vision friendly flashlight

By covering your flashlight with red cellophane or a red filter, you can prevent it from disrupting your night vision. Small flashlights work better than large ones.

Stargaze

Spend time looking through telescopes and learning about the cosmos with your local science center, astronomy club, or park ranger.

Go for a moonlit hike

The full moon provides ample light to see in most places. Let your eyes fully adjust. Be safe. A full moon hike will be a memorable experience.

Awaken your nocturnal senses

Find a comfortable spot and look around. Allow your eyes 20 minutes to adjust, and you may be surprised how well you can see by starlight. Do objects appear farther? Listen. Do sounds seem louder at night?

Watch nocturnal wildlife

Many animals live their “days” at night. Look for nocturnal wildlife such as owls, bats, deer, bobcats, or fireflies.

Be inspired

The night sky has been an inspiration for myth, literature, art, scientific discovery, and religion. Find your own way to connect with humankind’s celestial companion. Revel in its beauty and wonder, and most of all— be inspired!



Protecting Dark Night Skies

All living things benefit from natural darkness. The night sky is everyone's heritage, but light pollution is rapidly eroding the unspoiled view of the stars. This, however, is an easy problem to fix. Replacing poor quality outdoor lights with modern, efficient fixtures is not only good for the environment, but also saves energy and money while improving safety and security. Shielding lights and directing them downward reduces unwanted glare and returns the beautiful night. The starry skies that our ancestors enjoyed can be restored for everybody once again.

5 Simple Ways You Can Protect the Night

Enjoy the night

Ultimately, we will protect only what we love and cherish.

Shield your lights

Several types of *full cut-off* light fixtures are now available for home, business, and municipal use. Existing lights can also be adjusted to point downward or retrofitted with simple metal shrouds.

Use light only when you need it

Use motion sensors to turn lights on and off as needed. This costs less money, improves security, and reduces light pollution. Use timers for lights that are needed only in the evening or early morning.

Use less light

An efficient, shielded light fixture can use a smaller wattage bulb and still be effective. Even a 25 or 40 watt incandescent bulb, or a 9 watt compact fluorescent, is enough to light a porch or driveway.

Talk to your neighbors

Share your appreciation of the night and ways to protect it with your family, friends, neighbors, and community leaders.

Encourage them to make the night a better place for your community and nearby parks.



NPS Night Sky Program
Colorado State Univ- CIRA
1375 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523
www.nature.nps.gov/air/lightscapes

