

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Night Skies Program



Enjoying the Night

It is easy to forget that above us on every clear night, stars and planets grace the night sky. Get to know your environment in a new light, get outdoors at night. To see the best night skies, you may have to travel to a national park or wilderness area to get far away from city lights.

The Milky Way above Longs Peak
Rocky Mountain National Park

Experiencing the outdoors should be done both by day and by night. A whole new world comes alive at night and is waiting to be explored. Here are a few ideas to...

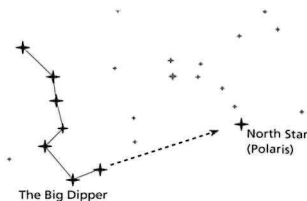
Get to Know the Night

At Home

- Sleep in your backyard on a starlit night.
- Make a red flashlight. Use red paper or cellophane to cover a white flashlight. This will help you navigate at night without affecting your night vision!
- Can you see the stars as well in your backyard with the porch light on? Ask someone to help you try different light bulbs, even different light fixtures, so that you can see the stars better.

Around Town

- From an open field or park, find the Big Dipper. Use the “pointer stars” to find the North Star.
- Attend your local astronomy club’s next public “star party.” There you can find amateur astronomers sharing views through their telescopes.



- Next time you are riding in a car at night, look closely at the outdoor lights. Do some shine in your eyes more than others? Can you find a light that only shines downward?

In the Wilderness

- National Parks are great places to get to know the animals that are *nocturnal*—wildlife that is awake at night and asleep during the day. Sit quietly and listen for these creatures.
- Look for the Milky Way stretching across the night sky. What looks like a faint cloud, is actually the light from billions of distant stars. The Milky Way is our home galaxy.
- If the full moon is up, the Milky Way will be hard to see. Try going for a night hike instead! Let your eyes adjust to the moonlight and limit using your flashlight. Be safe.



For more information visit:
http://www.nature.nps.gov/sound_night

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