

What is the International Dark Sky Association?

Established in 1988, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) is an educational and environmental nonprofit dedicated to preserving the nighttime environment and the heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting. With over 11,000 members in 70 countries, IDA works with communities, astronomers, ecologists, and lighting professionals at the local, national, and international level. The IDA does not advocate turning off lights or removing them but rather encourages the use of quality outdoor lighting (light shining down, not up).

What is light pollution?

Exterior lighting is used for a variety of reasons – for work or recreation, for advertising, or for safety and security. However, when the obtrusive aspects of lighting extend beyond the boundaries of the area in which lighting is intended, the result is *light pollution*.

Light pollution wastes energy (to the tune of \$10.4 billion), disrupts the global ecological balance and has been linked to negative consequences in human health.

What is a designated International Dark Sky Park (IDSP)?

Parks and other natural landscapes that are given the coveted IDA designation must meet stringent criteria. This includes creation of a comprehensive lighting management plan, commitment to strong public outreach programs and a natural landscape (dark sky) that provides exceptional nighttime viewing, with little or no light pollution. Parks are given Bronze, Silver or Gold designations depending on night time sky quality (measured by light pollution meters and satellite imagery).

Observatory Park received designation in August 2011 as a certified as Silver-Tier Dark Sky Park, only one of eight dark sky parks in the world. Other designated parks include: Natural Bridges, Utah; Cherry Springs State Park, Pennsylvania; Clayton Lake State Park, New Mexico; The Headlands of Emmet County, Michigan; Galloway Forest Park, Scotland, UK; Zselic National Landscape and Hortobagy National Park, Hungary.

Why is a Dark Sky designation important?

The Dark Sky designation complements Geauga Park District's mission to preserve, conserve and protect. By preserving the night skies at Observatory Park and throughout Northeast Ohio, the threat of light pollution will be minimized, energy costs will be reduced, and the ecological balance of wildlife will be protected.

What can be done to reduce or eliminate light pollution?

Follow these simple steps:

- Use outdoor light only when and where you need it. For example, make sure the wattage is appropriate for the amount of light you are using.
- Use only downward lighting. Floodlights, especially, should be retrofitted with shields to prevent light from spilling upward. Shields can be purchased at your local lighting store or home improvement center.
- Keep in mind that more light does not necessarily mean more security. Studies have shown that excessive outdoor lighting creates glare and may not deter criminals.

More information can be found at the International Dark Sky website www.darksky.org.