

# **INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION**

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*TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NIGHTTIME ENVIRONMENT AND OUR HERITAGE OF DARK SKIES THROUGH  
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE OUTDOOR LIGHTING*

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**INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY RESERVES**

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## **International Dark Sky Reserve Program Guidelines**

**June 2018**

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## **DEFINITION OF AN INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY RESERVE**

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An International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR) is a public or private land of substantial size (at least 700 km<sup>2</sup>, or about 173,000 acres) possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment, and that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment.

The IDSR consists of two regions:

- 1) A “core” area meeting the minimum criteria for sky quality and natural darkness, and
- 2) A “peripheral” or “buffer” area that supports dark sky values in the core and receives similar benefits.

The IDSR is formed through a partnership of landowners and/or administrators that recognize the value of the natural nighttime environment through regulations, formal agreements, and long term planning. The core and the peripheral zone together are referred to collectively as the “Reserve” and “IDSR” in this document.

## **GOALS OF DARK SKY RESERVE CREATION**

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- To identify and honor public or private lands and their surrounding communities for exceptional commitment to and success in implementing the ideals of dark sky preservation
- To promote eco- and astro-tourism
- To promote protection of nocturnal habitats, public enjoyment of the night sky and its heritage, and/or areas ideal for professional and/or amateur astronomy
- To encourage land administrators, surrounding communities and private interests to identify dark skies as a valuable resource in need of proactive protection
- To provide international recognition for such sites
- To encourage other locations to become environmental leaders on dark sky issues by communicating the importance of dark skies and by providing an example of what is possible with proper stewardship

## **DESIGNATION BENEFITS**

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Achieving an IDSR designation brings recognition of the efforts made by any public and/or private organizations protecting the night skies of the identified Reserve area. It

encourages and ensures the sustainability of dark skies conservation actions already undertaken in the area; moreover, it enhances resident and visitor awareness of environmental stewardship and responsibility.

Designation as an IDSR entitles the core and its surrounding communities to display the IDA logo in official publications and promotions and retain the use of this logo by other groups within the community when identifying the area itself<sup>1</sup>. IDA will promote and highlight ongoing Reserve efforts to protect night skies and maintain pages on its website identifying and describing all IDSRs.

## ELIGIBILITY

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To be eligible for consideration as an IDSR, a candidate site must meet all of the following requirements:

- 1) The core of the proposed IDSR must be a public or private land protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment.
- 2) Private inholdings and lands similarly situated within the core zones of Reserves are formally exempt from regulation under the terms of this document, but applicants are encouraged to obtain voluntary compliance from private landowners.
- 3) The core zone boundaries must be drawn according to, and consistent with, the following principles:
  - A) A core area does not have a minimum area requirement but must provide sufficient area to meet the outreach and public access requirements described in this document.
  - B) The proposed core area boundary may take any shape and may follow logical or natural geographic features.
  - C) The core need not be a single, contiguous land; multiple cores may be defined, but this approach must be justified in the application document.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, an organization or community can refer to itself “located in Grand View Dark Sky Reserve”.

- D) If the core includes a publicly protected area, such as a national or regional park, it must strive to fully encompass the boundaries of that area.
- 4) The peripheral zone boundaries must be drawn according to, and consistent with, the following principles:
  - A) The proposed peripheral zone boundary must be singular, contiguous, and completely enclose the core zone. It may take any shape and may follow logical or natural geographic features.
  - B) The peripheral area must encompass a minimum of 700 km<sup>2</sup> (270 mi<sup>2</sup> or 173,000 acres) around the core, roughly equivalent to a circle of 15-km/9.3-mile radius, **OR** a land area sufficient to mitigate 80% of current and expected future light pollution threats to the core.
  - C) Large areas of open water, such as oceans, bays, and larger lakes, do not count toward the 700 km<sup>2</sup> / 80% requirement.

The actual area of the peripheral, or buffer zone, may be reduced or increased by the IDA Dark Sky Places Committee (DSPC) on a case-by-case basis to ensure future protection of the core.

- 5) The boundaries of neither core nor periphery must not be arbitrarily drawn to omit areas that would increase the difficulty of achieving IDSR status, but must instead embrace these areas as an opportunity for improvement. If an irregular shape for either is chosen, it must be justified in the text of the application.
- 6) The core must provide an opportunity for regular public nighttime access, with or without supervision. A portion of designated land may meet this requirement, or access must be available for a fraction of the length of the night. In some cases, such as when working with areas that protect endangered wildlife, archeological sites, or other sensitive resources, this requirement may be adjusted.
- 7) The core must provide an exceptional dark sky resource, relative to the communities and cities that surround it.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL RESERVES

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- 1) A quality comprehensive Lighting Management Plan (LMP) should be adopted by a sufficient number of communities within the entire IDSR (core and periphery) corresponding to at least 80% of population **AND** 80% of designated area of protection. The regulations contained in the LMP must apply to all private **AND** public land-owners within the area of protection. Some exceptions may apply but are individually subject to IDA approval. Minimum standards are described below in the section titled “Lighting Management Plan Guidelines”.<sup>2</sup>
- 2) Typical nighttime conditions characterizing the core must be consistent with or exceed the following criteria:
  - A) The Milky Way is readily visible to the unaided eye;
  - B) There are no nearby artificial light sources yielding significant glare; and
  - C) Any light domes present are dim, restricted in extent, and close to the horizon. These conditions correspond approximately to a visual-band zenith luminance of 21.2 magnitudes per square arcsecond (0.4 mcd/m<sup>2</sup>) and a naked-eye limiting magnitude (NELM) of +6.

In order to substantiate the sky quality, measurements of the night sky brightness at the zenith must be made with suitable instruments, or the NELM must be estimated by a qualified observer. Further, panoramic nighttime photography of the horizon must be included in order to substantiate the number and extent of light domes visible from the site. Measurements of night sky brightness must be distributed over a sufficiently long enough period of time in order to average out fluctuations over timescales ranging from hours to seasons in length.

Applicants should discuss their measurement protocol with the International Dark Sky Places Program Manager and submit all data necessary to substantiate these conditions.

Any designated IDSP that no longer meets these conditions but documents a visual-band zenith luminance from 20.0 to 21.19 magnitudes per square arcsecond or a naked-eye limiting magnitude (NELM) no higher than +5 will be included in a List of Endangered IDSP Sites published on the IDA website. IDA reserves the right to duly

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<sup>2</sup> Lighting required by law under the authority of any entity having higher legal jurisdiction over either the core or peripheral zones may be formally exempted from the requirements of this section.

suspend or revoke the IDSR designation of a Reserve with night sky quality that falls below a visual-band zenith luminance from 20.0 to 21.19 magnitudes per square arcsecond or a naked-eye limiting magnitude (NELM) of +5.

- 3) Evidence of community commitment to dark skies and quality outdoor lighting, as shown by at least two-thirds (67%) of existing outdoor lighting fixtures within the core conforming to the LMP at the time of application (or an alternative fraction approved by the DSPC).
- 4) A lighting inventory and a plan to bring 90% of outdoor lighting in the core into compliance with the Reserve's LMP within five (5) years of receiving an IDSP designation, as well as a written commitment to bring the core into 100% compliance within ten (10) years of designation.
- 5) A measurement program must be maintained either by the core managing agency, communities, private landowners or other public or private organization to follow the evolution of light pollution in the core and assure that the night sky quality does not degrade. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit their measurements to the citizen science projects such as My Sky At Night ([myskyatnight.com](http://myskyatnight.com)) and Globe At Night ([globeatnight.org](http://globeatnight.org)).
- 6) A description of current and suspected future threats to dark skies over the core zone, and a plan to address these threats.
- 7) Communities must have a number of examples of conforming lighting installations proportional to the size of the population they serve, both on roadways **AND** on different private sites (industries, stores, public services, etc.):
  - A) Each participating municipality (excluding businesses, residences, and partners without installed lighting) should have completed **at least one** highly visible demonstration project with night sky friendly lighting consisting of at least 10 lighting fixtures for each 5000 residents; **AND/OR**
  - B) Approximately 10% of fixtures outside of the core must be retrofitted or brought into compliance with the appropriate regulation. This percentage does not include fixtures that were compliant upon the initial lighting survey, but rather must show active motivation of the community to make changes through the form of retrofits and/or appropriate physical changes to the current fixtures' form. Such changes may include, but are not limited to, installation of adaptive controls such as dimmers and motion sensors.

- 8) Participating communities must have a program, either through education, economic incentives, permitting or regulation, to encourage all new outdoor lighting fixtures to conform to the relevant regulation or guidelines for night sky friendly lighting.
- 9) The Reserve's commitment to public education is demonstrated by all of the following:
  - A) The importance of dark skies, natural nighttime darkness, and the benefits of quality lighting should be part of Reserve interpretation/outreach programs. If the Reserve typically provides interpretive programs, then dark skies must be one of the central themes communicated through on-site interpretation<sup>3</sup>. If interpretive programs are not typically offered, then publications, flyers, press releases, media, or other outreach are appropriate substitutes.
  - B) Dedicated dark skies programming must occur at least four times per year; however, more frequent events are preferable. These events may highlight the value of natural nighttime darkness in any appropriate way<sup>4</sup>.
- 10) Acknowledgement of the protected area by government or regulatory agencies situated higher than community level (county/province/etc.) with the perspective that dark skies are an important scientific, natural, cultural, and/or scenic resource value as shown by the inclusion of appropriate language in official documents for long term planning<sup>5</sup>. Communities within the IDSR will receive a certificate verifying the community as a part of the IDSR upon request. Those who wish to erect a sign must address a letter to IDA referring to the community as a part of the IDSR and giving specific examples of their engagement (lighting fixture replacement, outreach program, etc.).
- 11) Once established, the Reserve must erect and maintain appropriate signage indicating the International Dark Sky Reserve designation along a roadway entrance, along a footpath entrance if no roadway exists, or a visitor contact center. If approved by IDA, language as an alternative to "International Dark Sky Reserve" may

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<sup>3</sup> 'Dark skies education' refers not only to astronomy education but also education about wildlife, energy efficiency, safety, and human health. Astronomy education events such as star parties only count as 'dark skies education' if they prominently feature material about dark skies and outdoor lighting.

<sup>4</sup> Examples include cultural or historic value, importance to wildlife, astronomical or stargazing events.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of such documents include General Management Plans, Resource Management Plans, and Facility Development Plans. Consult IDA staff as to whether a particular type of management document meets this requirement.



appear on the signage and in Reserve communications regarding the IDSR status. Once the sign is erected a photograph documenting it must be taken and sent to IDA for records along with a description of its location.

- 12) The Reserve will submit an annual report to IDA by 1 October of each year detailing activities and progress towards fulfilling IDA IDSR goals during the previous year. The report serves to document that the Reserve continues to meet minimum program requirements; sustains partnership, outreach, and interpretive efforts; and makes adequate progress toward at least 90% compliance with LMPs. The report should include dates and brief descriptions of interpretive events, lighting retrofit projects, community outreach, etc. New measurements of the night sky brightness in the core must be obtained and included in the report. It should also provide information on any new lands acquired since designation and/or the most recent prior report, as well as any potential future sale of land that may result in reassessment of IDSR status (see “Sale or Transfer of Land Ownership,” below). Samples of printed materials and press articles should also be included.

Electronic submission of these documents is required in Microsoft Word or PDF format. If the annual report is not sent in a timely fashion, IDA may suspend the IDSR status until the annual reporting requirements have been met.

A Reserve is exempt from the annual reporting requirement in the calendar year in which the IDA designation was awarded. If the designation is received after 1 October of a given calendar year, the Reserve’s first annual report to IDA will be due on 1 October of the following calendar year.

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## **LIGHTING MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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The LMP must contain at least the following minimum provisions:

- 1) The written policy meets or exceeds applicable agency or departmental policies regarding outdoor lighting and conforms to all local, regional, and national laws.
- 2) The use of outdoor light at night is only prescribed when it is strictly needed, where it is needed, and in the appropriate amount for a specific task. The purpose of outdoor light that is allowed under the policy should be specifically to ensure public safety.

- 3) All outdoor lighting fixtures >500 initial lamp lumens<sup>6</sup> must be fully shielded<sup>7</sup> and make appropriate use of timers and motion sensors. Lighting of ≤500 initial lamp lumens may be left unshielded for special purposes, such as historical preservation. The approved special uses must be stated in the LMP. IDA will scrutinize these uses to ensure that core lighting is a suitable example of quality lighting for the public and protects the nighttime environment to the maximum practical extent. IDA may request additional descriptions, photographs, or drawings of these lights. These lights are not exempt from the other lighting guidelines, and must still be designed in such a way to minimize impact to the nighttime environment. Lighting controlled by motion-activated sensors and which limit the duration of illumination to less than five (5) minutes after activation is exempt from regulation by the LMP.
- 4) Lighting must be chosen to minimize the amount of short-wavelength light emitted into the nighttime environment. The lighting policy must restrict lighting in this respect according to one of the following prescriptions:
  - A) The correlated color temperature (CCT) of lamps must not exceed 3000 Kelvins;  
**OR**
  - B) Allowed lighting must not emit more than 25% of its total spectral power at wavelengths < 550 nanometers; **OR**
  - C) The scotopic-to-photopic (S/P) ratio of allowed lighting must not exceed 1.3.These metrics may be found in manufacturer data sheets for lighting products.
- 5) Visitor activities with respect to the introduction of unnecessary artificial light at night into the core environment must be regulated. This must include reasonable limits on the lighting of camping equipment and recreational vehicles, as well as a general prohibition of inappropriate “light painting,” the use of searchlights, and similar activities. Note that this requirement is in no way intended to compromise visitor safety; lighting required in emergency situations may be exempted from compliance.

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<sup>6</sup> “Initial lamp lumens” is defined as the number of lumens of light emitted by a lamp when new and not counting any depreciation of output due to the age of the lamp. This information can be found in manufacturer data sheets.

<sup>7</sup> “Fully shielded” is defined such that that the light source is screened and its light directed in such a way that none is emitted above the horizontal plane passing through the lowest light-emitting portion of a fixture.

- 6) Illuminated signs<sup>8</sup> must be regulated as follows:
  - A) Operation is prohibited from one hour after local sunset to one hour before local sunrise (unless strictly required for wayfinding or identification of concessions in the Park during normal business hours); **AND**
  - B) Displays must be single-color on a black background; **AND**
  - C) Luminance must not exceed 100 nits (100 candela per square meter); **AND**
  - D) The luminous/illuminated surface area of an individual sign must not exceed 200 square feet (18.6 square meters).
- 7) A policy governing the installation of temporary lighting in the core requiring that any such installation will adhere to the LMP to the greatest possible extent and whose duration will be limited to the shortest possible time.

## **LIGHTING INVENTORY**

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A lighting inventory is a formal audit of outdoor lighting. It is used to determine rates of compliance with the LMP within the IDSR core and to identify lighting equipment in need of rehabilitation through retrofitting or replacement. A complete inventory of outdoor lighting in the core is a requirement for IDSR status, and it must be accompanied by a plan under which lighting in the core will be brought into compliance with the LMP under the terms specified in “Minimum Requirements for All Reserves” (above).

The following must be taken into consideration when collecting and reporting lighting inventory data:

- 1) When there are numerous outdoor lights it is acceptable to group lights by facility or area. Whether the fixtures are fully shielded, are special purpose fixtures under 500 initial lamp lumens, and the intended lighting application must be noted for each fixture or group of fixtures.
- 2) Daytime photographs or manufacturer diagrams of each fixture type should also accompany the inventory.

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<sup>8</sup> “Illuminated sign” is defined as any informational or advertising sign that is illuminated by either internal or external means. Descriptive terms are adjusted here according to the type of illumination.

- 3) Inoperable fixtures, including those physically disconnected from power supplies, must be inventoried. Only those physically disconnected from power supplies may be counted as compliant for the purpose of determining the rate of LMP compliance.

The following is a sample table from portion of a lighting inventory:

Location	Fixture	Fully-Shielded?	Operable?	Special Purpose <500 lumens	Application	Conformity with LMP
Visitor Center	12 fixtures on 14' pole, 70 W HPS	YES	YES	NO	Parking lot, timer off at 10pm	YES
	2 door lights, 100 W MH	YES	NO	NO	Building egress	YES
	6 bollard (post) lights, 32 W CFL	NO	YES	NO	Walkway	NO – see plan
Restrooms	2 carriage style lights at doorways, 40 W incandescent	NO	YES	YES	Historic Preservation, egress	YES
Maintenance Yard	6 wall packs, 250 W MH	NO	YES	NO	Occasional night operations	NO – see plan

### PROVISIONAL STATUS

In some cases, a location interested in becoming an International Dark Sky Reserve may lack the resources to make a successful application. Provisional status recognizes the location's ongoing work to become an IDSR and is intended to be used as leverage to enable the necessary lighting upgrades or retrofits.

Provisional status expires after three (3) years. At any time before the end of its Provisional status, a Reserve may reapply for full status. Material submitted for the removal of Provisional status may be an addendum to the initial application as long as the material includes a current assessment of night sky quality, goals, outreach, and programs listed in the original application.

A Reserve may apply for Provisional status if all of the following conditions are met:

- 1) A Lighting Management Plan has been approved by the core zone managing agency;
- 2) Minimum sky quality criteria are satisfied;
- 3) An inventory of outdoor lighting in the core; and
- 4) Appropriate outreach efforts have been undertaken.

Applicants requesting Provisional status should send a nomination package to IDA that contains at least the following information:

- Initial sky quality measurements
- Documented intent to create and support creation of an IDSR
- Three partners (municipalities, parks, organizations, etc.) have documented intent to support an IDSR
- A Lighting Management Plan
- An action plan describing how the aspiring Reserve will meet minimum requirements

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## **IDSR APPLICATION PROCESS**

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### NOMINATION

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The nomination may be initiated by a qualified IDA member nominator<sup>9</sup>. Alternately, the Reserve may join IDA as an organizational member and self-nominate. Nominators are encouraged to correspond with IDA staff and the Reserve throughout this process.

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<sup>9</sup> A qualified IDA member nominator is an IDA member in good standing who has personally reviewed a Reserve's outdoor lighting and its commitment to the protection of dark night skies.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

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An official letter must be sent to IDA consenting to the IDSR nomination from the core administrator or manager. Official letters of support from the communities, counties, provinces or other jurisdictions to which the lands within the IDSR are subject that confirming their long-term engagement and commitment towards the creation of the IDSR must also be included with the nomination.

## STEPS FOR APPLICANT

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- 1) Make initial contact with IDA by phone or email to discuss the process and receive recommendations, followed by continued communications to update IDA staff on progress and receive additional recommendations.
- 2) Designate a formal point of contact (POC) person, such as a project manager, and provide their telephone number, address and email information to IDA staff. Before and after designation, any changes to this POC, or their information, must be transmitted to IDA immediately in order to ensure continuous communication at all times.
- 3) Obtain a letter of nomination from a qualified IDA member nominator, as well as a supporting letter from the core zone leadership, such as a park superintendent or administrator. Solicit additional letters of support from communities in the peripheral zone.
- 4) Upon completion, sends the application to IDA staff for review of the document at least one month before the chosen submission deadline date. The application must be transmitted electronically to IDA in PDF and/or Microsoft Word format. IDA staff will confirm that the application is complete and ready for submission or return it with specific suggestions for improvements.
- 5) Submit in plenty of time for IDA staff to review and prepare your application to make the bi-monthly deadline that you prefer, as found on the IDA website. Requests to rush applications will **NOT** be honored; planning ahead is essential if the Reserve wishes to meet a specific deadline.

TO BE INCLUDED IN AN IDSR SUBMISSION

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- 1) Map(s) of the area to be designated clearly showing the core and periphery as well as locations of communities within the Reserve. The map must indicate the legal boundaries of the protected land forming the core zone.
- 2) Letter of nomination from a qualified IDA member nominator.
- 3) Letter of nomination consent from the core managing agency.
- 4) Any core zone management documents supporting dark skies and/or the natural nighttime environment as a valued resource.
- 5) Documentation of sky quality, light pollution measures, satellite images, maps, photographs, or other evidence that demonstrates the noteworthiness of the core's dark-sky resource. Measurements of night sky brightness must be obtained using IDA-approved night sky brightness measuring equipment. A sufficient number of sites within the core must be measured to clearly establish the significance of the resource with emphasis on the areas of highest visitation. Data included in the application must contain an updated night sky brightness survey of the core completed no more than two years before the application's submission along with any other relevant information.
- 6) Lighting Management Plan.
- 7) Documentation signed by core administrator showing a lighting inventory of the core and a plan to bring 90% of outdoor lighting into compliance with the Reserve's LMP within five years; as well as a signed commitment to bring the core into 100% compliance within ten (10) years.
- 8) Any documentation of the significance of the core beyond its dark night skies<sup>10</sup>.
- 9) Documentation or description of restoration projects (e.g. community outreach, lighting retrofits, etc.) currently in action.
- 10) Description of interpretive programming or interpretive products related to dark skies/natural darkness, and any related examples of successful education efforts (photos, documentation of student projects, etc.)
- 11) A description of future plans related to the Dark Sky Reserve.
- 12) Proposed alternative wording for IDSR (e.g. Dark Sky Wilderness, Dark Sky Refuge,

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<sup>10</sup> Examples include site historical research, importance to indigenous nocturnal wildlife, cultural significance, etc.

etc.), if desired, along with a justification for the request.

Examples of successful past applications are available on the IDA website.

## **IDA REVIEW PROCESS**

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Six (6) application submission deadlines occur in each calendar year, commencing in January and continuing every other month. Before the final application is submitted, it is strongly recommended that the Reserve be in regular communication with the International Dark Sky Places Program Manager to perfect the application before the next application deadline.

IDA staff regularly forwards applications to the DSPC for review. Endorsement of applications by the DSPC is by a 2/3 supermajority vote; otherwise, the DSPC will return applications with reasons for denial of an endorsement and specific recommendations for improvement.

If endorsed, the applicants will be notified and the International Dark Sky Places Program Manager will present the application to the IDA Board of Directors (BOD). A ten (10)-calendar-day waiting period then commences during which the BOD has the right to deny IDSP status should it determine that any problems with the application exist.

If the BOD registers no objection within the ten-calendar-day waiting period, the IDSP designation is considered immediately awarded by IDA. The Reserve has the right to choose when the designation is made public, but it must organize the announcement to be made at the same time as the IDA public notice unless otherwise agreed by both parties. Along with the announcement notice, IDA will publish the Reserve's application on its website; by submitting the application, the Reserve agrees in advance that the application will be made publicly available.

If an application is denied final approval by the IDA BOD, a letter will be sent to the applicant outlining elements of the application that need improvement, along with specific recommendations for ways to remedy any problems the BOD identifies. Applications may be resubmitted for future consideration after remediation is complete. Resubmitted applications will be considered without prejudice.

IDA realizes that certain circumstances surrounding an IDSR application may cause some potential authors of letters of support (or opposition) to feel uneasy about publicly declaring their opinions about the IDA designation. In the interest of providing the Dark Sky Places Committee with as full a picture of community sentiment about applications as possible, it is possible for some letters to be suppressed from online publication if it is felt that making the letters publicly available will subject their authors to



retaliation or harassment. A prospective IDSR seeking this protection for letter writers must make a formal written request. The International Dark Sky Places Program Manager must approve suppression of publication of any part of an application. Note that suppression of online publication does not prevent either the DSPC or the BOD from reading all submitted letters.

## **POST-DESIGNATION REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE**

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**The IDSR designation is not awarded in perpetuity.** Rather, it is subject to regular review by IDA and possible revocation if the minimum program requirements are not maintained. More details may be found in the “Reassessment of IDSR Designations” section below.

To ensure that Reserves remain exemplary in their protection and restoration of the natural nighttime environment, IDA will periodically reevaluate each site in the International Dark Sky Places Program. This is done to confirm that the Reserve continues to meet the minimum requirements and is making adequate progress toward LMP compliance goals outlined in this document.

Each designated IDSR must submit to IDA a written report of its activities related to the maintenance of its designation on or before 1 October of each calendar year. The report is a short (typically less than ten-page) synopsis of the Reserve’s activities and initiatives during the intervening year<sup>11</sup>. The report should include dates and brief descriptions of any interpretive events, lighting retrofit projects, outreach efforts, etc. Samples of printed materials and press articles should also be included.

Annual reports should not be burdensome to produce, as they are intended as a compilation of information accumulated throughout the year. Annual reports and supporting documentation must be submitted electronically to the International Dark Sky Places Program Manager in either PDF or Microsoft Word format. If the annual report is not received by IDA in a timely fashion, IDA may suspend the site’s IDSR status until the annual reporting requirement has been met (see the following section). On or about 1 August and 1 September of each year, the International Dark Sky Places Program Manager will remind local contacts at each IDSR of the pending 1 October annual report submission deadline.

A designated IDSR is exempt from the annual reporting requirement in the calendar year in which the IDA designation was awarded. If the designation is received after 1

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<sup>11</sup> Examples of acceptable annual reports are available on the individual IDSR pages on the IDA website.

October of a given calendar year, the IDSR's first annual report to IDA will be due on 1 October of the following calendar year.

## **REASSESSMENT OF IDSR DESIGNATIONS**

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An IDSR designation is intended to represent the beginning of an ongoing relationship between the Reserve and IDA to our mutual benefit. IDA will periodically review the nature of that relationship in the required annual reports. From time to time, IDA also receives comments from visitors to Reserves that raise concerns about the veracity and timeliness of information provided to IDA by IDSRs. IDA may, at its discretion, investigate claims in which it is alleged that IDSRs are not adhering to commitments made to IDA and the public in their applications to the Program. This section details the IDA procedure for carrying out such investigations, and the rights of IDSRs in such matters.

### **INVESTIGATION AND DUE PROCESS**

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An allegation of impropriety concerning any of the elements of participation in the Program outlined in this document is subject to IDA investigation and potential disciplinary action including temporary suspension and/or permanent revocation of the IDSR designation. IDA staff shall perform due diligence in gathering facts concerning such allegations it deems credible, and will prepare a report of its findings for consideration by the DSPC. The DSPC commits to weighing the evidence fairly and impartially, and to seek to resolve disputes whenever possible through dialog. A IDSR subject to an investigation shall be notified in a timely manner and solicited for evidence contrary to the specifics of the allegation at hand. The IDSR will be given an opportunity to correct any deficiencies with regard to the Program guidelines established by the IDA investigation within a reasonable time period to be prescribed by the DSPC.

Failure to achieve consensus through these means risks a DSPC recommendation for suspension or revocation of the IDSR designation. If made, such a recommendation will be forwarded to the BOD for formal ratification before coming into force. The BOD decision on any disciplinary matters involving a IDSR shall be considered definitive and binding.

Any IDSR so investigated has the right to review the allegations against it and all factual information collected by IDA pertinent to the allegations.

### **REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING SUSPENSION**

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If the DSPC recommends a suspension of an IDSR designation, and the BOD ratifies

the suspension, the IDSR shall be immediately notified. The status of a suspended IDSR shall be changed to “Provisional” in all IDA communications until the designation is reinstated or revoked; however, the process of obtaining reinstatement of a designation is not the same as that outlined in the “Provisional Status” section of these guidelines.

To obtain reinstatement of a suspended designation, the IDSR must provide evidence to the DSPC’s satisfaction that the specific issues identified by the DSPC as grounds for the suspension have been corrected and that all Program guidelines are once again met. The DSPC will consider the evidence presented by the IDSR and render a judgment to either

- Accept the reinstatement petition, **OR**
- Reject the petition and recommend revocation, **OR**
- Return the petition with further instructions and a defined deadline for a IDSR response.

A suspension left unresolved after one (1) year from the date of the BOD’s assent to the suspension automatically becomes a permanent revocation. Revocation entails removal of the IDSR from IDA’s roll of approved International Dark Sky Places, and from mention on the IDA website and in member and external communications. IDA reserves the right to take legal action against any former IDSR whose designation is duly revoked but continues to use the IDA name/logo in advertising, communications, and/or signage.

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#### SALE OR TRANSFER OF LAND OWNERSHIP

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IDA considers the rights and privileges outlined here in association with IDSR status to be simultaneously permanent and revocable. Furthermore, IDA requires that the responsibilities and obligations of the landowner(s) at the time IDSR status is achieved are incumbent upon all future landowner(s) if the core zone(s) of a participating Reserve is/are sold or its/their title is otherwise transferred to any other public or private owner. A new owner or owners may unilaterally withdraw from participation in the program at any time by indicating these wishes in writing; otherwise, IDA will hold a new owner or owners accountable to the provisions of these guidelines in perpetuity. Any failure of new ownership to abide by the conditions for continued participation in the program laid out in this document, whether indicated by withdrawal or abandonment of responsibilities, will cause IDA to take action as described above (‘Investigation and Due Process’) which may result in the permanent revocation of IDSR status.