

# Borrego Springs, California, Annual Report 2019 – 2020

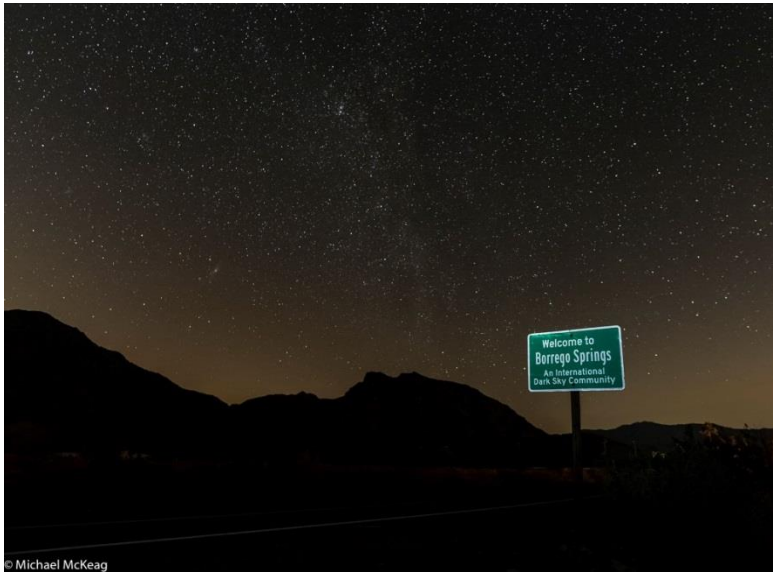


Photo by Michael McKeag.

**Borrego Springs Celebrates 10-Years as an International Dark Sky Community, 2009 – 2019** - Borrego Springs celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an IDA International Dark Sky Community, the second in the world, and the first and only in California. We held an event open to the public and well attended at the Borrego Springs Public Library, with speakers, programs, film, music, and refreshments.

**San Diego County Planning** - In February 2020, the San Diego County Land Use/Environmental Planning office gave the Borrego Dark Sky Coalition a presentation on their current focus.

Their project, which is underway, is to “... update the Light Pollution Chapter of the Regulatory Code to reflect current International Dark Sky Association (IDA) standards and for consistency with the state and federal laws. The County’s goal is to identify light pollution standards that meet or exceed IDA requirements that are both easy to adopt and implement for specific regions of the unincorporated County.”

There is now a growing understanding by San Diego County of the importance of using international lighting standards. County staff recognizes and respects the IDA Dark Sky status of both Borrego Springs village, and its neighbor, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The County planning group is aiming at creating a region in the rural area of the County, which would have stricter lighting regulations than those in the urban areas. We continue to support and work with the neighboring town of Julian, CA, toward their efforts to become an IDA Dark Sky Community.

**Neighborhood Lighting** – An inventory of neighborhood lighting was conducted in 2019. However no direct contact with the residents has yet been made. It is hoped that the upcoming changes in the county lighting code will serve as an impetus for Borrego residents to evaluate their porch lighting fixtures.



**Stargazing** - The Coalition continues to provide free monthly stargazing opportunities during the tourist season in the desert. We created a free download map of suggested stargazing sites in and around Borrego Springs, which people can go to on their own, and also tips for getting the most out of your Dark Sky experience.

Photo by Dennis Mammana, [www.dennismammana.com](http://www.dennismammana.com)

**Website** - <https://www.abdnha.org/borregodarksky/> The website pages were updated for a fresh look, with principles of outdoor lighting, about the dark sky coalition, and a sky calendar included on the home page.

**Dark Sky Display Table & Community Education** - The weekly Farmer's Market is the foundation of our interaction with local residents and visitors. The display shows examples of “good” and “bad” lighting, offers take-away informative materials, and a donation box. Coalition members also display the exhibit at other venues, such as the County Library Star Party and a Town Hall gathering.

We wrote, designed, printed and mailed a **postcard to over 2,000 post office box holders** in our zipcode reminding them of the basics of good outdoor lighting and being a good neighbor in a Dark Sky Community.

## LOCAL LIGHTING ISSUES

**Christmas Circle** – Inappropriate lighting was installed in palm trees in Christmas Circle, the town's local park. The temperature of the lights on the “Welcome” sign needs to be lowered.

**New LED Sign** - In spite of our advice, the local Performing Arts board installed an inappropriate display sign—the first LED sign in town. It has a portion of flashing blue light, and other unacceptable features. We plan to request changes.

**Dollar Store** - Coalition members wrote letters of objection to a proposed Dollar Store on the basis of the nighttime lighting needs for the parking lot. No update at this time.

**County Library & Park Lighting** – We have had some success with lighting reduced and being turned off earlier at the new library and park.

**Rams Hill Proposal** – Jim Rickard spoke about lighting issues for a new development at our local planning group, the Community Sponsor Group.



**Borrego Springs Dark Sky Coalition** bi-monthly meetings and pending projects were suspended in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus. Plans are to meet via video conference for the foreseeable future. Coalition Members: Betsy Knaak (chair), Grace Rickard (vice chair, community lighting chair), Randy Baron, Eli Hanks, Bill Hanks, Dorothy Hogan, Dennis Mammana, Michael McKeag, Jim Rickard, Dave Scheets, Kathy Scheets, Susan Switzer, Sally Theriault, Mary Watkins, and Sam Webb. Doug Sollesy from the Julian Dark Sky Network attends our meetings on a regular basis.

*Photo by Tom Hogan.*