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Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition
PO BOX 1892
Flagstaff AZ 86002
flagstaffdarkskies.org
info@flagstaffdarkskies.org



JOIN US at the Flagstaff Star Party

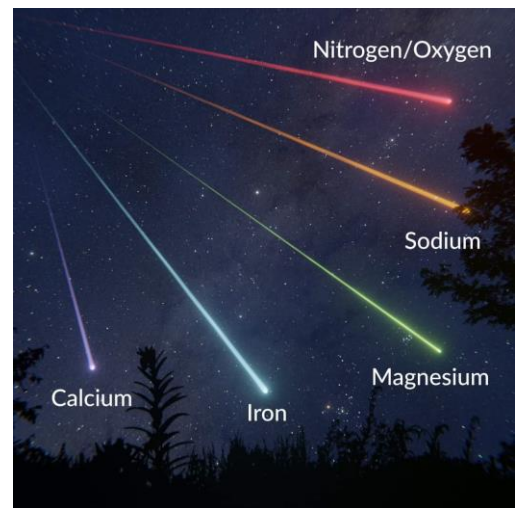
The night sky is dark in Northern Arizona. Even from the City of Flagstaff the Milky Way is visible with the naked eye. After one's eyes get adjusted to the dark, one can see how many stars fill the dome of the sky from horizon to horizon. And the best place to view these impressive dark skies is from the top of McMillan Mesa, at Buffalo Park. It is here that the annual Flagstaff Star Party is held.

Thousands of people and their families gather over three nights to view the celestial majesty of the night sky through dozens of telescopes. During the free star party, you might join a Sunset Talk to hear what happens as Earth transitions from day to night or a Twilight Talk that prepares you for what you are about to see in the universe. Each presentation is delivered by enthusiasts who have devoted their lives to promoting, protecting and preserving the night skies

This year's star party will include two examinations of cultural astronomy or "archaeoastronomy." This is the interdisciplinary study of the beliefs about the stars and their relation to human culture. Archaeoastronomy includes anthropology, archaeology, astronomy, mythology and the study of astronomical alignments, orientations and symbolism in ancient and modern architecture.

This year the Flagstaff Star Party is proud to welcome Ken Zoll from the Verde Valley Archaeology Center and the Society for Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest. Zoll will be discussing the cultural context of humankind's fascination and reverence for meteorites. His work was featured in the Spring 2022 publication of American Archaeology.

As Zoll explains: "Meteorites have long been recognized by ancient cultures as sacred objects from the heavens." He has examined collected fragments from the 12th-to-13th century Sinagua people who once lived around Flagstaff. His research suggests most are fragments from the 50,000-year-old impact by the Canyon Diablo meteor which created the world-famous Meteor Crater in Coconino County, Arizona.



He has found that these fragments were treated with respect. Some were wrapped in blankets made from turkey feathers then placed with reverence in a chosen site in correlation to where they were found. "There are likely a lot more ancient structures containing meteorites that we just don't know about," he said.

It is believed that the Hopewell's world famous astronomically oriented Serpent Mound in Ohio was built in relationship to a meteor impact crater. Other well-known celestial objects of veneration have been found in northwestern Mexico, in the Artic region by the Inuit, and by the Cree and Blackfoot people of Canada. In the 21st century, the interdisciplinary science of cultural astronomy is utilized to examine the cosmic traditions and the celestial inheritance woven throughout all peoples of all times.

At the Flagstaff Star Party, members of the Dark Skies Coalition and the Coconino Astronomical Society, astronomers from Lowell Observatory and around the region, and archaeologists like Ken Zoll are just a few of the fascinating people you will meet. So, grab your favorite people and get to McMillan Mesa, Sept. 22 – 24, for a stellar time under the skies of Northern Arizona.

There will be vendors with plenty of coffee, hot cocoa and hot food. While you're there, stop by the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition table by the entrance where you can learn how to support protecting the night sky by signing up for membership, buying and wearing a Flagstaff Star Party hoodie, stargazing and educating yourself about light pollution in the First International Dark Sky City. Heck, you may even see a meteor or two.

Feature Speaker Presentations Available on the FDSC YouTube Channel

A regular component of the monthly FDSC Members Meetings has been a featured speaker delivering a talk on topics broadly related to dark skies. Recent speakers have addressed topics ranging from Islamic Astronomy to the Flagstaff Solution to Preserving Dark Skies from the Top Down. All of these talks are now available from FDSC at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzrGY6bciNENIRFQv4DxlAQ>

Stop by at your convenience and learn more about any or all of these topics. A new talk will be added to this list on most months. Check them out.

In Remembrance



Lance Diskan – Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition

We are sad to say Lance Diskan, one of the founders of the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition, passed in June 2022.

After graduating from Ursinus College, Pennsylvania, Lance spent 20 years working for social justice causes in Coastal Los Angeles. This included co-founding the Venice Family Clinic, negotiating disability access at the Hollywood Bowl, contributing to the Free Venice Beachhead, and serving a four-year term as Los Angeles City Council Deputy.

After relocating to Flagstaff, Lance fulfilled his lifelong dream of working with indigenous populations by partnering with Black Mesa Trust in its ongoing fight for water sovereignty, protection of indigenous religion and the sacred Peaks. Lance also leaves behind a legacy of night sky preservation, including the founding of the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition in 1999 and the establishment of Flagstaff as the First International Dark Sky City in 2001. For more than two decades, Lance was a constant fixture at night sky events, often seen in his star-covered top hat or space-themed pants and always making friends for the sky.

In Remembrance

Jim Phillips – Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition and Coconino Astronomical Society

James O. Phillips, a longtime member of the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition and the Coconino Astronomical Society, has recently passed and will be missed.

Jim Phillips worked for Minnesota Power in Duluth until 2015. He was one of the four permanent speculative fiction members of the local Lake Superior Writers for more than 17 years. Jim was a masterful storyteller, noted by both his science-fiction writings and those stories he relayed around the breakfast table. He was always respectful of people and had a great sense of fairness, kindness and consideration in all of his dealings. He relayed often that his mind felt at home in thought and invention. He had a wide range of interests and particular expertise in a few, notably the world of butterflies. Flagstaff's bright forests, dark skies and Lowell Observatory were perfect for Jim's retirement.



Shortly after his arrival in Flagstaff, he attended a science fiction workshop at Lowell Observatory and ended up co-founding Flagstaff Writer's Connection and developing a critique group for speculative fiction writers.

He ran the Flagstaff Speculative Fiction Critique group until the pandemic forced the group to stop meeting in person. Jim kept in touch with the members and was making arrangements to start meeting again when he passed away of natural causes in his home during the second week of April 2022.

FDSC Committees Need Your Help

FDSC will accomplish much of its work through committees defined in the Bylaws. While all committees will become active this year, at the moment there is an urgent need for the Fundraising and Membership committees to become operational. Participation by FDSC members is crucial to achieve our expanded FDSC goals.

For the Membership Committee, increasing the FDSC membership by 100 is a 2022 goal. Fundraising needs to address the gap between the income expected from past sources and what is needed for 2022. Please take a moment to peruse the Bylaws, which are posted on the FDSC website, and find a committee that interests you that you would consider joining.

Become a Member of the Coalition

Your membership supports the mission of the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition: To celebrate, promote and protect the glorious dark skies of Flagstaff and Northern Arizona, and by example, set the gold standard in night sky protection.

Our mission is to celebrate the wonders of the nocturnal ecosystem that all humanity inhabits, to promote awareness and participation, and to protect this natural resource for future generations as our common inheritance. We work to enhance public awareness about the night and advocate for public policies that reduce wasteful lighting. By celebrating the values found in natural darkness, we work to continue Flagstaff's 60+ years of worldwide leadership in night sky protection. <http://www.flagstaffdarkskies.org/become-a-member-of-the-coalition/>

Memorable Quotes

But soon, the prospect clearing,
By cloudless starlight on he treads
And thinks no lamp so cheering
As that light which Heaven sheds.

Thomas Moore, I'd Mourn the Hopes.

This hairy meteor did announce
The fall of sceptres and of crowns.

Samuel Butler, Hudibras, Part I (1663-64), Canto I. 247.

"God is infinite, so His universe must be too. Thus is the excellence of God magnified and the greatness of His kingdom made manifest; He is glorified not in one, but in countless suns; not in a single earth, a single world, but in a thousand thousand, I say in an infinity of worlds."

Giordana Bruno, On the Infinite Universe and Worlds, 1584