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Welcome, James Rounds: FDSC Hires a New Executive Director

The Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition is pleased to welcome James Rounds as our new Executive Director. James is a long time Flagstaff resident who has worked primarily in education prior to joining FDSC, including stints at Flagstaff High School, Basis Flagstaff and at Tuba City, AZ. While not in the classroom, he coached girls' soccer, did a Fulbright/Hays Fellowship in Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan and volunteered for an environmental nonprofit for wildlife surveys and educational outreach. He served as a leader for the Alpine Institute at Flagstaff High School, a magnet-type program focusing on the Colorado Plateau. He enjoys sharing the Flagstaff environment with his wife (a Lowell Observatory employee) and two children who ask, "Why have the stars gone away?" when they travel to Phoenix.

James has long appreciated the dark skies of Flagstaff and looks forward to contributing to the protection of this resource, promoting the value of dark skies to the local community and sharing the Flagstaff story with other communities. At the same time, he will work to establish a robust Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition that will continue their work for decades to come.

Please offer your welcome to James as part of the FDSC Community and do consider responding positively when he solicits Members involvement in future FDSC projects.

James can be reached at: james.c.rounds@gmail.com

A message from James:

I am thrilled to take on the Executive Director role for the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition! I hope to bring a fresh perspective and drive to the mission of protecting, promoting, and celebrating the dark skies of Northern Arizona. The board has tasked me with improving our membership numbers, increasing our public outreach, and securing funding for the growth and stability of the coalition and I am excited to impress in those areas.

I took this role in no small degree because of how much my children appreciate seeing the stars here in Flagstaff. They are only five and two, but they notice any time we visit family in Phoenix or California that the stars disappear. They are perpetually curious about the sky, and I truly believe that every child should have the opportunity to wonder at the stars, eat s'mores at a campfire with the Milky Way glowing overhead, and watch the silhouette of an owl flicker across the moon. I hope to increase our outreach to children and families and inspire younger generations to recover truly dark skies for everyone.

Upcoming FDSC Events

Membership in the Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition has always been one of the benefits of this mountain town. Its members are actively involved in protecting and celebrating the glorious night skies of Northern Arizona. And beyond the American Southwest, members have witnessed the Flagstaff Solution reaching out to educate neighboring states and the rest of the world over the last twenty years. For decades, the FDSC has offered information tables on Earth Day, at the annual Science Fair, at Stem events, and at Lowell Observatory events. The FDSC has held the very popular annual Flagstaff Star Party as well as lectures by members out under the star filled skies of this First International Dark Sky City.

Additionally, the FDSC has had fun participating in the annual Flagstaff Fourth of July parade. It is here a Dark Skies float is entered to make our presence known and to advertise upcoming events like its month-long Celebration of the Night and the upcoming fall Star Party. The parade attracts over ten thousand citizens who line up along a mile-long downtown route and the numbers of families who come to enjoy this popular event keeps increasing every year. More entries are being added to the line of floats and is now up to around one hundred twenty. This has been a great way to remind Flagstaffian families that each of them is a part of the proud leadership in this ever-growing environmental cause. And that the FDSC has actively promoted awareness of this noble endeavor for over twenty years.



Recently, the FDSC was made aware of an early December holiday Flagstaff Light Parade held at night and travels a similar route in downtown Flagstaff. In this event, floats light up in a fun manner for the winter themed public activity. So, once again, a family-oriented event is being made available to our organization to promote recognition of our good works and encourage residents to get involved with dark skies.

To accomplish this, it just takes one person to decorate their automobile with our FDSC parade supplies in the same simple manner as is done on the Fourth of July every year. Then simply drive downtown parade route at

the time and place designated. This will become a biannual message encouraging all to join us by becoming a member. Unfortunately, those of us who have organized and created this presence have either moved away from the Flagstaff area or become unable to walk or drive the one-mile route. We need volunteers to take the lead on these important public events. Someone must write the copy which will be read by parade staff over the public address system during these events. Someone needs to fill out the event forms at the Chamber of Commerce. Someone needs to post event posters at the visitor center, all shops, art galleries, bulletin boards and coffee/tea houses throughout the city.

So, this year, besides deciding a theme for our Fall Star Party, the FDSC might consider more actively and publicly promoting membership as a vital goal of our organization. Perhaps create a single line message that tells residents they need to join our cause for the preservation of their children's celestial heritage and for their generations to come. The FDSC needs your help now!

Mark Your Calendars for FSP 2023

The stars may be trillions of miles away, but they seem closer in the world's first International Dark-Sky City! The FSP organizing committee has begun aligning the stars for the 10th annual Flagstaff Star Party, September 21-23, 2023, at Flagstaff's Buffalo Park. The Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition, along with partners Lowell



Observatory, Coconino Astronomical Society, NAU Department of Astronomy and Planetary Science, and the US Geological Survey Astrogeology Science Center, are laying out another exciting program of stargazing, music, presentations, and telescope viewing to connect Flagstaff residents and visitors to the universe around us. Volunteers are needed to make this a successful event, so please stay tuned for emails in the coming months announcing opportunities to help assure this signature Flagstaff event is as stellar as always!

Finding connections in a star-filled sky with Rich Krueger

Nominations Sought for the FDSC Board of Directors

FDSC is seeking nominations for our Board to aid the further growth of our Coalition and to expand the activities that our organization seeks to pursue. In addition to having a passion for preserving the amazing night skies, we would welcome suggestions for individuals who have strong ties to our community and would be willing to work on the Fundraising Committee or the Advisory/Nominating Committee in particular.

If you are interested in this opportunity or know of someone who might be, please send nominations to:

Mr. Drew Carhart

FDSC Secretary at: drew.carhart@gmail.com

Short Summary of the January 17, 2023 Meeting of the FDSC Board of Directors

The first FDSC Board of Directors meeting for 2023 featured a lot of the standard work for a year's commencement. Officers were elected for the 2023 term; President Chris Luginbuhl, Vice-President Don Davis, Secretary Drew Carhart, and Treasurer Robert Breunig each agreed to serve an additional term. Breunig and Carhart were also re-elected as Directors, as their terms in that position were expiring.

An operating budget for 2023 was adopted, as was a preliminary outline of goals and activities for the year. The hiring of an Executive Director for 2023 was discussed at length, as were fundraising plans. It was decided that a new master Strategic Planning Document needed to be drawn up, to succeed the plan that was adopted in 2020, since many of the earlier plan's goals had been met.

Overall, it was agreed that 2023 would be a busy year for FDSC, with a lot of important work to accomplish.

FDSC Membership Meetings

The monthly FDSC Membership Meetings are scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month via a Zoom link. Reminders are sent out via email a few days prior to each meeting.

The agenda is typically in two parts: First are reports from our President and others about business topics relating to the Coalition. This part is followed by a talk by experts on topics relating to dark sky preservation. These talks are recorded and stored on the FDSC Youtube site – we currently have eleven talks that are available.

Please check these out at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzrGY6bciNENIRFQv4DxIAQ> to learn more about topics ranging from impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy to the activities of the Fountain Hills dark sky preservation projects.

We are always looking for speakers so if you would like to propose someone or give a talk yourself, please contact Don Davis, Chair, Membership Committee at: drd002@gmail.com

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.flagstaffdarks skies.org/become-a-member-of-the-coalition/>

