

Save Starry Skies License Plate



This brochure was produced by Friends of Nevada Wilderness with proceeds from the Save Starry Skies specialty license plate.

The Save Starry Skies license plate is available to registered Nevada motorists. Proceeds are used to monitor Nevada's dark skies, provide public education and outreach, promote astro tourism in rural Nevada, and assist with lighting infrastructure improvements.

Scan the QR code or visit nevadadarksky.org for more information on how to get your Save Starry Skies license plate.



FRIENDS OF NEVADA WILDERNESS

Dedicated to preserving, defending and stewarding wild public lands and dark skies and informing the public about the values of and need for Wilderness.

Save Starry Skies

Protecting and Appreciating Nevada's Uniquely Dark Skies

Can the Dark Disappear?

Yes, dark night skies are steadily disappearing as the increasing use of artificial light makes the world brighter. As the dark sky disappears, so do the stars, washed out by the glare from our cities and towns.

The loss of our visibly starry skies is not the only negative impact of light pollution. Artificial light upsets the 24-hour circadian rhythms of plants, animals, and humans that all evolved in an environment that was dark at night.



We've lived in a world of artificial light for less than 200 years, a split second on the scale of time. **Bird migration, nocturnal animal life, human mental and physical health, and other natural balances have been disrupted, making it more difficult for us all to thrive.**

Light pollution is wasteful. Each year in the U.S., excessive use of artificial light releases millions of tons of carbon dioxide, contributing to the effects of climate change, and costs consumers more than \$3 billion in wasted energy.

Artificial Lights and You

Excessive light is one source of "pollution" that is relatively easy for us as individuals, business owners, and communities to control.

A non-profit group called DarkSky International has developed five principles for responsible outdoor lighting so you can **take the first steps to limit your light pollution:**

- ★ Useful – All light should have a clear purpose
- ★ Targeted – Direct/shield light so it falls only where it is needed
- ★ Low Level – Light should be no brighter than necessary
- ★ Controlled – Use light only when it is needed, by using motion detectors, timers, and dimmers
- ★ Warm-colored – Limit the amount of shorter blue-violet wavelengths

Remember, artificial light does not enhance public safety in ways that many people believe. Too much can create shadows that actually make hiding easier; increased glare makes it difficult for drivers and pedestrians to see.

A study prepared by the U.S. National Institute of Justice concluded: **"We can have very little confidence that improved lighting prevents crime."**

Nevada's Dark Skies

The good news is that stars remain highly visible throughout much of rural Nevada.

Since so much of our state is public land and is sparsely populated, large regions remain unlit, allowing the naturally dark sky to shine with more stars than can be counted.

This map from the 2016 New World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness illustrates the vast reserves of dark skies that can be found in Nevada.

It also illustrates the fact that 99% of Americans live in areas that are so bright from artificial light, only a handful of stars are visible on a clear night. As more and more people learn there are still special places, like Nevada, that are rich in dark skies, they pack their bags and travel great distances to gaze and be amazed at what they can't possibly see back home.



Astro-Tourism

Astro-tourism is growing in popularity around the world. According to Travel Noire, "Astro-tourism has seen a significant surge of interest over the past few years. Astro-tourism isn't just about the allure of celestial bodies. It's also about connecting with nature, finding serenity under a starlit sky, and basking in the raw beauty of the cosmos. The trend offers a unique experience that combines science, nature, and spirituality."

Tourism officials and rural communities throughout Nevada are recognizing this trend and spreading the word about Nevada's uniquely dark skies. Star gazing is a low-impact activity that can help stimulate local economies while educating the public about the value of preserving our night skies. For more information on the best places to star gaze, visit parktoparkinthedark.org and travelnevada.com/stargazing.



Tips for Stargazing

Unlike some outdoor activities, stargazing is free and doesn't require expensive gear. Here are a few things you might bring to enhance your stargazing experience:

- ★ Warm clothes – even in the summer, it can turn cold in Nevada's high desert
- ★ A head lantern or flashlight – a small investment in a headlamp that toggles to red light will enhance your night vision and limit bright light
- ★ Binoculars or telescope – while not necessary, it's sometime cool to zoom in
- ★ Reclining chairs or blankets – you'll be looking up for a while, so why not get comfortable
- ★ Download an Astronomy app that can help you find and ID constellations; just dim the excess light from your device

Nevada's Starry Spots



Great Basin National Park



Park to Park in the Dark Astro-Tourism Route



Massacre Rim Dark Sky Sanctuary