

# Death Valley National Park 2014 Annual Report to the IDA

## General

Current Contact: Cheryl Chipman, 760-786-3207 [cheryl\\_chipman@nps.gov](mailto:cheryl_chipman@nps.gov)

Carole Wendler, 760-786-3276 [carole\\_wendler@nps.gov](mailto:carole_wendler@nps.gov)

Estimated visitor count: Roughly one million to park. Approximately 5,300 visitors attended Night Sky programs.

## Lighting

New projects: Components for new lighting systems were purchased and low watt bulbs were installed at Scotty's Castle. New timer and light sensitive fixtures have been designed, but not yet installed. Estimation time of completion is 2015.

Xanterra Parks and Resorts (private landowner) retrofitted lighting at the gas station in Furnace Creek. The new lighting produces less light trespass to adjacent facilities.

## Sky Quality

No sky quality data was taken during the year. Brightness did not increase.

## Conservation & Research

NA

## Funding

The National Park Service Night Sky and Soundscape Division sponsored a volunteer (Astro-VIP) for six weeks during the 2013-2014 season. She then returned on her own to continue her work for the park for an additional four weeks in 2014.

We will be receiving two volunteers sponsored by this program in 2014-2015. Their work allows us to offer additional programming, as well as offer continued training for our staff.

## Outreach

Due to our NPS sponsored Astro-VIP, Death Valley was able to hold solar viewing programming on a regular basis. The programs will continue through the 2014-2015 visitation season. It is estimated that an additional 826 visitors attended 50 programs made available by this volunteer. She also conducted twelve training sessions for our interpretive staff.

Additionally, park staff posted weekly astronomy topics and viewings on the Facebook page, and the park newspaper included articles on the night sky and programming. The Interpretive Branch added full moon walks as part of the ranger repertoire.

## **Community and Media Relations**

The Ventura Astronomy Club will hold a public event here in the park in November 2014 for the first time, bringing large telescopes and expertise. Xanterra Parks and Resorts have recently offered facilities to hold events on their property, inside the boundaries of Death Valley National Park. This is a good development as restrictions on times and locations within National Park Service lands prohibit some of the best viewing areas.

An article titled "Seeing Stars" by Paul Bogard featuring Death Valley's night sky was published in Reader's Digest 8/2013.