



# STARGAZING INTO THE DARK SKIES OF CENTRAL TEXAS

INFORMATION ABOUT DARK SKY LOCATIONS WHERE THE STARS AT NIGHT ARE BIG AND BRIGHT, DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS.



## THE DARK SKIES PROGRAM

Did you know that an estimated 80 percent of Americans have never seen the Milky Way? The culprit: the growing glow of artificial lights. Sadly, the night skies are fading and natural darkness is disappearing. In light of this, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has partnered with the McDonald Observatory, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and local astronomy groups to promote stargazing in Central Texas. The program hopes to raise awareness of preserving night skies with star parties, self-guided constellation tours and light pollution education programs. Learn more at [darksky.org](http://darksky.org)

## HOW DARK SKY QUALITY IS MEASURED

The Bortle Scale rates how well you can see celestial objects in a certain place, taking into account light pollution and sky glow. Lower numbers indicate darker skies. Learn more about the Bortle Scale at [wikipedia.org/wiki/Bortle\\_scale](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Bortle_scale)

## STATE PARK BORTLE SCALE RATINGS

See each park's Clear Sky Chart, showing an astronomer's forecast for that park. [bit.ly/3DU9vu5](http://bit.ly/3DU9vu5)

## CERTIFIED DARK SKY COMMUNITIES

A town, city, municipality, or other legally organized community that has shown exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of a quality outdoor lighting ordinance, dark sky education, and citizen support of dark skies. A certification granted by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA).

### CENTRAL TEXAS CERTIFIED DARK SKY COMMUNITIES:

CITY OF BEE CAVE  
BLANCO  
DRIPPING SPRINGS

FREDERICKSBURG  
HORSESHOE BAY  
WIMBERLEY

## CERTIFIED DARK SKY PARKS

Land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, or educational value, its cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment. A certification granted by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA).

The land may be publicly or privately owned, provided that the landowner(s) consent to the right of permanent, ongoing public access to specific areas included in the Dark Sky Park designation.

### CENTRAL TEXAS CERTIFIED DARK SKY PARKS:

ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA  
LYNDON B. JOHNSON STATE PARK  
MILTON REIMERS RANCH PARK  
SOUTH LLANO RIVER STATE PARK

To learn about these communities and see all international Designated Dark Sky Areas, visit:

[bit.ly/45qCH7N](http://bit.ly/45qCH7N)

## WHAT IS LIGHT POLLUTION?

Light pollution is light that is too bright, is misdirected, or is shining where it's not wanted. Poorly designed or installed outdoor lighting leads to light pollution. To learn more about responsible outdoor lighting, visit: [bit.ly/3sdLlM3](http://bit.ly/3sdLlM3)

**WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?** Because light pollution:

- Produces glare that limits our ability to see at night, making us less safe and secure rather than more.
- Creates light trespass (light shining where it isn't wanted).
- Wastes money when we light areas unnecessarily, including the sky.
- Obscures the view of the stars and planets.
- Impacts the health for humans and animals.