

Letters of Support



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth National Forest
Supervisor's Office

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File Code: 1300; 3170
Date: September 14, 2017

Board of Directors
International Dark-Sky Association
3223 North First Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85719

Dear Board of Directors,

The Sawtooth National Forest extends its support to the International Dark-Sky Association for the certification of the proposed Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve. The proposed 906,000-acre reserve would primarily encompass public lands administered by the Sawtooth National Forest. The reserve would include the entire Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA) and a portion of the Ketchum Ranger District. The Forest has worked with the Idaho cities of Ketchum, Sun Valley and Stanley as well as Blaine County, the Idaho Conservation League, the Sawtooth Society and concerned citizens to help preserve the natural dark-sky experience for residents and visitors in central Idaho. The efforts by these partners to protect the quality of the night sky will also support the preservation and protection of the natural, fish, wildlife, scenic, historic, pastoral and recreational values for which the Sawtooth NRA was established.

The Sawtooth National Forest manages one of the few sizeable areas in the United States that retains exceptionally dark night skies, and is readily accessible for public enjoyment. It is of the utmost importance to protect this heritage as a part of the values recognized in the Sawtooth NRA enabling legislation, and to preserve the character of the associated Wilderness areas within the Sawtooth NRA. A paramount mission of the Forest Service is the responsibility to protect the natural conditions, primeval character and influence of designated wilderness. Preserving natural dark night skies is complementary to accomplishing that mandate.

The Forest is committed to working with cooperating groups and associations in support of the certification effort to accomplish the following:

- Support ongoing lighting inventory of the Dark Sky Reserve.
- Record sky quality meter readings to establish the quality of the dark night sky resource and changes throughout time.
- Offer public outreach, interpretation and educational programs explaining the purpose of the reserve and the value of the dark sky resource.
- Work with partner groups to acquire signage or other interpretive materials indicating dark sky reserve designation.
- Support efforts, where possible to bring outside lighting for Sawtooth National Forest facilities into compliance with IDA standards, subject to funding availability and normal maintenance procedures.



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National Forest Service support of the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve will not infringe upon the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan or the laws of the United States governing the management of the National Forest or the private lands therein. Our support of the Dark Sky Reserve will not require the Forest Service to obligate funds for any specific actions. Funding will remain subject to normal Forest Service procedures in regards to budgeting and other procedures.

Establishing the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve will strengthen our combined efforts to achieve our comprehensive land management goals for the Sawtooth National Forest. The Dark Sky Reserve will help to protect and preserve ecosystem integrity, and will enhance educational and interpretive opportunities and recreation as well as benefit local tourism economies.

We commend the International Dark-Sky Association for sponsoring this program, and look forward to joining our efforts to preserve the extraordinary dark sky resource in our area.

Sincerely,



KIT T. MULLEN
Forest Supervisor

