



News Release

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Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Recognized as an International Dark-Sky Park

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California State Parks proudly announces the designation of [Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) (Anza-Borrego) as an International Dark-Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA).

Located on the eastern side of San Diego County, with portions extending east into Imperial County and north into Riverside County, Anza-Borrego is the largest state park in California. Five hundred miles of dirt road, 12 wilderness areas and many miles of hiking trails provide visitors with an unparalleled opportunity to experience the wonders of the California Desert.

“This is exciting news for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to be recognized as a dark-sky park,” said Acting District Superintendent Norbert Ruhmke. “We made improvements to our light fixtures not only to better protect the wildlife, but also for our visitors to enjoy the beauty the desert has to offer at night.”

Long considered a premier site for stargazing, Anza-Borrego offers regular night sky interpretive programming. Monthly stargazing and moon-watching programs give visitors opportunities to learn about features of the night sky, the importance of darkness, and the steps the park is taking to protect dark skies. In recent years, Anza-Borrego has retrofitted light fixtures and replaced bright white lights with more dark-sky friendly amber lights. The new light fixtures create less light pollution, and have a smaller negative effect on wildlife.

Anza-Borrego’s commitment to protecting and interpreting its dark night skies was a factor in IDA’s official designation as a dark-sky park. The designation as a “Silver-Tier” park recognizes the very dark skies over most of the park, while acknowledging the presence of relatively small domes of light pollution near the horizon, from the surrounding urban areas of Los Angeles, San Diego, Palm Springs and El Centro.





“We’re very pleased with the outcome for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park,” said IDA Executive Director J. Scott Feierabend. “It builds significantly on the previous designation of Borrego Springs as an International Dark Sky Community, and strengthens dark-skies protections for both. As a result, many millions of people in southern California continue to be able to access and enjoy a nearby, dark night sky.”

IDA established the International Dark Sky Places conservation program in 2001 to recognize excellent stewardship of the night sky. Designations are based on stringent outdoor lighting standards and innovative community outreach. Since the program began, 18 communities, 58 parks, 12 reserves, three sanctuaries and four dark sky friendly developments of distinction are recognized with International Dark Sky Places designations. For more information about the International Dark Sky Places Program, visit <http://darksky.org/idsp>.

Upcoming Anza-Borrego Dark Sky Events:

- **Stargazing on Saturday, January 20 from 7 to 8 p.m.**
Winter nights are perfect for stargazing. Explore constellations and learn about the importance of dark skies everywhere. Bring binoculars if you have them, flashlight (red lens is preferable) and your imagination! Look for Interpreter Sally Theriault at the Borrego Palm Canyon Campfire Center.
- **Campfire Eclipse Program on Saturday, January 27 from 7 to 8 p.m.**
Be prepared for Wednesday morning’s lunar eclipse, and learn more about earth’s nearest neighbor, the moon—why are there moon phases and eclipses? Enjoy the night



sky and campfire with Park Interpreter Sally Theriault at the Borrego Palm Canyon Campfire Center.

- **Eclipse Talk on Monday, January 29 from 3 to 4 p.m.**
Be prepared for Wednesday morning's lunar eclipse, and learn more about earth's nearest neighbor, the moon. Why are there are moon phases and eclipses? Meet in the Visitor Center Discovery Lab.
- **Moon Features Talk and Moonrise Viewing on Wednesday, January 31 at 5 p.m.**
Have you wondered what the "Man in the Moon" really is? Join Park Interpretive Specialist Regina Reiter for this interactive program to discern the features of the moon and see a demonstration of the moon phases. Meet in the Visitor Center Discovery Lab. Stay for the moon rise.

Anza-Borrego protects nearly 650,000 acres of desert ecosystem in southern California, and two-thirds of that is afforded extra protection as designated wilderness. In addition to habitat for wildlife, the park serves as a refuge for humans too—offering expansive vistas, quiet solitude, and stunning night skies filled with stars. Residents of San Diego or Palm Springs can reach the park in two hours or less, and for those coming from the Los Angeles area, a 3-hour drive brings them to a completely different world. A glance at any map of light pollution in southern California reveals that Anza-Borrego is truly an oasis of darkness, easily accessible to the millions of people who live in these metropolitan areas.

The desert is a very beautiful and exciting place, but it can also be very unpredictable and dangerous. Whether you are hiking, camping, viewing wildlife or vegetation or the dark sky, it is important for visitors to plan their outdoor adventure in the desert properly. Simple actions such as taking plenty of water and food, and knowing that cell coverage is extremely limited or non-existent can help you be better prepared to safely enjoy this iconic landscape. For more information, please visit www.parks.ca.gov/anzaborrego.

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