

GUEST SPOTLIGHT



A CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS TO THE NIGHT SKY

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Indians

What words would you use to describe your home?

Words to describe my reservation are remote, quiet, untouched, and just plain wonderful. We are a 30-minute drive to the grocery store and a one hour drive to the nearest Walmart.

There are certain sections on the reservation where new constructions are permitted but the rest of the 122,000 acres remains untouched. The Paiute are caretakers of the land because we come from the land, live off the land, and then go back to the land. Preserving things at ground level also preserves things at sky level and the two are very much connected.

Why is dark sky conservation important to your community?

For the tribe it is different than for cities and towns in many ways. We see "sky" conversation as a teaching tool to help us reconnect with songs, stories, dances and the spirituality of what the dark/night really means to my Paiute people. Our songs, stories and dances connect us to our surroundings both during the day and night. We look at conservation of the sky through a cultural connectedness aspect which incorporates many different things.

A more modern aspect is that we do have a lighting ordinance which affects all new construction on the reservation. The ordinance applies to our new RV park, billboard signs, and tribal homes.

What are you doing about it?

Since our 2015 designation we have been uncovering songs, stories and dances related to the night sky. The songs, stories and dances are structured around our Bighorn Sheep to which we have songs/dances that have not been done since the 40's and stories that have not been told since the 50's.

*Background Image: Kaibab Campfire Stories
by Bettymaya Foott*



Image by Timothy O'Sullivan from grandcanyontrust.org

Paiutes have a saying “one person speaks, one person listens. Many people speak, many people listen.” So, in other words, one person can not do it alone and it will take many people to help spread the word of the importance of dark sky conservation.

This year we will be teaching our youth the dances, songs, and stories. It has been a 4-year struggle to relearn and find people willing to put their time into helping teach a forgotten, important piece of our culture that was considered lost until the designation happened.

What do you need to be successful?

A core group of people willing to commit time and energy into all that needs to be done to make events, classes, or projects happen in fun and friendly ways.

What advice would you share with another community?

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Learn more about the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians at <https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/info/kaibab-band-paiute>

For information about the Kaibab Paiute Reservations Dark Sky Certification visit <https://www.darksky.org/the-worlds-first-ida-dark-sky-nation/>