

Preserving a Sense of Awe: The Utah Dark Skies Research Project

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When was the last time you noticed Andromeda or Canis Major hovering above your head? Around 99 percent of people who live in developed nations live under light-polluted night skies. Light pollution is obtrusive artificial light, and too much of it has consequences—it washes out the night sky, disrupts ecosystems, impacts human health and wastes energy.

Utah has some of the darkest skies left in the U.S. Now IORT is doing research focused on learning more about the economic benefits and visitor experience of dark skies. We'll be putting actual numbers to the economic contributions local economies see from dark sky tourism, and working to understand how visitors experience our skies. This information will help managers of parks and protected areas make better decisions about protecting this experience into the future.

Funded through the National Park Service and the USU Public Lands Initiative Program.