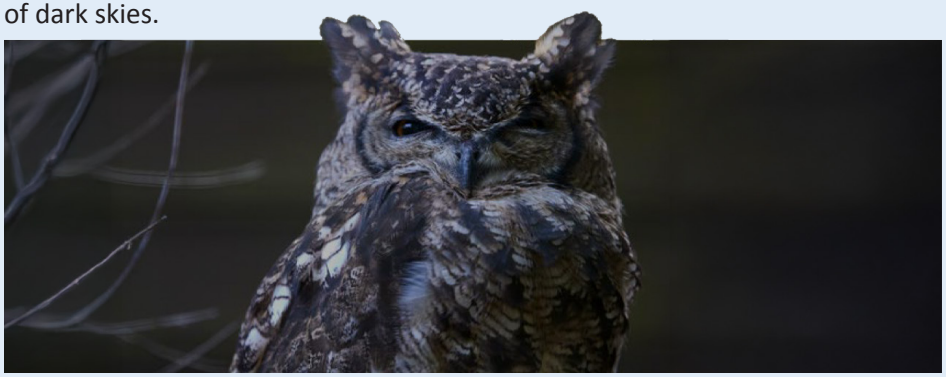
# Lincoln City is Coming Together to Achieve International Dark Sky Certification

## What is an International Dark Sky Community ?

Are the skies over Lincoln City, Oregon sufficiently dark enough to qualify for international recognition as a Dark Sky Community? The unexpected answer is—when considering Dark Sky Communities, the current level of darkness is not the most important factor. Ultimately, what matters is how committed the community is to safeguarding the night sky in the years ahead. Dark Sky International, a nonprofit organization that aims to restore the nighttime environment and protect communities and wildlife from light pollution, defines an International Dark Sky Community as 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.



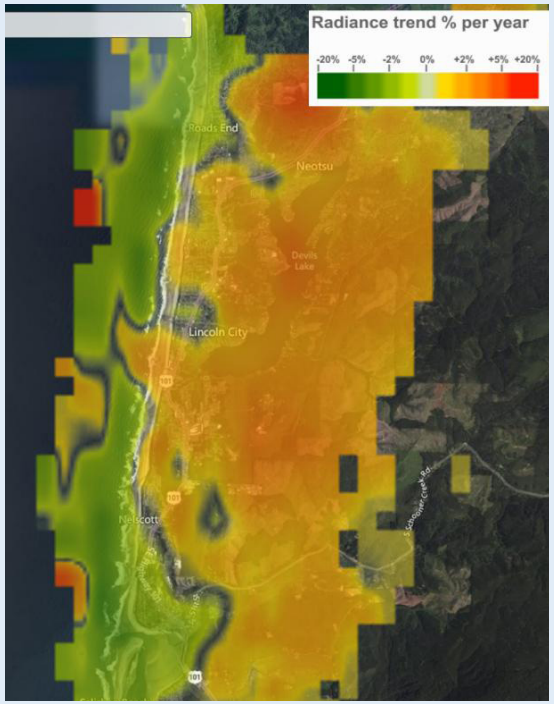
In addition to International Dark Sky Communities, Dark Sky International provides nomination opportunities for Dark Sky Parks, Reserves, Sanctuaries, Approved Lodges, and Urban Night Sky Places (collectively Dark Sky Places).

Lincoln City has the potential to become the first Dark Sky destination on the Oregon Coast and the first coastal Dark Sky Community in the United States. It has the potential to become the most populous Dark Sky Community in Oregon while fostering sustainable economic development, serving as a model for a harmonious relationship between humans and the environment they inhabit—aligned with the city's inclusion in Oregon's only UNESCO Biosphere Region. There are currently 56 certified International Dark Sky Communities across the globe. Lincoln City may be included among this list of special places—stay tuned by subscribing to the Explore Lincoln City Industry Newsletter.

## Why is Lincoln City Pursuing A Nomination?

Lincoln City is pursuing a Dark Sky Community nomination for a host of reasons, including: **(1)** such international recognition would make Lincoln City a destination for dark sky tourism, extending traditional visitation periods and also the length of tourist activity into the evening hours boosting a visitation-dependent economy, **(2)** implementing responsible outdoor lighting policies and promoting dark sky education could curb—and potentially even reverse—the trend of light pollution that endangers the region's star-filled night skies and the rich biodiversity of its forests, wetlands, estuary, lake, and 7.5 miles of ocean shoreline, **(3)** the requirements for becoming a Dark Sky Community align seamlessly with Lincoln City's role as a cooperative partner with the Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative, **(4)** responsible outdoor lighting saves energy and reduces lighting operation and maintenance costs, improves safety, and lowers the risk artificial light at night poses to human health, and **(5)** preserving the night generates a sense of belonging and connection among residents, leading to an increased investment in the well-being of community.

While many Oregonians may take the magnificent skies for granted, about 80% of Americans can no longer see the Milky Way from their homes. A recent study indicates that since 2011, light pollution in the world has grown at a rate of 10% annually (Kyba et al. 2023). That means that a child born today will see about 60% fewer stars by their 18th birthday. The amount of artificial light at night detected from satellites above Lincoln City is also trending upwards for most of the city (See Figure on the Right).



Unlike other forms of pollution that are harder to solve, light pollution can be tackled gradually—one light and one person at a time.

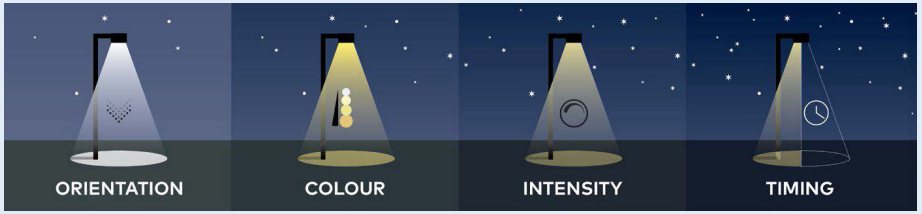
### *Steps Towards A Dark Sky Community Nomination*

Per decisions made by City Council and the City Manager in 2024 and 2025, Lincoln City has embarked on the first of three phases towards nomination. Explore Lincoln City is leading the effort; however, all the departments are assisting in the process. **Phase 1** is a Feasibility Assessment designed to collect relevant information and establish the programs and feedback mechanisms needed to evaluate Lincoln City's potential for a Dark Sky International nomination. This phase will guage the community's level of interest in a nomination and determine the amount of effort it will entail for the City of Lincoln City to prepare, adopt, and conform to a lighting ordinance. Several criteria must be met in order to be deemed eligible for nomination by Dark Sky International. They include:

1. Adopt an outdoor lighting policy (i.e., an ordinance) compatible with Dark Sky International's minimum requirements for permanent lighting installations.
2. Demonstrate community commitment to dark skies and quality lighting (i.e., city-owned lights to conform with ordinance within 5 years and other non-exempt lights to conform within a 10-year window to phase in compliance).
3. Demonstrate broad support for dark skies from a wide range of community organizations.
4. Demonstrate community commitment to dark skies and education as shown by at least one of the following: **a)** at least two community dark sky awareness events per year; **b)** dark sky awareness documents; **c)** dark sky education in community schools and curriculum.
5. Demonstrable success in light pollution control (e.g., identify new developments conforming to the outdoor lighting policy).

In response to the eligibility criteria, Lincoln City has prepared a detailed inventory of its outdoor lighting, and with the help of volunteers has performed a generalized audit of other outdoor lighting to determine the current status of outdoor lighting in Lincoln City and its relative compatibility with **Dark Sky International's Five Responsible Lighting Principles.** These principles include:

**(1)** Use light only where it is needed; **(2)** Direct light so it falls only where it is needed; use shielding; **(3)** Use warmer color lights to minimize the harmful effects of blue-rich white light on living things and star visibility; **(4)** Refrain from using any light that is brighter than necessary for the task at hand; use the lowest light level possible; and **(5)** Use outdoor light only when it is needed; use controls such as timers, dimmers, or motion detectors.




Next, a plan will be developed, using a set of prioritization criteria, to guide how outdoor lighting will gradually be brought into alignment with responsible lighting principles. Lincoln City will engage a lighting consultant/vendor in the implementation of that plan.

Explore Lincoln City has used stakeholder meetings and public open house events to raise awareness and gather support for ongoing community involvement and dialogue around the Dark Sky nomination. Also in development, is a Dark Sky Community Engagement Plan, including social media campaigns, educational programs, activities, events, and partnerships to keep the community engaged and to seek feedback on the nomination process.

Lincoln City has purchased three continuous sky quality meters to be installed within city limits and one just outside of town, in order to establish baseline night sky brightness conditions and to discern trends over time. Members of the community are invited to contribute citizen science-based, night sky measurements (volunteer light audits) via implementation of the Community Engagement Plan.

If deemed reasonably feasible, **Phase 2** would involve a pre-application to Dark Sky International and preparation and adoption of a lighting ordinance. **Phase 3** would involve documenting and submitting a nomination application to Dark Sky International.

### *Be A Defender of Dark Skies*

Protecting the night sky starts with small steps at home. Begin by exploring the **Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting**. Then, take a look at your own outdoor lights—at home, your workplace, or place of business—and see if they align. If not, consider retrofitting or removing fixtures to help reduce light pollution, clearing up the night sky.

Support dark sky preservation and education activities administered by Central Oregon Coast Friends of the Night Sky or Seven Capes Bird Alliance.

If interested in participating in night sky citizen science, education and outreach programming, or conducting lighting retrofits in support of the nomination, contact Explore Lincoln City at *visitors@lincolncity.org* or visit **ExploreLincolnCity.com/DarkSkies** to learn more.