



It Takes a Village to Protect the Grand Canyon

Dave Uberuaga, superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, tells people he works at one of the most protected places on earth, yet he spends all of his time working to protect it.

NPCA also spends a lot of time guarding against threats to the Grand Canyon, because the heart of our mission is to protect park resources and visitor experience. For instance:

- We campaign to stop air pollution from nearby coal power plants, especially the Navajo Generating Station.
- We support Colorado River water flows that preserve endangered species, river recreation and archaeological sites.
- We oppose uranium mining in the Grand Canyon watershed.
- We ask air tourism be managed to reduce loud noise pollution that irritates visitors and impacts wildlife.
- We oppose reckless commercial schemes just outside the park boundary, such as an ill-advised plan for a rim-side resort that includes an aerial tramway to the Little Colorado River.

In 2011, Uberuaga said “Grand Canyon National Park is a truly spectacular place, one that has inspired people around the world.” We agree and are glad to help him keep it so.

Dark Sky Refuge in Colorado Plateau National Parks

The Colorado Plateau stretches 130,000 square miles across the high desert landscape in the four corners region encompassing southeast Utah, southwest Colorado, northwest New Mexico and northeast Arizona. The area is well known for its red rock canyons, arches and hoodoos, which were formed by wind erosion or carved by the Colorado River and its tributaries. The Colorado Plateau is also home to 27 national park units, the highest concentration in the country. These parks protect not only the fantastical rock formations but also the region’s cultural history including Ancestral Puebloan artifacts and ruins.

As light pollution steadily increases across the country illuminating the night skies, the national parks on the Colorado Plateau are also being recognized internationally as a place to conserve and experience another extraordinary and diminishing resource—dark night skies. At a time when less than one third of the country’s population lives in a place where they can see the Milky Way, “astrotourism” is on the rise. People are seeking out celestial refuges where they can experience views of not only the Milky Way, but also meteors, galaxies and other night sky phenomena. In many national parks, stargazing programs draw more visitors than any other ranger-led activity. In 2012, Bryce Canyon National Park alone reported

over 50,000 night-sky related visits, contributing over 2 million dollars to the local economy.

Colorado Plateau national parks offer world-class viewing of naturally dark, star-filled skies because of the region’s high elevation, air quality, aridity, low population density



and frequent cloudless nights. In 2007, Natural Bridges National Monument in southeastern Utah was designated the world’s first International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association.

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Top: Grand Canyon, AZ ©Pinwheels | Dreamstime.com
Above: City Lights of the US 2012 From NASA Earth Observatory website | Suomi NPP Satellite image

FIELD REPORT

SPRING 2014

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Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park system. NPCA, its over 800,000 members and supporters work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical and cultural heritage for generations to come.

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Newsletter Design by kelleyalbertdesign.com



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Rebecca Walsh—NPCA's New Western Clean Air Manager



MEET OUR NEW STAFF

Rebecca is a longtime journalist and Utah native returning to work in her hometown of Salt Lake City. Rebecca previously worked as a political reporter for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, covering city and state government before becoming a metro columnist. She covered everything from the 2002 Winter Olympics to then-Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr.'s trip to India to adopt his youngest daughter.

Rebecca took a two-year sabbatical from journalism to live in Florence, Italy, before returning to the U.S. in 2011. She speaks declining rudimentary Italian and makes a mean meat sauce. When she returned to

the mainland, Rebecca worked in Palm Springs, California and Jackson, Wyoming—swinging from 100-degree hikes in Joshua Tree to minus-10-degree cross-country traverses past Jenny Lake in Grand Teton.

Thanks to growing up in Utah (back when trucks still drove across Gemini Bridges), Rebecca's favorite parks include Canyonlands, Arches and Zion.

As the Western Clean Air Manager, Rebecca will be responsible for the program's efforts to protect and restore air resources of the National Park System in the Southwest and Northern Rockies regions. This will include expanding local and regional coalitions and educating the public and decision-makers on protecting air quality in national parks.

Above: Rebecca with her son Jack visiting the North Shore of Hawaii ©Rebecca Walsh

Prestigious New Designation

The Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument was heralded on March 21, 2014, by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) for the unspoiled quality of its pristine and breathtaking night skies. The Monument received the official IDA designation as "Parashant International Night Sky Province," joining other international **Night Sky Places**.

Parashant National Monument is a Service First organization jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service (NPS). NPS Director Jon Jarvis stated, "What's really great about night sky is that it is something you can restore. It's not gone. It's still there and all we have to do is pay attention to our lighting. Create efficiency in lighting and you get a dark sky."—From BLM/NPS Press Release 3/21/2014

Dark Sky Refuge in Colorado Plateau National Parks

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Last year, Chaco Culture National Historic Park in northwestern New Mexico also was awarded International Dark Sky Park status for its natural nighttime darkness, commitment to reducing light pollution and public outreach and education programs. Only 14 places worldwide have the International Dark Sky Parks designation, but two others, Big Bend and Death Valley, are also U.S. National Parks.

The National Park Service (NPS) has committed to taking a leadership role in protecting natural darkness as a precious resource in our national parks. Their call to action—dubbed Starry Starry Night—is part of their strategic vision as the agency enters its second century in 2016. As a step in implementing this plan, NPS established the Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative

Natural Bridges National Monument in Utah is the world's first International Dark Sky Park as designated by the International Dark-Sky Association

in 2013. The goal of the cooperative, the first of its kind, is to create a model for dark sky protection that focuses on voluntary improvements to outdoor lighting in communities and on public lands. The group also promotes the enjoyment and tourism potential of stargazing and astronomy on the Colorado Plateau.

Within the boundaries of the cooperative, several communities are embracing both the commitment to protecting natural

darkness and to hosting festivals and events that celebrate the night sky experience. Flagstaff, Arizona, the world's first International Dark Sky City, has adopted night-sky-friendly lighting regulations, making it a rare exception to the pervasive increase in light pollution across the country. Torrey, Bryce Canyon City, Springdale and Moab are just a few of the communities in Utah that are working with their neighboring national park, local businesses and astronomy groups to host night sky programs and events.

So the next time you are planning a national park adventure, remember to step out into the night, turn out your light and enjoy the wonder of the Milky Way against the backdrop of the dark night sky. To find national park ranger-led night sky programs, visit www.nps.gov and search "astronomy."

NPCA Helping to Protect the Night Sky Experience

Recognizing the importance of natural darkness for nocturnal wildlife and the national park visitor experience, NPCA assesses the impacts of new development adjacent to the national parks on night skies. Some of the proposed projects that have the potential to illuminate the skies with new lights include oil and gas development near Chaco, Arches and Mesa Verde, high voltage transmission lines across Dinosaur and near Saguaro, a coal mine west of Bryce Canyon, potash mines near Petrified Forest, and a convenience store at the entrance to Natural Bridges.



Every light counts. Here is how you can help:

■ Enjoy the Night

We are all more willing to protect what we love and cherish, so enjoy the night sky at home, as well as during your next national park visit.

■ Use Light Only When You Need It

Use motion sensors and timers to turn lights on and off as needed. Think twice about installing an outdoor light.

■ Shield Your Lights

Shielded fixtures allow no light to shine above the horizon. Several types of these light fixtures are now available and existing

lights can be adjusted to point downward or retrofitted with simple metal shrouds.

■ Use Less Light

An efficient, shielded light fixture can use a smaller wattage bulb and still be effective.

■ Talk to Your Neighbors

Share your appreciation of the night and ways to protect it with your family, friends, neighbors, and community leaders. Encourage them to make the night a better place for your community and nearby parks.

Information for this story was provided by Nate Ament, Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative Coordinator and Chad Moore, NPS Night Skies Team Leader. To learn more, contact Nate at nathan_ament@nps.gov or 435-719-2349.

*For more information, visit the **National Park Service Night Sky** website: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/night/> • <http://www.nightsskyparks.org/>
International Dark-Sky Association website: <http://www.darksky.org/>*

What are the Benefits of Dark-Sky-Friendly Lighting?



- Reduces light scattered upward where it dims the view of the night sky.
- Improves habitat for nocturnal wildlife.
- Reduces energy use and associated costs.
- Preserves rural character of communities.
- Boosts local economies through dark sky tourism.
- Promotes our enjoyment of the stars and astronomy.
- Provides safe, glare-free illumination of structures and walkways.
- Improves human health and sleep patterns.

Chaco Culture National Historic Park Designated International Dark Sky Park

Last August, northwestern New Mexico's Chaco Culture National Historic Park (NHP) became the fourth unit of the U.S. National Park System to receive the designation of International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association. Added to the National Park System in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, Chaco Culture NHP encompasses the high-desert landscape of Chaco Canyon and the grand ruins of the heart of the Ancestral Puebloan or Chacoan culture which spread throughout the Four Corners region 1,000 years ago. Chaco Canyon, with its ruins of massive, multi-story stone buildings called Great Houses and prehistoric roadways, was the ceremonial, administrative, and economic center of the Chacoan culture between 850 and 1250 AD.

Today, the park draws visitors not only interested in ancient cultures and spiritual significance, but also those seeking natural darkness and the beauty of a pristine, star-filled sky. According to monitoring conducted by the NPS Night Skies team, Chaco remains one of the darkest places in the National Park System and is considered one of the best places in America to stargaze. As such,



the NPS is committed to reducing its own light pollution and educating visitors and nearby communities of the value in protecting this incredible resource while interpreting the story of the Chacoans who often oriented their Great Houses and roadways to solar, lunar, and cardinal directions.

Despite the NPS's commitment to protecting Chaco's night skies, threats to this resource remain. Along with light pollution emanating from growing urban areas including Albuquerque and Farmington, New Mexico, the growing demand for oil and gas development in the northwestern corner of the state has the potential to impact the quality of the night skies at Chaco. Flaring of natural gas and an increase in intensive artificial lighting from construction activities, vehicle traffic, and support facilities can all affect the quality of the night skies both at the park's higher elevations and inside the canyon. NPCA and our partners are currently working with the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management to plan for new oil and gas development in the Chaco area with the goal of protecting not only the incredible cultural resources but also the star-filled night skies that the people of Chaco gazed at and highly valued a thousand years ago.

LEFT PAGE: (Bottom Left) Night Sky at Big Stick Camp on San Juan River, UT ©Tyler Nordgren **(Top Right)** Glowing Kivas in Balcony House, Mesa Verde NP, CO ©Jacob W Frank **(Bottom Right)** Delicate Arch, Arches NP, UT ©Jacob W Frank **THIS PAGE: (Poster)** Chaco Sky Logo - www.darksky.org **Top:** Stargazers at Rocky Mountain NP, CO ©Debbie Biddle

New Regional Council Members Spotlight

Doug Sporn

Doug is president of D. Sporn Consulting LLC, which provides pharmaceutical regulatory consulting guidance to generic and new drug application sponsors and venture capital companies. His company also offers “due diligence” support for firms considering investment in specific pharmaceutical products and firms. He has an M.B.A in quantitative methods from Texas Christian University and a B.A. in mathematics from the University of Texas.

Sporn’s interests include hiking in the wilderness areas of New Mexico and Colorado, especially in the national monuments and parks near his home in New Mexico. He supports the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and studies Native American cultures of the Southwest.



a managing director in the communications and entertainment group of RBC Capital Markets, where he led the firm’s data communications sector. Previously, Bob was a managing director at Daniels & Associates and a vice president at Salomon Brothers, Inc. Bob received an M.B.A. from the Wharton



Trina Peterson

Trina brings a multi-faceted background as an entrepreneur, nonprofit board chair, venture capitalist, business strategy consultant, and wilderness skills educator to her work as director of development at 1% for the Planet. Trina graduated from Princeton

University and received an M.B.A from Dartmouth’s Amos Tuck School. Her nonprofit board work with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, The Watershed School, and The Women’s Wilderness Institute has helped Trina understand the importance of great governance and strong fiscal leadership in building lasting organizations. Her

work in the business arena—helping to fund, found, and take public SweetWater, Inc. and providing strategic counsel, market research, and business planning to a variety of entities—has given Trina a deep appreciation for those folks willing to plunge in and create businesses. Trina is based with her family in the mountains west of Boulder, Colorado where she often sleeps out under the stars, telemarks the local slopes, and cycles the lung-busting trails and roads.

Doug Sporn, Bob Allison, Trina Peterson

School of the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. from the University of Colorado. Bob has spent his life exploring natural treasures of the Pacific Northwest, the desert Southwest, the Rockies and Alaska. He grew up in Oregon and is currently based in Colorado. Bob is looking forward to leveraging his business expertise and passion for wild places for the benefit of NPCA.

Bob Allison

Bob has 23 years of experience as an investment banker, representing clients in mergers and acquisitions, capital-raising and advisory assignments. Most recently, he was

The Utah Gateway Community Forum

Connecting Community Leaders with their Neighboring National Parks and Monuments

Collaboration and communication are vital components to ensuring that Utah’s gateway communities and public lands develop and maintain strong and mutually beneficial relationships. By coming together, these key players are better able to strategize, compromise, and ultimately help realize one another’s goals and aspirations.

Working from this fundamental premise, NPCA’s Southwest Regional Office, along with a team of dedicated community leaders, hosted Utah’s first-ever Gateway Community Forum on November 7. In total, the event drew more than 100 participants from communities and public lands across the state and provided them with the opportunity to discuss unique challenges, solve complex problems, and begin a process of supporting one another.

Since the forum, great strides have been made by participants and NPCA staff toward further strengthening these important relationships between gateway community leaders and adjacent public land managers.

“Utah’s beauty—nowhere displayed better than at our National Parks—draws visitors from all over the world and spurs a tourism industry that is indispensable to our state economy...

Many visitors to our National Parks spend time in gateway communities. Their perception of Utah is molded largely by the good experiences they have in those communities.”

— Gary R. Herbert, Utah Governor



For example, NPCA has already hosted several productive meetings with seven community action teams that were created

Above: Hiker at Double Arch, Arches National Park, UT ©Scott Kirkwood | NPCA

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The Utah Gateway Community Forum

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after the forum. These self-organized groups have coalesced around shared interests and concerns including collaboration, economic development, community quality of life, environmental integrity, funding, and tourism. What's more, NPCA is currently designing an interactive website that when launched, will provide an online tool for sharing information and collaborating on various projects.

Looking ahead, NPCA will continue to support Utah's gateway community leaders and public land managers by facilitating informative meetings, maintaining the newly designed interactive website, and conducting further community outreach. We encourage all NPCA members who are interested in this work to join the conversation by visiting www.utahgatewaycommunity.org or contacting our Southwest office directly. Through the gateway community initiative, we can help ensure that an effective and holistic approach is taken toward protecting and preserving Utah's national parks for present and future generations.

Your Support for NPCA Goes a Long Way



"As a long time resident of Arizona, I have spent countless hours hiking, kayaking, hunting and exploring our great outdoors and national parks. I joined NPCA's Southwest Regional council because I wanted to help a group protecting the wondrous places I love. I have seen first hand how effective and important NPCA is for our national parks as the only independent, bi-partisan advocacy group working locally and in Washington, D.C. So the decision to increase my financial support to NPCA to help fulfill the Kendeda Fund Challenge was easy."

— **Bob Sanderson, NPCA Member, Regional Council Member**

Please join Bob and the hundreds of other supporters who are helping us meet the challenge. Thanks to the Kendeda Fund, any new or upgraded gifts of \$1,000 or more will be matched dollar for dollar. To learn more or to make a gift, please visit: npca.org/kendeda

Above: Grand Canyon, AZ ©Laurin Rinder | Dreamstime.com



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