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Ridgway Tapped with International Dark Sky Community Designation from International Dark-Sky Association

Ridgway, CO – The International Dark-Sky Association has named Ridgway as the newest addition to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) Dark Sky Places Program. As such, Ridgway becomes the second IDA “Dark Sky Community” on the Western Slope of Colorado and only the third in the State. There are now 28 International Dark Sky Communities, with 21 of them in the U.S. and the remainder in Canada, Denmark, Germany, Scotland, and the U.K.

Ridgway’s Dark Sky Community designation comes after approximately two years of efforts that culminated with an application submittal in February 2020 to IDA to be designated an IDA Dark Sky Community. The application was prepared by a local group known as the Ridgway Ouray Community Council, led by resident Val Szwarc. The application process is rigorous and requires applicants to demonstrate robust community support for dark sky protection and to document designation-specific program requirements.



[Photo by Gary Ratcliff, OurayImage.com](#)

Established in 1988, IDA has led a movement to protect our night skies from light pollution. Their overarching goal, which revolves around the four strategic priorities described below, is to reduce light pollution and promote responsible outdoor lighting that is beautiful, healthy, and functional.

1. **Celebrate The Night:** Increase awareness of the benefits of the night for all living things, and how light pollution is an urgent environmental threat that individuals can help solve.
2. **Dark Sky Protection:** Protect exemplary dark skies through our certification program.
3. **Lighting Where We Live:** Engage cities and communities in reducing light pollution through responsible lighting policy and practice.
4. **Skyshed Restoration:** Implement coordinated, intentional, and scalable actions to slow, halt, and reverse the increasing rate of light pollution.

Ridgway is a small town located along the Uncompahgre River in the foothills of the San Juan Mountains in southwest Colorado with a population of just over 1,000 people. The town, situated at an elevation of 6,985 feet, is in a remote location and produces very little light pollution. Ridgway residents have long



embraced the concept of enjoying and protecting the area's beautiful, natural surroundings, including protecting the dark skies. The town has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at protecting dark skies, including passage of an Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and education campaigns on the benefits of using shielded fixtures and night sky protection. As so many lights have become more efficient, bright, and blue-white in color, the town has recognized the importance of focusing on both shielding outdoor lights better and choosing less glaring light bulb temperatures. Click [here](#) to visit the Town of Ridgway's website and learn more about this topic.

"We are excited and honored that IDA has elected to welcome Ridgway into the IDA Dark Sky Places Program," said Ridgway Mayor John Clark. "It's an incredible accomplishment. The town's policies and community actions will help to protect and preserve the region's incredible night skies for years to come. I'd like to send a huge thank you to the Ridgway Ouray Community Council for their tireless efforts to see this through."

For more information about IDA and to learn more about their plan to protect the night from light pollution, visit www.darksky.org. For questions or more information about Ridgway's designation as a Dark Sky Community, please call 970-318-0081 or email pneill@town.ridgway.co.us.

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