



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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News Release

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El Morro National Monument Certified as an International Dark Sky Park

Ramah, NM – The National Park Service and the International Dark Sky Association are pleased to announce El Morro National Monument as an International Dark Sky Park. This certification recognizes the exceptional quality of the park’s night skies and provides added opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through astronomy based interpretive programming.

El Morro National Monument will host a myriad of programs under the monument’s spectacular skies in 2020. Although an event celebrating this new certification will be hosted in warmer weather, join us for upcoming night sky programs on January 18, 25, and February 1. Details for these and other programs can be found on the monument’s website www.nps.gov/elmo or Facebook page www.facebook.com/elmorro.

International Dark Sky Park certification promotes public education and astronomy based recreation in parks while improving energy efficiency and reduced operational costs through outdoor lighting upgrades, which in turn creates economic opportunities for neighboring communities through astronomy-based tourism.

“We are very happy to be able to advance the preservation of El Morro National Monument’s night skies and provide visitors with even better opportunities to experience them. We are particularly grateful for the support that we’ve gotten from the community. This certification is the perfect marriage of technology and education. National parks are some of the best places in America to see a breath taking array of stars, planets, and neighboring galaxies.” said Kelby Fuhrmann, park superintendent.

The certification does not carry any legal or regulatory authority. The certification demonstrates a commitment by parks to improve night skies through the use of more energy efficient, sustainable lighting. Certification also reaffirms our commitment to

educate the public and gateway communities about the importance of park-friendly, outdoor lighting and opportunities to work together toward common goals.

The International Dark Sky Places Program was founded in 2001 to encourage communities, parks, and protected areas around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting polices and public education. El Morro National Monument now joins more than 100 locations that have followed a rigorous application process that demonstrates robust community support for dark sky certification.

El Morro National Monument features one of the most impressive and accessible records of Southwest history, which is exposed on a single rock. Inscription Rock, a sandstone promontory rising 200 feet from the valley floor has more than 2,000 inscriptions and petroglyphs of many cultures along its sheer cliff face. Monument visitors can gaze upon original markings of pueblo residents, Spanish explorers, early surveyors, and pioneers in symbols, signatures, poetry, and prose right where they were originally carved. Visitors have the opportunity to experience the glorious night skies alongside a 1,000-year cultural continuum of people and events that shaped the American Southwest.

This certification was a community effort and El Morro would like to express sincere gratitude to the local organizations and businesses who supported this dark night sky initiative: Western National Parks Association; Grants-Cibola Chamber of Commerce; El Morro Area Arts Council; El Morro Feed & Seed; Inscription Rock Trading & Coffee Co.; The Albuquerque Astronomical Society; Ancient Way Café; Cibola County Volunteer Fire Department; El Morro Ranches Property Owners Association; Zuni Mountain Sanctuary; El Morro Market; Family Haven Farms; C & E Concrete, Inc.; Space and Art Travel Bureau; and Ramah Navajo Chapter. This initiative is a community involved and supported project and El Morro could not have achieved IDA's certification without their involvement.

About the International Dark-Sky Association: IDA's mission is to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. Learn more at www.darksky.org.

www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service: More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 419 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.