

May 2026

Meetings at Highland Road Park Observatory and online through YouTube

Calendar:

- 2 May: LSU's Star Party at Landolt Observatory
- 3 May, 1PM: Astronomy Day at LASM
- 4 May, 6:30PM: Cub Scout Pack 125 Star Wars Night at St. Alphonsus
- 11 May, 7PM: BRAS meeting at HRPO
- 13-17 May: PAS's Spring Scrimmage Star Party at Feliciana Retreat Center
- 16 May, 9AM: Bluebonnet Swamp and Nature Center Birthday Bash
- 26 May, 7PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe
- 6 June, 10AM: Science Saturday at LIGO
- 8 June, 9AM: Little Lambs Day camp in Lafayette
- 26 June, 9AM: Gateway Preschool in Prairieville
- 27 June, 10AM: Dino Days at LASM

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President's Message

Hi Everyone,

I don't know if you've realized it, but now is a great time to be in an astronomy club! (Especially OURS!!) We've got people travelling once again to the Moon. We've got mind blowing space telescopes in operation AND awaiting deployment that will bring even MORE startling images from our universe. Locally, we have an outstanding Physics and Astronomy Department at LSU from which we can draw resources and learn, and of course, a world class Nobel Prize winning facility with LIGO right in our own backyard.

All of that is pretty cool in itself, but we're also living in a time where getting stunning views of the cosmos is within the grasp of almost any one of us. Telescopes with fantastic optics, astro cameras and software for astrophotography, compact and easy to use electronically assisted astronomy devices such as the Seestar...all of these are out there and it doesn't take a year's salary to get started.

That last statement is relative, of course. Even though prices (especially for entry level stuff) are comparatively low, not everyone's budget is ready. That's where the club comes in. First of all, we have scopes that want to be used and we have a loaner program to let you do so. (There is a limited group of scopes available, but we're getting more all the time.) Most importantly, we have other members that already HAVE equipment. Many, if not all, of those members would be happy to show off their stuff so you can get an idea of how different equipment works, what it takes to maintain it, and how to get the most out of it. After all, we didn't join a club to NOT share our love of this hobby with others.

As I mentioned at the last meeting, we want to serve ALL of our members no matter what your main reason for being in the club is. If you just like showing up once a month to hear a fun program and be a little social, we're here for you. If you want to do some great community service and help spread some astronomy knowledge throughout the community, we've got plenty of opportunities. If you want to get outside and either learn about or start using equipment, there are plenty of other members that have the same desire. (Our newly begun use of the GroupMe app will hopefully start to facilitate that!)

There is a TON of cool astronomy related things going on in the world right now and it's a great time to be in our club. We hope we can be your fun outlet for indulging your passion for astronomy and space related stuff. As you can see above, there's plenty for you to jump into, but if there's something that interests you that you DON'T see us doing, please let us know. More than likely, our other members would find it interesting, too!

Have a great month, Everyone, and I hope to see you in at least ONE of these mentioned capacities soon.

Clear Skies,

Ben Toman

President



From the LSU STEM resources faire: Scott and Ben begin the setup procedure, Scott explains the celestial globe, and Roz makes her way around the solar system.

Vice President's Word

Traditionally, May first is celebrated as the half way mark of Spring, which really does seem like it only started yesterday, making it hard to believe its nearing its end. Already, most of us have noticed how late the sun sets and how early the sun rises. As the summer sets in, it gets to be harder and harder to find the time to do astronomy and also get a decent amount of sleep. And yet we persist.

To nudge you along to get outside, you can ask one of us to add you to our Groupme list, where you might find others to go with you out into the wilds. In the past year, we've seen two club outings to dark sky sites, with the last one having happened just a few weeks ago in collaboration with some of our friends over at LSU. The skies might not have been quite as clear as we would have liked, but it was worth it just to see a few constellations you can't from the city and to watch the college students marvel at their first field full of fireflies. Hopefully, our next trip will find us under clear skies, and possibly new places, as we continue to hunt for darker skies.

The next good star party in the area is coming up fast, as the second week of May will be the Spring Scrimmage star party put on by the Pontchartrain Astronomical Society: this one takes place over at the Feliciana Retreat Center and has pretty nice skies and very nice accommodations, if you can score them before they're all taken. For later in the Summer, we're still working on where we'll go next, and we'll try to schedule a local star party just for our members over at the Highland Road Observatory.

As a programing note, we mentioned earlier in the year that we were going to be phasing out our use of Jitsi for our online meetings. After several complaints from certain individuals, we've finally decided to pull the plug. Starting in May, our online meeting will move to Youtube only. It will be broadcast live and watchable afterward, just as it has been, only without the added step of trying to add another program to monitor into the situation. Hopefully, this will improve the quality.

This month's meeting will be focused on our Outreach team. We'll be showing off some of our kits, learning some new ones, and talking about the resources available to us through the Night Sky Network.



Braving the wilds: members of BRAS and LSU made an excursion to a local dark site despite the clouds.

Outreach Report

Hi Everyone,

We've been staying pretty busy with the outreach and doing a great job of bringing astronomy education to our community. May and June have plenty of opportunities (see below) for you to get in on the game!

But first of all, a huge thank you to everyone that helped out this past month (and the end of the month before.) We finished off March with a great Zippity Zoo Fest. Great weather, perfect location for our setup and lots of interested people stopping by to check out the Sun and see our demos. A couple of days later we were out at Holy Family School in Port Allen for their Family Science Night. Another great crowd of people there, too!

Our first ever outing to the Youth Job Challenge program in Carville was a lot of fun for us. We had interested kids and it was really nice to be a part of such a cool program that is helping young people from underprivileged backgrounds attain certification in various skills such as electrical and phlebotomy.

We also had a nice visit to LSU campus where we helped out with their Science Resource Fair at the Main Library. Plenty of interested students AND free snacks!

That same night, we had a small but mighty showing at the library in Gonzales for Sidewalk Astronomy. Our last SA there until October. There may not have been many people stopping by, but the conversation and viewing were top notch! (We got to see a cool shadow transit across Jupiter from its moon, Io. That made the whole evening well worth it to me.)

We followed that evening up with an early morning back out at Port Hudson Historic Site for another School Day. We met with about 130 kids from various private schools around the state (Lake Charles, Ville Platte, Central) and again had a great time imparting some astro knowledge.

Finally, just yesterday (as I write this) we helped out with International Astronomy Day at the Highland Road Park Observatory. I couldn't be there personally due to gig commitments, but I heard it was a great evening. (Although, swarming termites did their best to block out the stars.)

We still have our April Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe coming up on the 28th so we're not done with this month yet. Again, I want to give a big shout out to our volunteers for the past month or so: Steven, Roz, Scott, Don, Coy, Chris R., Fr. Mike, Chad, Susan, Jim, Trey, Steve M. and Ben. (A little extra shout out to Jim for single handedly representing the club at our info table at Astronomy Day for a few hours!)

As I said, we've got plenty of events coming up. I've heard from some of you, but would love to get more hands on deck to get some help for the regular volunteers. Remember, I only have 15 lapel pins to give out at the end of this year so you need to get those hours in if you want one, haha!!

Clear Skies,
Ben Toman



Gonzalez Library: Steve, Roz, and Don set up scopes for the patrons to take in the planets one last time before Don's trip back to the great north.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, April 28th

7pm-9pm
Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

Sunday, May 3rd ***NEW*******

1pm-5pm
Astronomy Day at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum
(Demos, info and possible Solar observing)

Monday, May 4th

6:30pm-8pm
Cub Scout Pack 125 Star Wars Night
St. Alphonsus Parish Activity Center
(Demos, activities, etc)

Saturday, May 16th **NEW******

9am-4pm
Bluebonnet Swamp and Nature Center Birthday Celebration
(Demos, Solar observing)
Can sign up for shifts throughout the day

Tuesday, May 26th

7pm-9pm
Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

June 6th

10am-4pm
Science Saturday at LIGO
(Demos, activities, Solar observing)

Monday, June 8th

9am-11am
Little Lambs Day Camp in Lafayette

Friday, June 26th

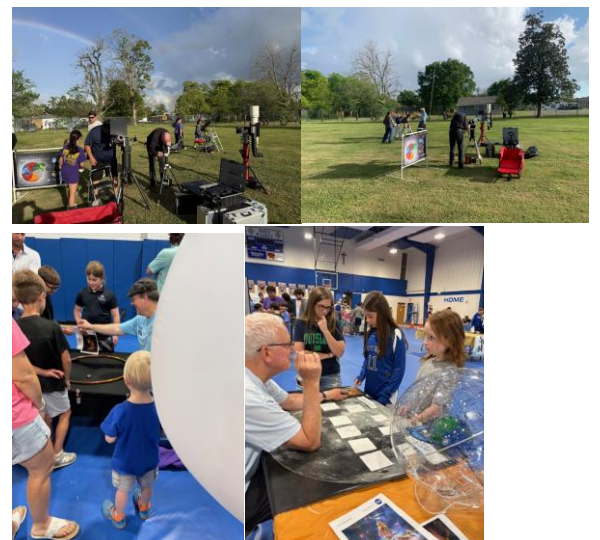
9am-11:30am
Gateway Preschool in Prairieville

Saturday, June 27th

10am-2pm
Dino Days at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum
(Demos, activities and Solar observing)



ZippyZooFest: Top: Susan and Roz talk about the size of the solar system, Chris and Scott check out the photosphere. Middle, Coy shows off the Chromosphere while Ben explains to Roz and Steven why he loves a terrible movie. Bottom, Gorgeous P. Cock takes in the solar system while Reign, the zoos young giraffe, serves to draw patrons to our setup.



At Holy Family during Holy Week: Top, Fr. Mike readies the h-alpha and Scott talks sunspots. Bottom, Ben sucks the children into his gravity well and Chad talks selenography.

Secretary's Summary

There were 31 people in attendance at the April meeting.

Dr. Colin Turley of the LSU Department of Physics & Astronomy is the Director of the Landolt Observatory. Dr. Turley delivered an informative presentation regarding the Clark Reflector in the Landolt Observatory.

Now considered an antique, the telescope was built in 1939 and has an 11.5-inch diameter lens. It is named after Alvin Clark, whose company (founded in 1846) ground some of the largest lenses for refracting telescopes at the time. Dr. Turley described in detail the mechanics of the telescope and how to measure focal length. He also showed some interesting photos of the LSU campus taken in the 1940's, back when there was a lot more wide-open space!

Following Dr. Turley's presentation, BRAS President Ben Toman passed out BRAS buttons to some of our newer members. BRAS was very busy with outreach programs in March and there are many outreach volunteer opportunities coming up. Of particular interest, we will be at LIGO on June 6th and at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum Dinosaur Days on June 27th. Out of 91 astronomy clubs that reported outreach activities to the Night Sky Network in the past six months, BRAS ranked 8th in the number of outreach programs conducted. Great job, everyone!

BRAS will be using the app GroupMe to announce on short notice when members will be headed to dark sky sites, in case other members would like to join them. The app is free on the iPhone App Store or Google Play Store. Once you create an account on the app, let BRAS Vice President Scott Cadwallader know and he will add you to the group so you can receive notifications.

The new club t-shirts are in, and many were distributed at the meeting. Extra t-shirts were ordered, so if you want one but didn't order one, just let Ben or Scott know. If you placed an order but missed the April meeting, bring a check or cash (exact change, please) to the May meeting to pick up your t-shirt.

Skies were clear and some members stayed after the meeting for stargazing.



From Port Hudson: Roz and Chad engage students with STEM kits, Ben makes an impact on students understanding of meteors, and Scott hunts for the Sun on a cloudy day.

Observatory Notes

AMERICAN STEM: A QUARTER-MILLENNIAL CELEBRATION

Fridays from 5:45pm to 9:45pm

for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

Part IV: 1 May [1926-1976]

Part V: 22 May [1976-2026] Part VI: 12 June [2026-2076]

The great Constitutional Republic experiment has been going strong for 250 years. In addition to incalculable gifts in the areas of human rights and the arts, the United States educational and capitalist and social systems (and our international partnerships) have generated enormous accomplishments in STEM fields.

[This series will follow the Community Discussion format rather than the Lecture format.]

SCIENCE ACADEMY

Saturdays from 10am to 12pm.

for Cadets aged eight to twelve / \$5 per Cadet per week (\$6 if out-of-parish)

advanced registration via [WebTrac](#) strongly recommended

[activity #431320] / parents may stay with or leave Cadet

Four Cadet minimum and sixteen Cadets maximum per session.

2 May = “Colonizing Mars”

9 May = “ISS Expedition 14”

16 May = “Omega Centauri”

23 May = “Power in the House I”

EVENING SKY VIEWING

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Saturdays (2, 9, 23 and 30 May) from 7:30pm to 10pm

Fridays (8, 15 and 29 May) from 8:30pm to 10pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

7:30pm / for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

8 May = “High Proper Motion” This lecture focuses on those stars that are so close to the Solar System, human beings can actually chart their moving through outer space during the course of a lifetime.

15 May = “Searching for Novae” Several years ago, a professor declared to HRPO patrons that novae were not found at the rate previously expected. Can citizens of the Baton Rouge region help?

29 May = “The Mariner Program” An astounding success from 1962 to 1973, this series of spacecrafts became the first to use gravity assist to visit more than one planet.

BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Monday 11 May from 7pm to 9pm

for ages fourteen and older / no admission fee

PLUS NIGHT: “Freedom 250”

Saturday 16 May from 7pm to 10pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee / binocular recommended

During Plus Nights and extra features are available to the public...

- *The well-known marshmallow roast takes place at the campfire ring (weather-dependng).
- *Seven to ten of HRPO’s collection of over fifty physical science demonstrations will be on hand to perplex and amaze. Which demos will it be?
- *An unaided eye sky tour takes place, showing the public major features of the sky for that month.
- *Filters are inserted into the viewing mechanisms, to show patrons “hidden” details of the Moon, Mars and Jupiter (when they are available).
- *Reveal your age, and be shown any “birth stars” in the sky at that time.

BATON ROUGE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB MEETING

Tuesday 26 May from 6pm to 8pm

for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

NATURAL SKY TASK FORCE PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

Friday 29 May from 5:15pm to 6:45pm

for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

The purpose of these gatherings is to network and share results of separate efforts to reduce light pollution in the HRPO service area, and to share advice on improving efforts to reduce light pollution in the HRPO service area.

SOLAR VIEWING

Saturday 30 May from 12pm to 2pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Weather permitting, viewing of the Sun’s image in four different manners—transferred onto a white surface, directly with optical light, directly in hydrogen-alpha wavelength and directly via Calcium K wavelength—will take place. Protective clothing and sunscreen are recommended.

STEM EXPANSION: “Failure is Not an Option”

Saturday 30 May from 2:30pm to 6:30pm

for ages twelve to sixteen / \$15 each per in-parish registrant; \$18 each per out-of-parish registrant. Advanced registration via [WebTrac](#) required [activity #431321].

This program offers advanced topics, topic extensions and all-new games and activities to an older crowd. Certificates will be earned, and a section of archived experiments, some *never* performed on site, take place. There are also giveaways and door prizes.

FORCES OF NATURE EXPLORERS CAMP

22 June to 26 June / 8am to 5pm daily. For ages eleven to thirteen.

\$125 per EBR-parish camper / \$150 per other-parish camper

[Cost covers entire session; limit thirty per session.]

This one-week-only session focuses on the four forces of nature: the weak nuclear force, the strong nuclear force, gravity and the electromagnetic spectrum (gamma rays, x-rays, ultraviolet, color, infrared, microwaves and radio). Campers will investigate the spacecraft and instruments studying these forces, perform indoor and outdoor experiments demonstrating the presence of these forces in our lives and build basic devices connected to these inquiry! There will be special guests throughout the week to explain the process for obtaining an Amateur Radio Service license. Parents may register in person at HRPO or online at Webtrac. The activity number is 231180.

AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE FIELD DAY

Saturday 27 June from 2pm to 10pm / For ages six and older. No admission fee.

One section of the electromagnetic spectrum gets all the love, as tens of thousands of “hams” ascend to the radio waves with “phone” (voice) and CW (Morse) in this exciting contact contest that stretches from coast to coast! Get on the GOTA station and make your own contact! Ham radio is awesome for parents and kids alike.



At International Astronomy Day: John and Steven try to look busy while Jim talks with people about the club and Barrow and Troy give people a look at the Chromosphere

Sky Map



<https://in-the-sky.org>

Skymap centered on 10PM on 15 May.

Quick Picks—Events for May from Telescopius.com

- Fri 1 [Full Moon](#)
- Fri 1 [Venus](#) 6.3°N of Aldebaran
- Sun 3 Antares 0.5°N of [Moon](#)
- Mon 4 [Moon](#) Apogee at 405,843 km.
- Tue 5 Eta-Aquarid Meteor Shower
- Sat 9 [Last Quarter Moon](#)
- Wed 13 [Saturn](#) 5.7°S of [Moon](#)
- Thu 14 [Mercury](#) in Superior Conjunction
- Thu 14 [Venus](#) at Perihelion
- Sat 16 [New Moon](#)
- Sun 17 [Moon](#) Perigee at 358,074 km.
- Mon 18 [Mercury](#) at Perihelion
- Mon 18 [Venus](#) 2.9°S of [Moon](#)
- Wed 20 [Jupiter](#) 3.1°S of [Moon](#)
- Wed 20 Pollux 3.4°N of [Moon](#)
- Thu 21 Beehive 0.8°S of [Moon](#)
- Fri 22 [Uranus](#) in Conjunction with the Sun
- Sat 23 Regulus 0.0°N of [Moon](#)
- Sat 23 [First Quarter Moon](#)
- Wed 27 Spica 1.9°N of [Moon](#)
- Sun 31 Antares 0.4°N of [Moon](#)
- Sun 31 [Full Moon](#)
- Sun 31 [Moon](#) Apogee at 406,369 km.

Events are non-local: check stellarium.com for exact distances.

Looking up

Turn Off the Lights for Insects' Sake! Light Pollution and Ecosystem Health

[Christopher Carlton](#), Baca, Stephen, Gambino, Christine, Ashbrook, Aaron

Light pollution is the brightening of the night sky with artificial light beyond what is essential for safety and navigation. Insects are essential for functioning ecosystems.

Artificial lights attract insects, thereby disrupting their natural behaviors and negatively impacting urban and suburban environments. These behavioral disruptions have severe consequences for insect diversity (Degen et al. 2024, Owens et al. 2020). In fact, light pollution is emerging as a major contributor to the decline of insects in many parts of the world, in addition to more obvious factors such as habitat loss and overuse of pesticides. Light pollution also negatively impacts bird migration patterns and impacts human health by disrupting normal circadian rhythms essential to healthy sleep patterns (Burt et al. 2023, Falchi et al. 2011).

Insects' attraction to light sources is a well-known phenomenon that has eluded understanding until recently. Experiments using 3D video data have suggested a deceptively simple explanation. As a navigation tool, nocturnal insects orient their bodies with their top (dorsal) side towards the light, whether it is faint sky glow at night or a point source such as a porch light (Fabian et al. 2024).

Insects being lured to light sources is not the only problem caused by light pollution that negatively impacts insect diversity. Fireflies are beetles in the family Lampyridae. They are fascinating and familiar members of the insect community in appropriate habitats in Louisiana, most of North America, and globally. Many people have happy memories of catching fireflies as children, and firefly tourism has risen dramatically in areas where healthy populations remain. Firefly populations have suffered severe population declines in many areas of Louisiana and elsewhere. Concerned citizens and dedicated firefly preservation organizations, such as the Xerces Society, have sprung up to identify and mitigate the causes of firefly decline ([Lewis et al. 2021](#)).

Most species of fireflies possess organs that produce light because of a chemical reaction involving an energy rich molecule, luciferin, and an enzyme, luciferase. This reaction produces

distinctive greenish or bluish flashes or sustained glows of fireflies. Adults of many fireflies utilize species-specific flash patterns to identify prospective mates, and one group of fireflies even mimics the flash patterns of other fireflies, then kills and eats them when they mistakenly approach. Despite the bright flashes against a dark landscape that are familiar to most people, the light produced by fireflies is relatively dim, and artificial lights such as porch and streetlights render communication among individual fireflies impossible. In light-polluted environments, no mating occurs, and thus the population can disappear in a single generation. Other factors that contribute to firefly decline include removal of moist leaf litter and decaying wood habitats required by the predatory firefly larvae, and the potential non-target impacts of insecticides such as mosquito fogging in areas of adult activity and broadcast soil insecticide treatments where larvae occur. Reestablishing adult and larval habitats are necessary steps for firefly recovery, but in areas of excessive lighting, fireflies are unlikely to return and thrive.

Light pollution also creates problems for homeowners and businesses by attracting large numbers of insects that are normally dispersed across the landscape. Many residents of Louisiana anticipate with anxiety the annual clouds of Formosan subterranean termites (*Coptotermes formosanus*) that fly around streetlights, typically around Mother's Day, which coincides with the peak mating swarms of the year for the species. These flights normally originate in areas where woody debris accumulates such as wooded corridors along bayous, nearby forests, infested trees and discarded lumber. In these areas, termite mating flights pose little threat to homes or other wood frame structures and serve as a valuable food source for insect-eating wildlife such as birds and frogs. Streetlights attract the termites into neighborhoods, where porch lights and illuminated windows subsequently attract them to homes. Inevitably, a few find their way into homes where they are a nuisance and, if moisture issues and other suitable conditions for termite establishment are present, they may potentially create colonies and cause major property damage. Turning off lights at night can help supplement professional preventative termite management and home moisture maintenance to help protect structures from Formosan subterranean termite damage.

Other nuisance problems occur when massive flights of midges (members of the family Chironomidae, order Diptera) emerge from their aquatic habitats and converge on well-lit neighborhoods and businesses. A secondary problem is the attraction of frogs, toads and

nocturnal lizards (e.g., geckos) to abundant insect food supplies around residential lights, where they deposit fecal material and lure snakes that feed on them. Moths attracted to porch lights often lay eggs on adjacent surfaces, resulting in large numbers of wandering caterpillars, some of which are potentially turf or garden pests. Less common, but potentially costly problems include mass flights of sugarcane beetles (*Euethola humilis*), which are strongly attracted to lights on and around buildings. Upon arrival, the adult beetles may burrow into the weather seals around windows, causing leaks and requiring expensive repairs. Different cockroach species, such as the smoky brown cockroach (*Periplaneta fuliginosa*) are attracted to lights and may enter structures and forage for food. Other unexpected, normally day-active insects, are attracted to light, such as certain species of dragonflies and many other species of small insects. Spiders may establish webs near lights to prey on plentiful insects that accumulate nearby. Other organisms, such as bats and nocturnal insect-feeding birds (e.g., night hawks and screech owls), are deterred by excess lighting, and therefore do not consume pest insects and rodents in well-lit locations. Some light-attracted insects may even pose a threat to human health. Kissing bugs (*Triatoma* spp.) are blood-feeding insects that are potential vectors of Chagas disease in Louisiana. Kissing bugs are rarely encountered since the native species spend most of their life cycle in the vicinity of wild hosts away from homes. However, adult kissing bugs disperse during certain times of the year, are strongly attracted to artificial lights and are thus lured to houses where they may enter at access points near lights.

Light pollution continues to rise nearly unabated around the world and has recently increased because of the transition to highly luminous energy efficient light emitting diodes (LEDs) (Pothukuchi 2024). Common shorter wavelength LEDs in the blue end of the visible spectrum strain human eyes, have been shown to be lethal to nocturnal insects and disturb other wildlife due to their higher sensitivity to shorter wavelengths (Owens et al. 2024). Blue wavelengths also increase the glare of light on surfaces and produce more intense sky glow than longer wavelengths. Artificial lighting is a complex and often divisive social issue due to the perception that more nighttime lighting increases security and contributes to crime prevention, but evidence is lacking that supports this claim (MacDonald et al. 2026).

Citizen-led Initiatives

Small, incremental steps can reduce light pollution, substantially improve habitats and reduce light trespass that impacts nearby residents. Local neighborhood initiatives increase public awareness and promote efforts to convert local security lighting to less polluting but equally effective types of fixtures. Bright, undirected (i.e., no cutoff), high mounted fixtures such as streetlights mounted on telephone poles should be eliminated and replaced with lower, downward directed fixtures using longer wavelength light sources that are orange or red in color. Individual residential security lights can be replaced with motion sensitive lights calibrated for large animals or intruders. Many residential developments are implementing less invasive security lights and integrating outdoor lighting restrictions into homeowner association covenants. Shutters are available that can diffuse light so that it is less harmful to wildlife but still provide visibility to residents. Warm spectrum lights are preferred, with red being the least harmful. Indoor lighting should be turned off at night, or the windows can be shuttered if light shines outdoors. For a full explanation of the benefits of dark sky friendly lighting, see the information provided by the organization [Dark Sky International](#).

Establishing “firefly sanctuaries” in local parks and other green spaces can improve habitat for many nocturnal animals in addition to fireflies. Many organisms benefit from dark wildlife corridors in addition to having access to their preferred habitats. Consideration should be given to dark wildlife corridors along undeveloped waterways and forests to allow migration into sanctuaries and reestablish diminished populations. At larger scales, active lobbying of legislators, local politicians, urban planners and utility companies can emphasize the growing demand for environmentally responsible public lighting. Individual citizens can become involved in these efforts. Another effective approach is to join one or more of the many social, scientific and environmental organizations that are leading organized efforts to mitigate light pollution. Astronomy organizations are among the most active and motivated groups lobbying for positive change in public lighting because it directly impacts celestial observations. Many of these organizations have dedicated light pollution committees that monitor lighting patterns and encourage best practices to reduce the impacts of light pollution.

Traveling to a designated dark sky site can lead to greater appreciation of the beauty of an unpolluted night sky and is an excellent way to get people young and old motivated to become activists in reducing urban and suburban light pollution. Field trips offered by churches or scouting groups and summer youth camps provide opportunities to visit dark sky sites. These venues are often located in dark sky locations. Most residents of brightly lit towns and cities have never seen the Milky Way (the galaxy in which we live) arcing brightly overhead on clear nights. Observing the Milky Way is possible under dark skies during most months of the year from most locations on Earth. Reducing light pollution benefits society, human quality of life and the environment in a multitude of ways, however, to prevent it requires education and activism to change the way public lighting is used and perceived.

Online Resources

[Baton Rouge Astronomical Society](#)

[Bortle scale](#), a method of visually assessing dark sky quality

National Geographic Education, [Light Pollution](#)

[Pontchartrain Astronomy Society](#)

Rewilding Institute, [The Ecological and Human Need for Dark Skies](#)

[Shreveport Bossier Astronomical Society](#)

[The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#)

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