

## “Dark Skies” Might Be a Hard Sell in Oklahoma

Kaye Beach

June 14, 2011

If the idea of "Dark Skies" doesn't give you a warm and fuzzy feeling all over, it could just be that you are an Oklahoman.

But don't be so hasty. There are more ominous aspects to this proposal than just the foreboding connotation of threatening weather that come to mind when dark skies are mentioned in these parts.



*“Everyone is a citizen of the world. At some level we should all be its stewards with accountability toward preserving its environment. One component of that is the preservation of dark skies or the prevention of light pollution”*

*[GLOBE at Night](#) . . .enlists the help of students to collect data on the night sky conditions in their community and contribute to a worldwide database on light pollution.*

Read more about [Dark Skies Awareness](#)

There will be a Norman City Council meeting today at 5:30 pm.

CONFERENCE ROOM - MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
201 WEST GRAY  
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2011 at 5:30 P.M.

See [City Council Agenda](#)

June 11, 2011

[Lighting Ordinance Resurfaces](#)

April 13, 2011

## [Lighting ordinance draws opposition](#)

**The proposed ordinance, O-1011-44, is being presented as primarily an energy conservation measure.**

### **SEC. 431.6 -- COMMERCIAL OUTDOOR LIGHTING STANDARDS**

(Established by Ord. No. O-1011-44 -- \_\_\_\_, 2011)

1. Purpose and Intent. It is the intent of this Section to define practical and effective measures by which the obtrusive aspects of commercial outdoor light usage can be minimized, while preserving safety, security, and the nighttime use and enjoyment of property. These measures are intended to reduce light spillover, minimize glare, and decrease resource waste.

April 15, 2011

#### **Norman City Council and Public Discuss New Lighting Ordinance**

Almost every seat was full on Tuesday night during the city council meeting; many were filled by students, all dressed in black shirts.

The students of Norman North High School's astronomy club attended the city council meeting on Tuesday, April 12. They waited patiently in the back for their turn to speak their opinion to the city council. They all wore black shirts to show their support for the lighting ordinance. As the four students and one of their teachers stepped toward the podium, a power point presentation came up on the screen. The students passed forward a petition with 637 signatures in support of the proposed lighting ordinance proposed by the City Council.

<http://simplysalmagundi.wordpress.com/2011/04/15/norman-city-council-and-public-discuss-new-lighting-ordinance/>

**Norman Public School teachers apparently are using our taxes to indoctrinate school kids on new "rights" and using them to instigate the implementation of city policy that offers us these new "rights" invented by international organizations in lieu of long established natural and legal ones.**

The students, however, are to be commended. They overcame the usual apathy and turned out in force to defend what they are being taught is a right.

#### **The Starlight Initiative**

*An unpolluted night sky that allows the enjoyment and contemplation of the firmament **should be considered an inalienable right of humankind equivalent to all other environmental, social, and cultural rights**, due to its impact on the development of all peoples and on the conservation of biodiversity."*

*Starlight Declaration. La Palma, Spain 2008.*

<http://www.starlight2007.net/theinitiative.htm>

**Too bad the schools aren't teaching about them about their true rights to life, liberty and property that are recognized and guaranteed to each and every one of us by law in the United States. For the first time, I am thankful that my daughter chose the more physical and less academic route at Norman North. I don't think I could face the public realization that my tax dollars had been used in this manner.**

### **Outside Agitators**

*"Grzybowski said the class is Norman's outside agitators to the city for the issue of light pollution, encouraging City Council to preserve the night sky by passing lighting ordinances"*

*"The students — steered by Norman North astronomy teacher Eileen Grzybowski — have collected readings throughout Norman as part of **Globe Night 2010, a worldwide campaign to fight light pollution** —"*

(Source March 15, 2010 [Star light, star bright](#) [The Norman Transcript](#))

**GLOBE Night 2010 centerpiece of the Dark Skies Awareness Global Cornerstone Project for the International Year of Astronomy (IYA) in 2009 a UNESCO initiative.** (More information below)

**Mrs. Grzybowski's husband is the author of this publication;**

***The Canadian River and floodplain in Norman, Oklahoma: Environmental perspective***

[Joseph A Grzybowski](#) (Author)

**Unfortunately, Amazon.com lists this publication as [out of print](#)**

**Joseph A. Grzybowski, Ph.D. is a Biologist/Ornithologist [scientist who studies birds] and Professor who serves on "various local, regional and national committees involving endangered species and environmental management." [link](#)**

### **IYA2009 Boosts Globe at Night to Record Number of Dark-Skies Observations**

Source: [International Year of Astronomy 2009](#) Posted Thursday, April 30, 2009

*In Norman, Oklahoma, high school students, their teachers and local amateur astronomers produced a map of nearly 500 SQM measurements that canvassed their city. **Local teacher and amateur astronomer Eileen Grzybowski**, with students Brittany, Emily and Braden, then made a well-received presentation of the results to their **local Environmental Control Advisory Board**. (Emphasis mine)*

*They [the City of Norman's **Environmental Control Advisory Board**] want us to partner with them and be the outside agitating voice in the newspapers and elsewhere to put the issue of revising our lighting ordinances front and center, Grzybowski reported.*

They [the City of Norman's **Environmental Control Advisory Board**] made suggestions as to how the presentation could be revised to make a bigger impact.

They want us to obtain pictures taken from the sky down to the Earth from an airplane and pictures of our ground-based sites of high light pollution and dark oases, and they want us to include data about security issues and cost savings.

<http://www.spaceref.com/news/viewpr.html?pid=28094>

**\*\*See below for information regarding the IYA2009 and "GLOBE at Night"**

**"Our next step is to go before the City Council and do the light demo and discuss our preliminary results."** says Grzybowski

**Which they did on May 13, 2010.**

**NORMAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION AGENDA  
MAY 13, 2010**

**PRESENTATION BY EILEEN GRZYBOWSKI'S SCIENCE CLASS OF THEIR STUDENT LIGHTING PROJECT.**

[Link](#)

**City of Norman Environmental Control Advisory Board**

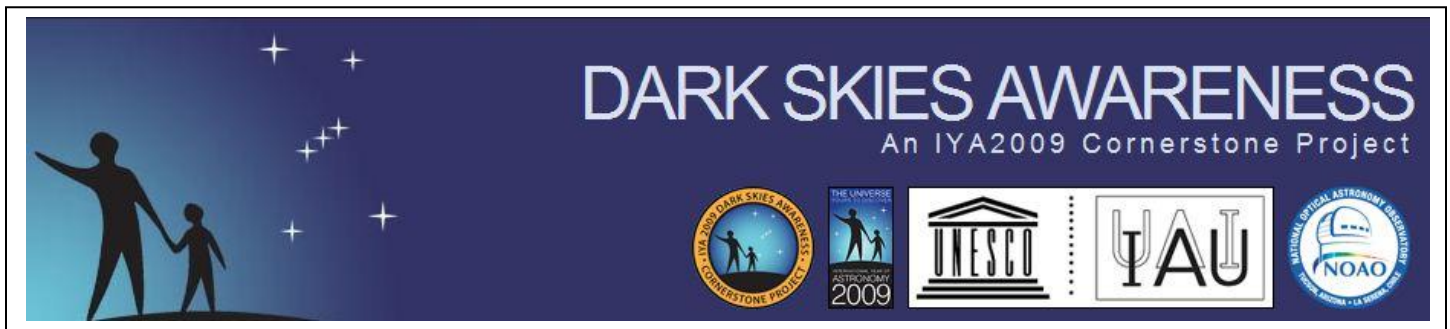
Investigates, prepares plans for, and recommends programs regarding the preservation and enhancement of the environmental quality of the City as well as administers variance procedures in the Air Quality Control Ordinance. Meets the 3rd Wednesday; 5:30 p.m., Norman Municipal Building Multi-Purpose Room, 201 West Gray. (3-year term)

[US Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement](#)

**Members**

- Amanda Rook - 07/14/09 - 07/14/09 - 10/27/12 - 5
- Mark Jensen - 11/10/09 - 11/10/09 - 10/27/12 - 2
- Dr. Moira Waterbury - 11/10/09 - 11/10/09 - 10/27/12 - 5
- Asia Scudder - 04/27/10 - 04/27/10 - 10/27/13 - 4
- Yves Badaroux - 04/27/10 - 04/27/10 - 10/27/13 - 3
- Dave Boeck - 04/10/07 - 10/27/10 - 10/27/13 - 4
- Larry Steele, CHAIR - 10/27/08 - 10/27/08 - 10/27/11 - 7
- Jane Dye - 10/27/05 - 10/27/08 - 10/27/11 - 7
- Neil Suneson - 08/09/05 - 10/27/08 - 10/27/11 - 2

## About those Dark Skies



### 2007 First meeting of the Starlight Reserves Working Group.

The overall aim is to discuss the problems of identification of specific categories of natural sites, skylscapes, cultural nightscapes, and exceptional sites for astronomical observation, as “Starlight Reserves” for their possible nominations on the World Heritage List.

[www.starlight2007.net/pdf/ProgFVStarlight.pdf](http://www.starlight2007.net/pdf/ProgFVStarlight.pdf)

### IYA 2009

The United Nations declares 2009 the International Year of Astronomy.

**20 December 2007: the United Nations 62nd General Assembly proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Astronomy.** The Resolution was submitted by Italy, Galileo Galilei's home country. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 is an initiative of the International Astronomical Union and UNESCO.

**THE STARLIGHT INITIATIVE** (Granting all the “right” to observe the stars which will obviously clash with your right to light your property! All for the sake of “biodiversity)

***An unpolluted night sky that allows the enjoyment and contemplation of the firmament should be considered an inalienable right of humankind equivalent to all other environmental, social, and cultural rights, due to its impact on the development of all peoples and on the conservation of biodiversity.***

*Starlight Declaration. La Palma, Spain 2008.* <http://www.starlight2007.net/theinitiative.htm>

**The initiative is designed as an international campaign in defence of the values associated with the night sky and the general right to observe the stars.** It is open to the participation of all scientific, cultural, environmental, and citizens' organizations and associations, as well as public institutions and other public and private bodies willing to effectively cooperate in the conservation of clear skies and the dissemination of the knowledge related with their observation. The final aim of the initiative is to strengthen the importance of clear skies for humankind, emphasizing and introducing the value of this endangered heritage for science, education, culture, technological development, nature conservation, tourism and, obviously, as a quality-of-life factor.

<http://www.starlight2007.net/theinitiative.htm>



**GLOBE at Night** is a fun, international citizen-science event that encourages everyone—students, educators, dark sky advocates and the general public— to measure the darkness of their local skies and contribute their observations online to a world map. The program is a centerpiece of the **Dark Skies Awareness Global Cornerstone Project for the International Year of Astronomy (IYA) in 2009**. Its goal is to raise public awareness of the impact of artificial lighting on local environments by getting people involved.

<http://www.darks skiesawareness.org/gan.php>

### **GLOBE at Night in Norman**

United States: 475 Sky Quality Meter measurements & 475 Orion measurements during GLOBE at Night in Norman, Oklahoma □ lighting inventory for city

<http://www.starlight2007.net/pdf/lapalma2009/WalkerS4.pdf>

**Dark Skies initiatives are concerned with land development control policies and part of a “Global Assessment” done on behalf of an International Union.**

### **GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF LIGHT POLLUTION IMPACT ON PROTECTED AREAS**

**The Dark Skies Advisory Group** of the Specialist Group works to reduce light pollution and protect a natural night sky. While it focuses

primarily on protected areas and sites, the group is also concerned with appropriate design and land development control policies.

[www.interenvironment.org/pa/dark.htm](http://www.interenvironment.org/pa/dark.htm)

**IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature**, is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

**The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognizes the importance of natural darkness to the ecological integrity of protected areas, and to the sustainability of healthy lives in healthy cities. The Dark Skies Advisory Group has been established within IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas to help advance this recognition.**

*“. . . ecosystems and wild species operate 24 hours each day, seven days each week. They have evolved to cope with, depend on and take advantage of natural darkness. A night sky without artificial light is therefore vital to the proper functioning of natural ecosystems. Artificial lighting affects species migration patterns, predator-prey relationships, and the circadian rhythms of many organisms, to name just a few of the consequences of light pollution.”*

**Web site of the IUCN Dark Skies Advisory Group**

<http://www.darkskyparks.org/index.php/component/content/article/72-dsag.html>

Members of the IUCN include the **US Department of Agriculture Forest Service, US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of the Interior National Park Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, and hundreds of other federal, state and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and land trusts**

**Naturally-The Sierra Club supports the proposed lighting ordinances in Norman.**

**It is imperative that all Sierra Club members attend this important meeting to ensure that the proposed lighting ordinance remains effective and is even strengthened.**

We also continue to urge Sierra Club members to individually contact their council members and the mayor asking them to adopt this ordinance as it is currently proposed or even strengthening the ordinance. Contact information including email addresses are located here for council members: <http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/content/city-council> and here for the mayor: <http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/content/mayor>.

<http://www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org/redearth/newsletter/2011AprNewsletter.html>

