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ESCONDIDO DRAW SEEKS INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK CERTIFICATION

OZONA, Texas – The Escondido Draw Recreational Area is seeking certification as an International Dark Sky Park, joining the increasing number of West Texas communities and areas working to preserve the night sky.

The announcement today by the Recreational Area and the Ozona Chamber of Commerce would make it the first of its kind in Crockett County and marks the celebration here of International Dark Sky Week. The county is located in a region with some of the darkest skies in North America. Other nearby dark sky places already certified by the International Dark-Sky Association include the Greater Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve (the largest dark sky preserve in the world), Devils River State Natural Area and South Llano River State Park.

“I applaud Escondido Draw’s efforts to become an IDA-certified dark sky park. Dark Skies are an invaluable natural resource that is increasingly threatened in our modern world,” Stephen Hummell, McDonald Observatory’s senior outreach program coordinator, said.

Encompassing more than 3,500 acres, the new Escondido Draw Recreational Area is located just west of Ozona, on the western edge of Crockett County. The Texas Motorized Trail Coalition owned park consists of a variety of landscapes and recreational opportunities including challenging off-road vehicle trails, mountain biking, bird watching, swimming, camping and of course star gazing.

Tom Anderson, the Recreational Area’s president, said, “We are proud to potentially increase the protected area in Texas that is home to some of the most star-filled skies one can see. We just don’t see any down side being that the park is already very dark and we decided we’d like to keep it that way as another draw while maintaining the rural character and minimizing impact on wildlife.”

An International Dark Sky Place designation helps enhance the visibility of designated locations and foster increased tourism and local economic activity in addition to protecting an area’s natural and rural heritage.

“West Texas is known for many wonderful things, its wide-open spaces and dark skies being among them,” Carter Smith, executive director of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, said. “I’m delighted that the Escondido Draw Recreational Area is pursuing certification as an International Dark Skies Park.

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About the International Dark-Sky Association

The mission of IDA is to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. Its Texas chapter, www.idatexas.org, maintains a listing of the growing number of certified dark sky communities and places in the state.

About Escondido Draw Recreational Area

EDRA Property/Regional Map and directions can be found here:
https://www.escondidodraw.org/info_directions.php

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