



CALIFORNIA

# West Marin residents seek Northern California's first dark-sky designation



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Star watchers and astronomy buffs may soon get a new designated locale to gaze at the wonders of the night sky.

An [organization in West Marin](#), in the north of the Bay Area, is launching an effort to “protect our wildlife and our communities from the harmful effects of light pollution” and join an exclusive list of dark-sky places worldwide.

DarkSky West Marin, founded in early 2021 with the help of Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, says the group will soon apply to DarkSky International for designation. Additionally, nearby Point Reyes National Seashore will apply for recognition as a dark-sky park, according to the DarkSky West Marin website.

“We were getting all these complaints because people kept putting up brighter and brighter lights” said Peggy Day, one of the organization’s founders.

She observed that on many nights, “one half of the sky is a whitish dome from San Francisco or Highway 101.”

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nine such communities have signed letters in support.

The Point Reyes Station Village Assn. submitted a draft ordinance to Marin County in May of 2021, according to DarkSky West Marin. It was unclear whether the ordinance had progressed since then.



SCIENCE & MEDICINE

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In Southern California, two towns and three parks have already been recognized for their lack of light pollution.

Borrego Springs and Julian, two San Diego county towns with populations under 1,500, were accredited in 2009 and 2021, respectively.

Additionally, [Joshua Tree National Park](#), Death Valley National Park and Anza Borrego Desert State Park east of San Diego are listed as dark-sky locales.

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The photo below, taken in 2014 from the International Space Station, shows the lights of Southern California in contrast with the dark Pacific Ocean below.



A view from space of the lights of Southern California taken in July 2014. (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

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International Space Station, shows a closer look at Northern California's nighttime lights.



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An image from space shows the nighttime lights of Northern California in September 2013. (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

Above San Francisco in this image is the Pacific Ocean. To the right is Marin County, with little light showing in sparsely populated West Marin in the top right.

West Marin's seven unincorporated towns, Point Reyes Station, Olema, Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Tomales, Dillon Beach and Inverness, have just a few thousand residents in total.



Terry Castleman

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