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## **The Utah Office of Tourism Celebrates Governor Cox's Third Annual Declaration of Dark Sky Month**

*Utah Office of Tourism's dark sky messaging encourages responsible tourism stewardship*

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH — The Utah Office of Tourism celebrates Governor Spencer Cox's third annual declaration of April as Dark Sky Month. Astrotourism and dark sky messaging complement the [Red Emerald Strategic Plan](#), which aims to elevate life in Utah through responsible tourism stewardship. April in Utah has been celebrated as Dark Sky Month since 2021.

Utah is home to some of the darkest skies on earth and currently leads the world in dark sky preservation with 24 accredited [International Dark-Sky Association](#) (IDA) places. With good planning and community support, dark sky preservation and astrotourism is a responsible and sustainable form of tourism that encourages overnight stays, distributes visitation around the state and educates visitors about Utah. Astrotourism could lead to an estimated [\\$5.8 billion in spending in the Colorado Plateau](#) and support over 113,000 new jobs in the next 10 years.

"The Red Emerald Strategic Plan aims to spread out visitation throughout the state and the year, not just high season and highly visited places. Preserving dark skies helps communities establish long lasting tourism economies and keeps our places Forever Mighty®," said Vicki Varela, managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism. "Utah State Parks, our national parks and community partners have shown tremendous leadership and vision in preserving the night sky throughout the state."

Further, the Red Emerald Strategic Plan focuses on the quality of visits and manages visitation consistent with local community priorities.

Utah's 24 accredited International Dark-Sky Association places include Natural Bridges National Monument, the first ever dark sky designated park in the world, all five of Utah's Mighty 5® national parks, 10 state parks, two towns and more. Visitors and residents can go to [visitutah.com/stars](http://visitutah.com/stars) for a suite of resources to learn how to experience, enjoy and protect the state's vast night skies.

*Dark Sky Images - [here](#)*

*Dark Skies at Kodachrome Basin State Park Video - [here](#)*

*Beginner's Guide to Dark Skies Exploration - [here](#)*

*Governor Spencer Cox Utah Dark Sky Month Declaration - [here](#)*

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### **About the Utah Office of Tourism**

The Utah Office of Tourism (UOT) fulfills its mission to improve the quality of life for Utah residents through revenue and tax relief by attracting quality, well-prepared domestic and international visitation and



motivating tourism spending within a sustainable tourism economy. The UOT partners with communities to develop tourism economies and storytelling consistent with their local vision and encourages stewardship and industry support through local engagement and ambassadorship. To advance these goals, the UOT manages year-round strategic marketing, industry research, media relations, cooperative marketing, in-state public relations, website and visitor experience enhancements, and destination management and development programs. Learn more at [travel.utah.gov](https://travel.utah.gov) and [visitutah.com](https://visitutah.com).