



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Utah Office of Tourism Celebrates April as Official Dark Sky Month**

*Residents and visitors invited to enjoy the state's collection of 24 Dark Sky Places*

**SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — APRIL 1, 2022—** When the sun goes down and the stars come out over Utah, gazing into the night sky is a magical experience. Few places on earth have as many awe-inspiring nighttime views as Utah, which will be celebrating April as Dark Sky Month for the second consecutive year, as declared by Gov. Spencer Cox.

The International Dark Sky Association, an award-winning conservation program that recognizes communities that strive to preserve the beauty of the night, has designated 24 Dark Sky Places in Utah since 2007 giving the state the highest concentration of Dark Sky Places in the world.

“Dark skies are integral to the well-being of many animal and plant species and are demonstrated to have positive health impacts to human beings,” [Gov. Spencer J. Cox stated in his declaration](#) of Dark Skies Month. “We wish to recognize the efforts and advocacy of federal, state, local and nonprofit agencies as well as Utah's recreation, tourism and education sectors which make night sky opportunities in our state available for all to enjoy.”

Utah's dark skies also play a key role in the state's economy. Astrotourism is expected to generate nearly \$6 billion and employ more than 113,000 workers in the American Southwest over the next decade. Astrotourism, at its broadest, can be a great value-added product to several services that a tourism or leisure or hospitality business can offer. With guided star-gazing adventures, astronomy programs, star parties, dark sky photography and more, there is a unique opportunity for deeper exploration of Utah, the darkness and its positive effects on the environment, humans and our sense of place.

“Having the most certified dark skies in the world is one of the many ways that Utah is precious,” said Vicki Varela, managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism. “All precious things require stewardship so that we can enjoy them now and also protect them for future generations to enjoy.”

Varela said the office's Red Emerald Strategic Plan creates a path for a perpetual visitor economy. All Utahns share a role in preserving the state's natural beauty through responsible recreation, keeping the sights and sounds of nature easy and welcoming to enjoy. The Utah Office of Tourism has maintained a [Dark Sky Places webpage](#) complete with guides, stories, and details about each of the Places.

In April, both Utah residents and visitors alike looking for a memorable evening, are invited to look up and enjoy the view during Dark Sky Month. Chances are there's a Dark Sky Place near you, no matter where you find yourself in Utah.

For more information on Utah's Dark Sky Places visit this [link](#).



**ASSETS:**

*Gov. Spencer J. Cox Dark Sky Month Declaration - [here](#)*

*Gov. Spencer J. Cox Dark Sky Month Declaration Recorded - [here](#)*

*Dark Sky Images – [here](#)*

*Dark Skies at Kodachrome Basin State Park Video – [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](http://travel.utah.gov) and [visitutah.com](http://visitutah.com).