



DarkSky Colorado Strategic Plan

November 2024



Prepared by CWH Consulting



DarkSky
COLORADO

Table of Contents

3	Letter of Support
4	Mission and Vision
5	Goals
14	Team
16	SWOT
17	Partnerships
18	Impact
20	Financial Sustainability
21	Fundraising Strategy



In Support of Colorado's Dark Skies

When DarkSky Colorado applied for the CTO Tourism Destination Grant it had my enthusiastic support. As the only statewide nonprofit dedicated to protecting the night, DarkSky Colorado is filling a much-needed role of protecting communities and wildlife from light pollution.

We are lucky to have places in Colorado where the night sky is cherished and protected, and where people can go to connect to the natural darkness and a night sky full of stars. As light pollution continues to grow and threaten the last remaining areas of pristine natural darkness, Colorado has a unique opportunity to both protect its night skies and responsibly promote them for a wonderful visitor experience that also provides economic benefit to residents.

As the primary sponsor of the Colorado Dark Sky Designation and Promotion Bill - HB22-1382, I worked with DarkSky Colorado to form the framework of this bill, and I am pleased that they are executing the proposed scopes of work from the bill.

Through education, advocacy, and conservation efforts, DarkSky Colorado strives to conserve and restore the natural night sky for the heritage, health and wellbeing of the people, wildlife and environment of Colorado. Because of DarkSky Colorado and the CTO partnership that has facilitated the Colorado Dark Sky Mentor Program, there are 34 applicants in the International Dark Sky Place certification process, more than anywhere else in the world.

I appreciate the work that DarkSky Colorado has accomplished and I offer my full support as they continue to demonstrate how to have an enjoyable destination tourism experience while protecting the night at the same time.

Sincerely,

Julie McCluskie



Julie McCluskie
State Representative
CO House District 13

"We are lucky to have places in Colorado where the night sky is cherished and protected, and where people can go to connect to the natural darkness and a night sky full of stars."

History of DarkSky Colorado

DarkSky Colorado became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2023. However, its roots are far richer and deeper. Light pollution as a topic emerged in the 1980s, which led several Colorado residents including Dr. Robert Stencel (Professor of Astronomy at Denver University) and Dr. David Crawford (founder of DarkSky International) to discuss how Colorado could protect their skies against pollution. In 2001, they inspired the Colorado legislature and Bill § 24-82-902 was adopted to create lighting standards in Colorado. Over the next few years, interest in protecting Dark Skies grew and informal gatherings on how to work together to conserve Colorado's Dark Skies garnered more and more support. Community leaders such as Ryan Parker, Richard O'Brien, and later Aaron Watson, joined the group and, in 2019, DarkSky Colorado received LLC status and became an official Chapter of DarkSky International.

Today, DarkSky Colorado has a seven-person Board of Directors and hired their first Executive Director in 2023. Together, they have worked to certify 17 communities and parks in Colorado as International Dark Sky places.

Mission

We strive to conserve and restore the natural night sky for the heritage, health, and wellbeing of the people, wildlife, and environment of Colorado.

Vision

The Colorado night sky is preserved and protected for all.

Values

EQUITY - The natural night sky is our universal heritage and everyone has a right to starlight.

LEGACY - The promise to future generations to conserve the natural night sky, leaving it better than we found it.

INTEGRITY - DarkSky Colorado is a non-partisan, dependable partner that leads by example and is backed by science.

STEWARDSHIP - Instilling values and practices of care and protection of the night sky.

Theory of Change

If we reduce artificial light at night (ALAN), then we will protect and preserve Colorado's night skies for future generations.

Strategic Focus Areas

Education	Inspire & inform action to conserve the beauty and solace of Colorado dark skies
Advocacy	Advocate for local and state lighting policies to Reduce light pollution for Coloradan communities
Conservation	Reduce artificial light at night to conserve and restore Colorado's environment
Coalition & Partners	Build strong, synergistic and dependable partnerships to achieve DarkSky Colorado's mission
Team & Organizational Governance	Create a highly functioning financially sustainable organization, competent leadership team and efficient processes



GOALS

Education

Goal:

Inspire & Inform Action to Conserve the Beauty & Solace of Colorado Dark Skies

Priorities:

1. Events
2. Communications
3. School (K-12) Engagement
4. Physical Assets

Events

One Year Objectives

- Develop a series of speaker events for Colorado regions with at least four online or in-person events in celebration of Lights Out Colorado.
- Develop a working plan to host an in-person conference (brainstorm and define format, structure, communications, etc.).

Three Year Objectives

- Develop yearly one month event speaker series with six online or in-person events.
- Pilot 50 person conference with civic leaders, thought partners, planners, and conservationists across the state to share successes, challenges, and ideas for dark sky conservation.

Five Year Objectives

- Host two, month-long Lights Out Colorado event series during Spring and Fall Migration to promote the reduction of light during migration. A month long series could consist of informational webinars to be inclusive of people across the state. Events will be held across all benefits of dark skies: health, wellbeing, wildlife, energy.
- Host a 300 participant, in-person conference for leaders, thought partners, planners, and conservationists across the state to share successes, challenges, and ideas for dark sky conservation.

Communications

One Year Objectives

- Create concrete guidance for IDSP certification.
- Improve communications and marketing through a new website and newsletter.
- 2000 people receive DarkSky Colorado Newsletter, with a click through rate of 30%.
- 500 followers on Facebook, 100 followers on Instagram and 50 followers and weekly posts on LinkedIn.
- Develop and disseminate video content reaching 250 viewers.
- Publish DarkSky Colorado strategic plan (website, newsletter).
- Writing and submitting two relevant op-eds/quarter.

Three Year Objectives

- 4000 people receive DarkSky Colorado Newsletter with a click through rate of 32.5%.
- 3000 followers on Facebook, 500 followers on Instagram and 250 followers on LinkedIn.

Five Year Objectives

- 10,000 people receive DarkSky Colorado Newsletter with a 35% click through rate.
- 5000 followers on Facebook, 1000 followers on Instagram and 500 followers on LinkedIn.
- Use online sky quality data to tell powerful stories and do a citizen science initiative.
- Submit two or three article proposals (queries) each quarter to lifestyle, recreational and environmental magazines (e.g., Thirst Colorado, NoCo Style, Denverite, 5280, Westword).

School (K-12) Engagement

One Year Objectives

- Implement K-12 Dark Sky Curriculum in 2 schools.
- Partner with one school and its educators on a Dark Sky curriculum (including one off talks/ lessons).

Three Year Objectives

- Supply an educational program packet to schools.
- Implement K-12 Dark Sky Curriculum in 5 schools.
- Reach out to children's science teachers in three school districts.

Five Year Objectives

- Develop an age/grade appropriate Dark Sky curriculum for classrooms across the state.
- Implement K-12 Dark Sky Curriculum in 10 schools.
- Sponsor three astronomy presentations per year by guest speakers at middle- and high schools.
- Set up a Dark Sky Award / Scholarship program for high school students.

Physical Assets

One Year Objectives

- Research Astrovan options and create a budget.
- Begin initial conversations with 2-3 partners on an Observatory.

Three Year Objectives

- Create a central visitor center and office
- Develop a capital campaign to purchase an Astrovan to support Dark Sky programming and outreach across the state.
- Develop key partnerships and make progress made towards observatory HQ being built.

Five Year Objectives

- Astrovan to be fully owned and operating.
- Be part of development of an observatory (headquarters, education & outreach).
- Astrovan to provide traveling star parties and Astro education events.



GOALS

Advocacy

Goal:

Advocate for Local and State Lighting Policies to Reduce Light Pollution for Coloradan Communities

Priorities:

1. Local
2. State

Local

One Year Objectives

- Build connections to 5-10 local (town/city/county) council members.
- DarkSky Colorado Board or Staff to give at least 4-6 community/civic addresses per year to:
 - Town/City Councils
 - Civic organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, local community forums)
 - Industry events

Three Year Objectives

- Build connections to 10-15 local council members.
- DarkSky Colorado Board or Staff to give at least 6-10 community/civic addresses per year for education/outreach.

Five Year Objectives

- Build connections to 25-30 local Councilors.
- DarkSky Colorado Board or Staff to give at least 10-15 community/civic addresses per year for education/outreach.

State

One Year Objectives

- Build connections to 3-5 Senators.
- Advocate for bill for state funding for lighting retrofits across the State.

Three Year Objectives

- Build connections to 10-15 Senators.
- Advocate for new state legislation on Dark Sky mandates for communities and parks (including color temperature and Dark Sky compliant lighting).
- Maintain funding for retrofitting of State owned lighting in communities and parks.
- Advocate for a resolution for Colorado Capitol lights to be Dark Sky compliant.
- Allocate federal grants for lighting retrofits.

Five Year Objectives

- Engage state legislators (at least three attempts per elected leader), to advocate for DarkSky Colorado's work and promote recognition.
- Establish a statewide policy in which all lighting is Dark Sky friendly and in which the policy includes a provision for funding retrofits across the state.
- The Colorado Legislature or Governor will announce the state's intention to become the first Dark Sky State.



GOALS

Conservation

Goal:

Reduce Artificial Light at Night to Conserve and Restore Colorado's Environment

Priorities:

1. Sky Quality Measuring
2. Dark Sky Certification
3. Mentor Program

Sky Quality Measuring

One Year Objectives

- Fund & distribute continuous light monitoring equipment in five areas across the state.
- Establish ten Sky Quality Measuring sites (SQM).

Three Year Objectives

- Establish 30 SQM sites.
- Expand SQM data gathering capabilities.

- Secure funding to allow for SQM loaner meters Colorado places in the IDSP pipeline.
- Provide technical assistance to Colorado places in the IDSP pipeline for preliminary SQM readings and the lighting inventory.

Five Year Objectives

- Establish 50 SQM sites.
- Develop an online, interactive SQM data network that allows communities and places to upload data and track regional trends in light pollution.

Dark Sky Certification

One Year Objectives

- Colorado will have 20 International Dark Sky Places (IDSP) with fifteen more in the pipeline.
- Ten state parks will be in the pipeline for IDSP certification.
- Develop and distribute tools to assist places in becoming Dark Sky certified.

Three Year Objectives

- Colorado will have 25 IDSPs certified with ten more in pipeline.
- Five state parks will be IDSP certified.
- Two large cities (>50,000 people) will be in the pipeline for certification.
- Implement statewide mapping to identify places that could meet Dark Sky standards.

Five Year Objectives

- Colorado will have 30 IDSPs.
- One large city will be IDSP certified as an international example.
- Ten state parks will be IDSP certified.
- Attain 100% retention of certified communities.

Mentor Program

One Year Objectives

- Engage five mentors in dark sky consulting.
- Provide 300 technical assistance hours.
- Obtain funding for mentor travel reimbursement.

Three Year Objectives

- Engage ten mentors in dark sky consulting.
- Provide 500 Technical assistance hours.
- Obtain full ownership and operation of the Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program and develop a sustainable model that generates revenue for the organization.

Five Year Objectives

- Engage 15 mentors in dark sky consulting.
- Maintain 500 Technical assistance hours or full time equivalent.

GOALS

Coalition + Partners

Goal:

Build Strong, Synergistic and Dependable Partnerships to Achieve DarkSky Colorado's Mission

Priorities:

1. Dark Sky Organizations
2. Educational Partners
3. Certification Communities
4. State & Federal Partners
5. Corporate Partners
6. Community & Nonprofit Partners

Dark Sky Organizations

One Year Objectives

- Obtain 250 member advocates in Colorado.
- Work with DarkSky International to build coalition strategy.
- Identify and engage with dark sky champions in every county.
- Organize and coordinate a meeting and/or workshop with other dark sky groups.

Three Year Objectives

- Obtain 500 member advocates in Colorado.
- Partner with dark sky organizations in the 4-corners region.

Five Year Objectives

- Obtain 1000 member advocates in Colorado.

Educational Partners

One Year Objectives

- Partner with five K-12 schools and one college.

Three Year Objectives

- Partner with five K-12 Schools and two colleges

Five Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships ten K-12 schools and with three colleges/universities.

Certification Communities

One Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships with 20 certified communities and ten pipeline communities.

Three Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships with 25 certified communities and ten pipeline communities.

Five Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships with 30 certified communities and ten pipeline communities.

State and Federal Partners

One Year Objectives

- Establish partnership with two state entities.

Three Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships with two state entities, one federal grant

Five Year Objectives

- Establish partnerships with three state entities, one federal grant

Corporate Partners

One Year Objectives

- Sponsors & Funders: Obtain 2 funding or sponsorship relationships.
- Adopters: Engage in conversations with 3-5 hotel chains re DarkSky International standards.
- Pro-bono: Obtain free accounting services.

Three Year Objectives

- Sponsors & Funders: Obtain 5 funding or sponsorship relationships.
- Adopters: Partnership with two national hotel chains > 60% Dark Sky Compliant.
- Pro-bono: Obtain 2-4 pro bono partnerships (legal, financial etc.).

Five Year Objectives

- Sponsors & Funders: Obtain ten funding or sponsorship relationships.
- Adopters: Voluntary, high-impact partnerships with more than 3 hotel chains.
- Pro-bono: Obtain 6-8 pro-bono partnerships.

Community and Nonprofit Partners

One Year Objectives

- Establish a partnership model.
- Develop 5+ partnerships with nonprofits including the following areas: Environmental, Wildlife, Birds, Pollinators, Energy, Health & Wellness, Creative, Educational.

Three Year Objectives

- Have 20+ partnerships with nonprofits including the following areas: Environmental, Energy, Health & Wellness, Creative, Educational
- Establish trusted connections with indigenous tribes

Five Year Objectives

- Develop 30+ partnerships with nonprofits including the following areas: Environmental, Energy, Health & Wellness, Creative, Educational.
- Develop a strong connection to Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes.



GOALS

Team & Organizational Governance

Goal:

Create a Highly Functioning Financially Sustainable and Competent Team and Processes

Priorities:

1. Finance
2. Board
3. Staff
4. Volunteers
5. Recruitment & Succession

Finance & Processes

One Year Objectives

- Attain \$100,000 budget.
- Use the strategic plan to obtain dependable funding.
- Apply to at least 5 grants to increase funding.
- Develop internal policies and procedures.
- Develop impact metrics tracking system.

Three Year Objectives

- Attain \$250,000 budget.
- Apply to at least ten grants to increase funding.

Five Year Objectives

- Attain 500,000 budget

Board

One Year Objectives

- Develop an organizational structure that enhances internal work and supports existing and incoming board members to establish a diverse BIPOC pipeline.

Three Year Objectives

- Have a diverse board with 10% identifying as BIPOC and 15% identifying as under 30.

Five Year Objectives

- Have a diverse board with 25% identifying as BIPOC and 25% under 30.

Staff

One Year Objectives

- Create a roadmap for staffing.
- Hire a part-time Executive Director (ED), a part-time Communications Manager and a contract Grant Writer.

Three Year Objectives

- Employ 1-3 full-time equivalent (FTE) dedicated funded staff.
- Hire a full time ED, a full-time Program Coordinator and a part-time Development Director.

Five Year Objectives

- Employ 3-5 FTE Dedicated funded staff.

Volunteers

One Year Objectives

- ED leads the formation of a volunteer program by determining commitments, roles & responsibilities.
- Secure five volunteers.
- Plan and execute a mentor strategic planning retreat.

Three Year Objectives

- Hire a volunteer coordinator and build a robust volunteer list by county.
- Secure ten volunteers.
- Identify a place to train advocates.

Five Year Objectives

- Ensure a robust group of 15+ well trained volunteers and paid coordinators.
- Secure 15 volunteers.

Recruitment & Succession

One Year Objectives

- Recruit one, BIPOC, college-age student to sit on the DarkSky Colorado board.
- Ensure a succession and training plan is in place for technical expertise.
- Recruit new board members who possess expertise in areas related to dark skies / ALAN and human health, pollinators, birds, and wildlife.

Three Year Objectives

- Recruit one BIPOC school age student to sit on the DarkSky Colorado Board.
- Two new Board Members to be recruited (BIPOC and under 30).
- A succession plan to be in place for President, Treasurer, Secretary.

Five Year Objectives

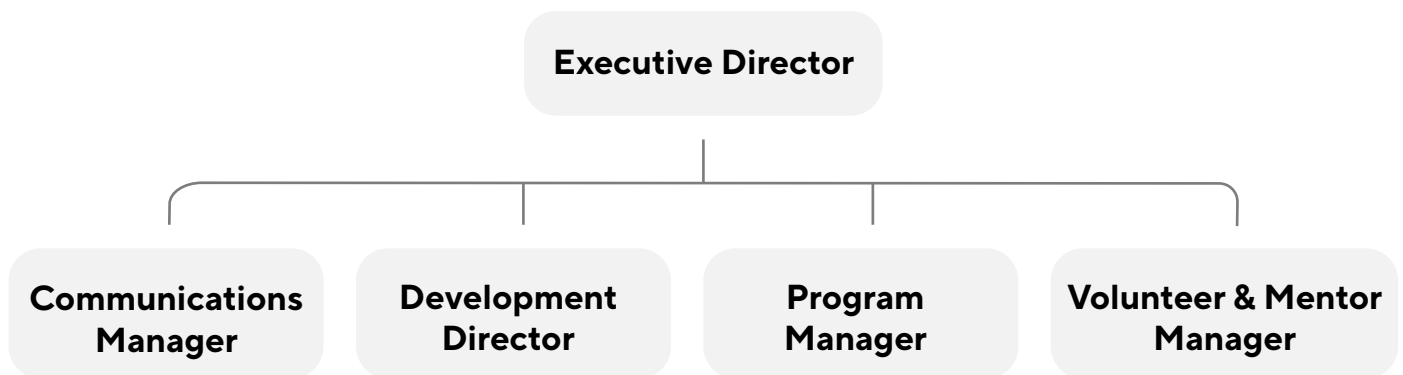
- 4-6 new Board Members to be recruited (BIPOC and under 30).
- A succession plan to be in place for all key staff and board positions.



Our Team

Staff

Over the next five years, DarkSky Colorado will work to build out our paid staff team to ensure there is capacity to fulfill our five-year goals. By 2029, our team will consist of the following positions:



To ensure this is a feasible growth for DarkSky Colorado, the following steps will be taken to hire and build a team over the next one to three years:

One Year Staff Hiring Plan

- Part-time Executive Director
- Part-time Communications Manager
- Dark Sky Certification Specialist/
Program Coordinator (*Contract*)
- Grant Writer (*Contract*)
- Mentor Supervisor (*Contract*)

Three Year Staff Hiring Plan

- Full-time Executive Director
- Part-time Communications Manager
- Full-time Certification Specialist/
Program Manager
- Part-time Development Director
- Mentor Supervisor (*Contract*)

Board of Directors

DarkSky Colorado currently has a committed and passionate board of seven members. Since its inception, this has been a working board. Over the next 5 years, with the hiring of paid staff, DarkSky Colorado's board can take a less "hands on" approach and provide strategic guidance, fundraising and advice. DarkSky Colorado's goal is to have a diverse board of nine committed board members.

To ensure DarkSky Colorado's board is high-functioning and set up for success, the following strategies will be implemented:

Board Audit

DarkSky Colorado Board will complete a board skills audit to assess for skills, experiences and identify any gaps in their team. Desirable skills and expertise for the DarkSky Colorado board include:

- **Astronomy / Technical Expertise**
- **Fundraising and Development**
- **Volunteer Management**
- **Advocacy**
- **Marketing & Communications**
- **Education**

Board Committees

Board Committees will consist of at least two board members and may also include community advocates and volunteers. Each committee must have a chair, who is responsible for assigning tasks and managing meetings. DarkSky Colorado will form the following board committees.

- **Development**
- **Outreach**
- **Advocacy**
- **Governance**

Giving Policy

DarkSky Colorado will adopt a 100% giving policy for their board members, ensuring all members make a meaningful annual financial contribution to the organization.

Retreat & Meetings

DarkSky Colorado will hold an annual retreat for their Board of Directors. To ensure the board is high functioning, team building activities will be included in this retreat and there will be space created for culture building at all board meetings.

Trainings

DarkSky Colorado will provide funding and opportunities for its board members to attend conferences or trainings relevant to their board service. These will include:

- **Fundraising and Development**
- **Technical DarkSky Expertise**
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- **Board Governance**

Recruitment & Succession Planning

DarkSky Colorado is committed to ensuring its board is diverse and representative of the communities it serves. The Governance Committee will seek out new board members to have a board of nine directors. The Governance Committee will also create a succession planning process to ensure technical expertise is not lost from the organization, and leadership roles have steady and positive transition.

Our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

As part of the strategic planning process, DarkSky Colorado completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. This was done through multiple avenues including a survey, interviews and in-person brainstorms. Respondents included board members, staff, volunteers, donors, community partners and members.



Strengths

- Statewide approach
- Dedicated, organized and passionate team
- Technical expertise
- Purpose-driven
- Policy
- Education & mentorship program
- Partner relationships



Weakness

- Funding
- Advocacy
- Political environment
- Capacity
- Visibility and recognition
- Outreach and messaging
- Organizational goals & priorities
- Board governance
- Local efforts vs large geographical area
- Volunteer skills
- Engagement from members/donors



Opportunities

- Increasing public awareness
- Statewide policy & advocacy
- Partnerships
- Funding
- Community engagement
- Astrotourism
- Expansion of Dark Sky places
- Increased marketing
- Increased capacity
- Board governance
- Education and youth outreach
- International/national leadership



Threats

- Staffing (turnover)
- Succession planning
- Political climate
- Population growth
- Lighting regulations
- Funding
- Corporate and utility resistance
- Misconceptions of “Dark Sky”
- Costs and compliance for IDSP
- Burnout (board/volunteers)
- Large area of coverage

Our Partnerships

DarkSky Colorado's mission and efforts are multiplied by the cooperation and support of our organizational partners. We have six types of partnerships:

Community & Nonprofit Partners

- Environmental Nonprofits
- Energy Nonprofits
- Health & Wellness Nonprofits
- Creative Nonprofits
- Tribal Partners

IDSP Communities

- Existing IDSPs
- Communities, parks, reserves, sanctuaries, urban night sky places, and lodging pursuing dark sky certification
- Places not yet engaged

DarkSky Organizations

- DarkSky International
- Dark Skies, Inc of Wet Mountain Valley
- Colorado Plateau DarkSky Cooperative
- DarkSky Chapters in UT, AZ, NM
- Astronomy Clubs/Societies
- Observatories

Educational Partners

- Universities/Colleges
- K-12 Schools
- Other relevant educational organizations

State & Federal Partners

- National Park Service
- United States Forest Service
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Tourism Office (including the Care for Colorado Coalition)
- Colorado Department of Transportation

Corporate Partners & Foundations

- Sponsors & Funders - These include for-profit organizations and philanthropic foundations that provide direct funding or corporate sponsorship to DarkSky Colorado.
- Adopters - These include chains or individual businesses who adopt dark sky lighting for their businesses e.g. hotels.
- Pro-bono Support - These include entities such as legal firms, accounting firms who can offer technical expertise to DarkSky Colorado for free or low cost.
- Lighting Companies & Lighting Engineers.

Partnership development across categories should be guided by the following stages:

- **Identification** – Identify all possible partners within each category through research and networking.
- **Relationship building and networking** – Connect with possible partners to discuss areas of collaboration.
- **Formalize partnership** – Depending on the type of partnership, formalize through a Memorandum of Understanding or specific event/program DarkSky Colorado will be working on them with.
- **Nurture** – Continue to regularly check in with partners to ensure relationship continues to grow and opportunities are regularly discussed.

Our Impact

DarkSky Colorado is committed to creating sustainable impact across Colorado. Per our Theory of Change, **we believe reducing light pollution results in the following benefits:**

- **Public Health:** Studies indicate that artificial light at night negatively affects human health by increasing our risks for sleep disorders, depression, diabetes, breast cancer, and more. Utilizing ALAN when it's needed, where it's needed, in the right amount, and with the right color temperature, will mitigate health risks.
- **Public Safety:** Dark sky lighting that is fully shielded, targeted towards the ground, and warm colored will reduce glare and improve visibility and safety at night.
- **Ecosystem Protection:** Plants and animals depend on Earth's daily light and dark cycle to govern life-sustaining behaviors. Research shows that artificial light at night has adverse and even deadly effects on many species.
- **Energy Conservation:** Most outdoor lighting is wasted. This energy waste increases greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change and wastes billions of dollars each year.
- **Night Sky Heritage Preservation:** Our ancestors experienced a night sky that inspired science, religion, philosophy, art, and literature. The night sky is humanity's most common and shared heritage.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** Dark sky destinations, where stargazing is a key attraction, have become increasingly popular, driving demand for astrotourism. Visitors travel to remote locations to experience clear, star-filled skies, benefiting local economies.
- **Scientific Research:** Astronomy, or the study of the universe has led to invaluable scientific and technological developments including smartphones, communication satellites, and GPS.

To track our impact towards this overarching goal, our primary metrics will be:

- Number of Colorado's certified IDSP
- Number of Colorado places in DarkSky International's IDSP pipeline
- Number of people and locations reached through educational events
- Number of senators and councilors engaged
- Number of SQM sites
- Number of K-12 students receiving dark sky education
- Number of mentors and hours of technical assistance provided through the Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program
- Number of people reached through social media and online presence
- Number of sponsors, funders, adopters and pro-bono partners

Logic Model

IF we reduce artificial light at night THEN we will protect and preserve Colorado's night skies for future generations.				
Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<i>What do we need to achieve our goals?</i>	<i>What will we do?</i>	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	<i>What changes in knowledge, skills, or behavior will we see as a result of these activities?</i>	<i>What are the long-term impacts we expect will result from this work?</i>
Team	Educational Events	# of people and locations reached through educational events	Action by participants of education events to reduce artificial lighting	Reduced artificial lighting
Volunteers & Mentors	Technical Assistance	# of mentors and hours of technical assistance	Changes in communities to comply with DSI lighting standards	Reduced artificial lighting
Board	Strategic Planning	Diversity of board	Strategic planned activities in pursuit of DarkSky CO goals	Sustainable impactful organization
		Implementation of strategic plan	Strategic planned activities in pursuit of DS CO goals	Sustainable impactful organization and Reduced artificial lighting
Marketing	Website, Newsletter, Social Media	# of people reached through social media and online presence	Action by citizens to reduce artificial lighting	Reduced artificial lighting
Partnerships	State agency contracts	# of contracts	Education and behaviour change of communities to follow DarkSky guidelines	Reduced artificial lighting
	Connect with Schools & Colleges	# of school partnerships	Action by participants of education events to reduce artificial lighting	Reduced artificial lighting
	Connect with Corporations	# of sponsors, funders, adopters and probono partners	Action by members, partners from funded programs and projects to reduce artificial lighting	Sustainable impactful organization and Reduced artificial lighting
Technical Expertise	Technical Assistance	# of SQM sites	Communities and state parks certified by DSI	Wildlife protected, Mental Health benefits for citizens
		# of certified communities and state parks		
		# of pipeline communities		
Funding	Grant writing	Money raised	Increase in events, programs and partnerships to achieve DSCO's mission	Sustainable impactful organization and Reduced artificial lighting
	Corporate partnerships	Money raised		
Advocacy	Connect with legislators	# of sentors and councillors engaged with DarkSky CO	Laws and legislation changed to promote Darkskies	Reduced artificial lighting

Financial Sustainability

DarkSky Colorado will adopt the following 5-year budget as a guide for fundraising and operations.

	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
EXPENSES			
Staff	\$65,000	\$225,000	\$250,000
Board	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$8,000
Events	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$15,000
Communications	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000
Physical Assets		\$100,000	
Mentor Program + TA	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$180,000
Total	\$131,500	\$456,500	\$455,000

REVENUE			
Corporate and Foundation Grants	\$25,000	\$150,000	\$250,000
Donations	\$10,000	\$130,000	\$50,000
Other nonprofit grants	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$100,000
In-kind Donations	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Contracts	65,000	100,000	50,000
Total	\$140,000	\$460,000	\$490,000

Budget Assumptions

- Salary projections are based on the following full time salary ranges:
 - Executive Director: \$70-80,000
 - Communications Manager: \$50,000
 - Development Director: \$65,000
 - Program Coordinator: \$40,000
- Board expenses include professional development, conferences, retreat and travel.
- Observatory project will be completed in partnership with other agencies, and require a separate financing plan
- Year 3 Physical Assets Expense is a one-time expense of the Astrovan, and currently is accounted for by Donations Revenue.

Fundraising Strategy

DarkSky Colorado has the opportunity to work with a range of private and philanthropic partners to fulfill its mission. Core partnerships and examples of these partnerships to pursue include:

Philanthropy

- Local Foundations
- Statewide Foundations and Organizations
 - Environment
 - Health & Wellness
- National Foundations
- Local or State Funding/Contracts
- Private Individuals

Recommendations

1. Identify local state and national contacts at 10-15 foundations that align with DarkSky Colorado's mission and set up introductory calls.
2. Pursue networking opportunities and relationship nurturing:
 - a. Site Visits
 - b. Events
3. Create grant calendar for 2024-2025.
4. Contract grant writer and begin grant applications.

Corporate Partnerships

- Corporations
- Corporate Sponsors

Recommendations

1. Identify 5-10 corporations that show interest or have relevance to DarkSkies and set up initial conversations to discuss how they could better comply with Dark Sky regulations.
2. Develop 1-pager of corporate sponsorship opportunities for corporations.
3. Identify 5 statewide/national and 10 local corporations to approach for corporate sponsorship – ideally existing relationships from board or members.

Revenue Generating Activity

- Certification Consulting: Develop consulting services and business model for communities looking to pursue Dark Sky certification.
- Conference & Event Revenue: Charge fees for educational events held by DarkSky Colorado.

Recommendations

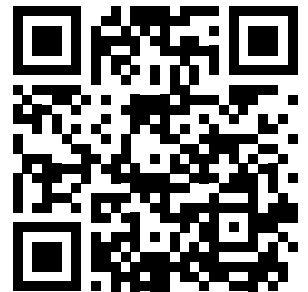
1. Build clear business model for consulting model.
2. Identify an interested community to test consulting model.





Strategic Plan developed by:
CWH Consulting

Made possible by:
Colorado Tourism Office Tourism Management Grant



For more information visit darkskycolorado.org