

Get Wild: Happy Earth Day ... and night!

Martie Semmer



Tents under the stars in the Eagles Nest Wilderness Sept 16, 2017, near Silverthorne.

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April 22 is a special day each year that gives us the opportunity to recognize the importance of protecting our planet. This is a great month to become familiar with the Colorado Tourism Office's Care for Colorado Coalition's Monthly Messaging. The Care for Colorado Coalition is a partnership between the Colorado Tourism Office and Leave No Trace.

The Coalition includes more than 100 tourism-related businesses, associations, and both state and federal agencies that are committed to preserving and protecting Colorado's outdoor and cultural resources by amplifying the seven [Care for Colorado Principles](#)

through their own networks. The International Dark-Sky Association Colorado Chapter is a Care for Colorado Coalition Partner.

As a benefit for coalition partners, the Colorado Tourism Office produces monthly messaging, which includes curated and prepared stewardship content for coalition partners to share through their own media channels. Also, coalition partners are invited to submit content for the monthly messaging themes, which the tourism office reviews to ensure that the content is aligned with the seven Care for Colorado Principles.

Earth Day is the monthly messaging theme for April. Locals and visitors alike are encouraged to protect the planet during the daytime as well as the nighttime. The International Dark-Sky Association Colorado Chapter blog post "[Happy Earth Day...and night](#)

," written by Deborah Price with contributions from Martie Semmer offers nighttime stewardship tips, which I am republishing here:

Earth Day (April 22) is a great reminder each year to protect our home planet. However, each day we have with the sun is reflected by nighttime with the moon and stars. While one half of the Earth is bathed in light, the other half is dark.

Half of life on earth is nocturnal. Many species of wildlife have evolved eyesight that is specifically designed for night vision. Light pollution is often a detriment to their survival and ability to thrive.

Night is a magical time, not only for wildlife survival and activity, but for the glorious skies we see above our heads. The darker it is, the more you can see. The more we keep lights off, the more our eyes adjust to darkness. We see better at night when there is less light

pollution. Our pupils expand in the darkness and allow us to take in much more of the night around us. When lights are turned on, our pupils shut down and put a barrier between us and the magic of the night.

This year's theme for Earth Day is Invest in Our Planet. Investment can mean a lot of things, and investing in protection of the night has some pretty simple rules we can follow. It starts with using lights only when we need them, and directing light where it is needed (not up into the sky or into a neighbor's yard). When we find ways to protect life after dark, it helps our lives shine a little brighter in the daytime too.

To find out more about nocturnal wildlife and other important reasons to protect the dark visit the two links below. You'll feel better being a dark sky protector, and the wildlife (and the earth itself) will thank you!



Martie Semmer

After a 2019 introduction in Westcliffe to the wondrous night sky, Martie Semmer, a International Dark-Sky Association Colorado board member and Western Colorado Regional Coordinator, remarked that the sky is the limit as she continues learning about and advocating for the preservation of the night sky. Contact her

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