

Look up Sylvan Township residents

Look up. See the stars. That was part of the goal when Sylvan Township started its “dark skies” initiative last winter. Part of the reason many live in Sylvan Township is the environment around us – from lakes and forests, to wetlands, wildlife and birdlife. And, we like to look up – see the stars and maybe dream a little.

When Sylvan initiated its “Dark Skies” idea it was meant to help residents think about ways they could help keep our skies dark through various kinds of lighting designs, or easy ways to change outdoor lighting, or suggestions on ways to assess lighting needs, and ways to mitigate needed lighting. Some asked, “what is light pollution?” It is the artificial light that accumulates and begins to diminish the dark sky, so to the human eye we often see a glow of light on the horizon, often we can’t see many stars when looking up, or it feels like twilight and is never really dark out.

We listed resources and the township itself implemented downward, LED lighting for its premises. Part of that effort was to share with residents “how we did this.” The township is happy to share information on what they installed.

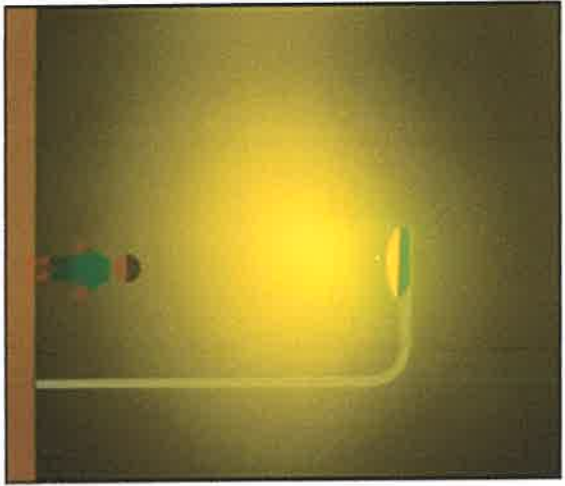
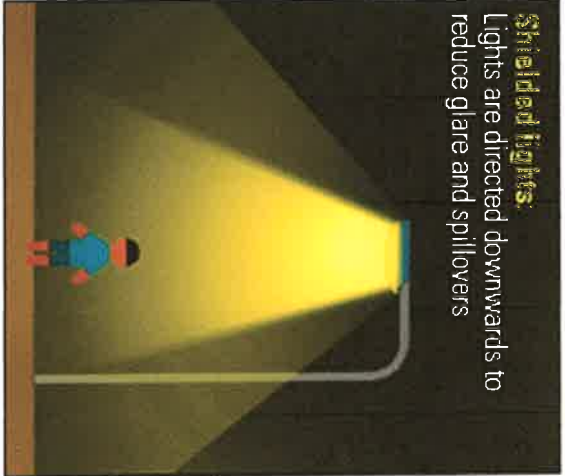
Sharing information can be very helpful to others and through “how to” stories, making resources available and giving recognition to good lighting design, it might also be a way of building community. Dark skies efforts not only enhance the experience of the night sky, the darkness is essential to natural cycles – especially sleep, and circadian rhythms. For wildlife, light pollution can disrupt mating, migration, navigation ability and predator-prey behaviors. Darkness is important.

Thank you residents for your help, and look up and see the stars, one of the treasures of this place.

For information on ways to help keep a Dark-Sky go to:

<https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/lighting-basics/>

Shielded lights:
Lights are directed downwards to
reduce glare and spillovers

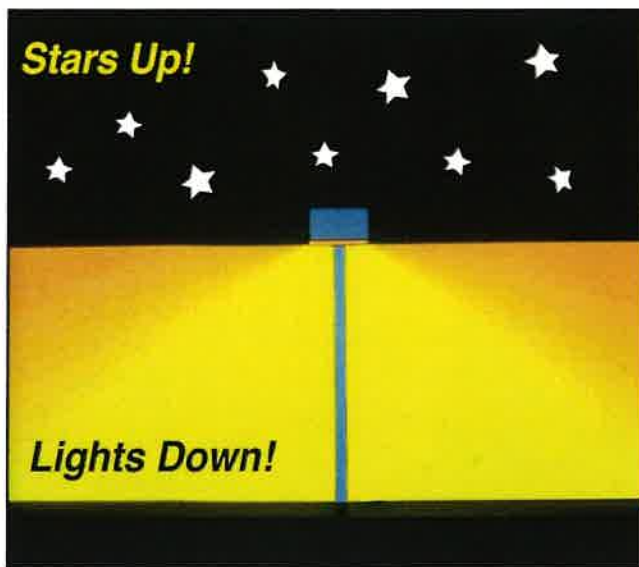


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OUTDOOR LIGHTING CONTROL



An opportunity exists to reclaim vast amounts of energy currently wasted inadvertently into the night sky by poorly designed outdoor lighting fixtures and installations.

- **COSTS:** \$10's of billions in electricity costs are currently wasted upward at night in the United States annually. These numbers do not include the costs of harvesting fossil fuels to generate electricity.

- **SOLUTIONS:** Reclaim waste using fixtures and installations with lower wattage light sources, and fixtures designed to distribute light only to where it is wanted.

- **GOOD LIGHTING IS AVAILABLE NOW:** The lighting industry currently designs and many manufactures offer what they call "night sky friendly" lighting fixtures, recognizing the opportunity for savings.

- **SECURITY:** There is no conclusive evidence demonstrating a relationship between lighting and crime.

- **HEALTH:** New studies point to dramatic health consequences from the disruption of human "circadian rhythm" among populations living in or near cities. Loss of the day/night cycle reduces the efficacy of the immune system.

- **SAFETY:** Vision is impaired by "glare" from overly bright light sources, especially for aging eyes.

- **LOSS OF NIGHTTIME SKY:** The heritage of dark night skies is rapidly being lost. Generations are growing up having never seen the Milky Way. Sky glow resulting from artificial lighting dramatically hinders the science of astronomy.

- **REGULATION:** Thousands of communities world-wide have adopted outdoor lighting ordinances including the "New Mexico Night Sky Preservation Act" signed into law by New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson in 1999.

- **NATIONAL ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY:** Using good lighting for new installations, and replacing old, poorly designed fixtures with more efficient ones can be a big part of a national "green" initiative.

- **GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATION:** Hundreds of groups have formed in recent years dedicated to promoting quality, cost-efficient outdoor lighting. Such organizations represent a major opportunity for energy savings nationwide.

An excellent resource, the **International Dark-sky Association (IDA)**, maintains a major online presence at:

<http://www.darksky.org/>

