



Elk Island National Park of Canada

Leads you into the DARK!



What are Dark Sky Preserves?

They are established to reduce artificial light glare, increase the visibility of the night sky, and to benefit all life on Earth

They promote the protection of nocturnal habitat for present and future generations

They encourage public enjoyment and awareness of the cultural heritage of the night sky

Three of the seven Dark Sky Preserves in Canada are found within Canada's National Parks:

- ◆ Elk Island National Park (Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve)
- ◆ Fort Walsh National Historic Site (Cypress Hills Dark Sky Preserve)
- ◆ Point Pelee National Park and Dark Sky Preserve



Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve and Edmonton's Night Darkness Levels



What is the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve?

It was developed as a partnership between the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Edmonton Centre, Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture and the Parks Canada Agency and officially designated on September 3, 2006

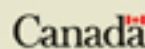
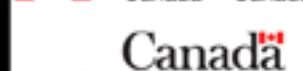
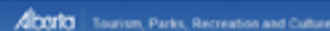
It is a 300 km square region east of the City of Edmonton, dedicated to maintaining the dark sky

This preserve encompasses Elk Island National Park and the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

What does Elk Island National Park commit to do for this designation?

- Ensure lighting practices are a balance between our needs, safety, efficiency and light pollution reduction
- The majority of park lighting is directed downwards or is sensor-triggered and only activated when needed
- The park is replacing inefficient light fixtures to save energy. Inefficient fixtures may cost less to purchase and install, but end up costing much more in the lifetime of the fixture
- With a specific purpose donation from Dow Chemical Canada Inc., Elk Island National Park provides telescopes, educational programs, and interpretive media to educate the public and help maintain its Dark Sky designation

Enjoy the night sky and join us in our dark sky anniversary celebrations on Labour Day long-weekend!



What is scotobiology?

The study of the effects of darkness on biology

(Scotos or skotos is the Greek word for dark)

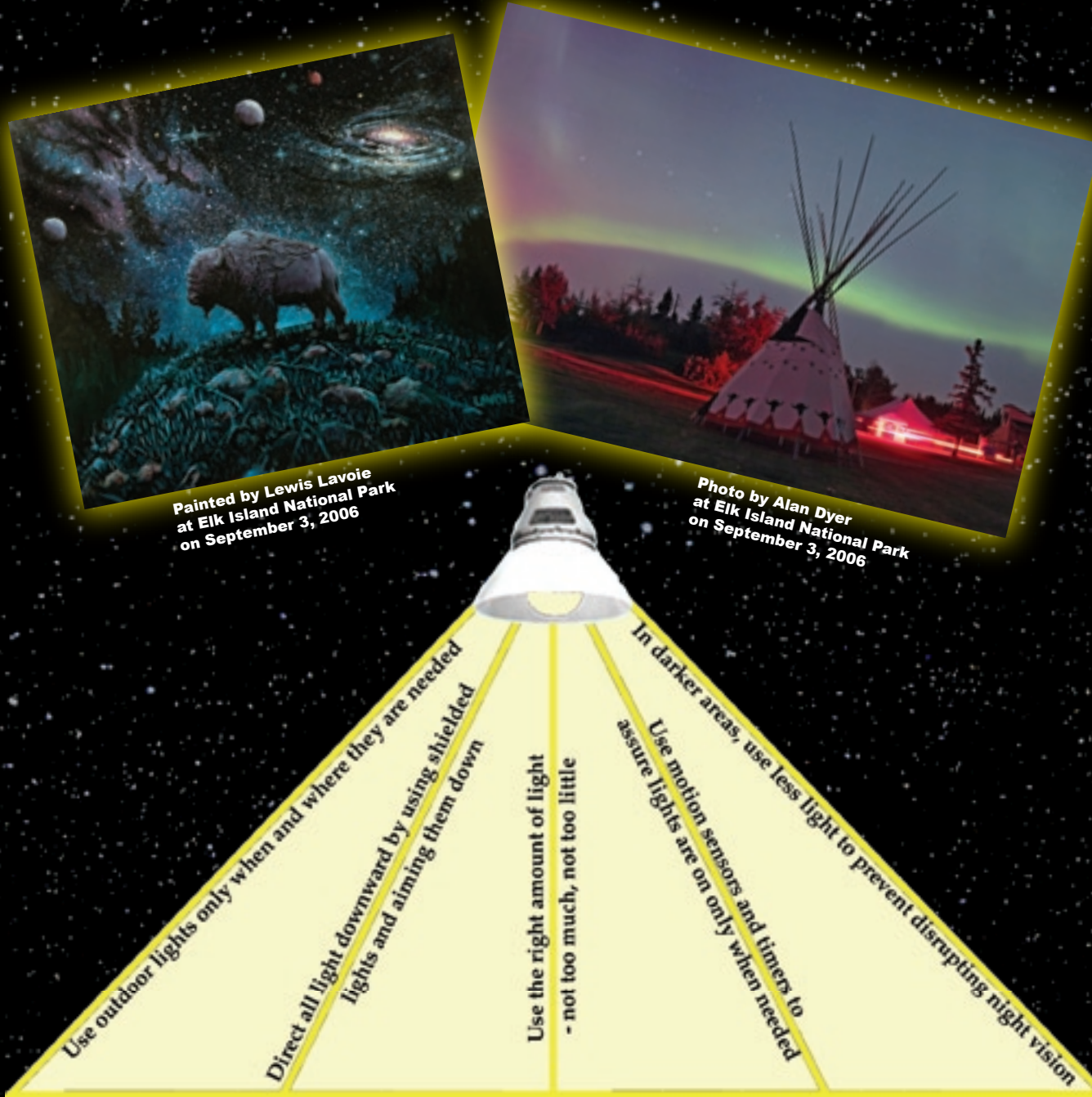
Many species can have their mating patterns, migration, and many other crucial behaviours disrupted by light pollution, which may lead to death

Animals' dependency on darkness to avoid being seen by predators or being detected by prey is compromised in artificially raised night light levels

Plants may mistake light polluted nights as 'longer' days, which may compromise development, flowering and the crucial onset of dormancy



Elk Island National Park expands the scope of protection by including the dark sky



Painted by Lewis Lavoie at Elk Island National Park on September 3, 2006



Photo by Alan Dyer at Elk Island National Park on September 3, 2006

What can you do?

All of us have a responsibility in maintaining the night sky through energy conservation and responsible lighting practices. Up to half of the light we produce is never actually used because it is misdirected where it is not needed. It is often not a matter of more light, but better light. Better designed lighting can incorporate modern, high performance optics that aim light in a defined pattern to reduce glare and light pollution.

Night-sky-friendly lighting allows us all to meet the basic needs of lighting (safety, security, visibility, comfort) while having very little negative impact. Responsible lighting practices can help decrease light pollution and not only benefit organisms that depend upon darkness but also allow for better night sky viewing.



For more information:
www.pc.gc.ca/elkisland
780-992-2950