

Pickett CCC Memorial State Park

Known for its stunning natural sandstone formations and botanical diversity Pickett CCC Memorial State Park is also one of the best locations in the Southeast to view the night sky. The park is located within the Pickett State Forest in the upper Cumberland Mountains, on the Cumberland Plateau. It is adjacent to the Pogue Creek Canyon State Natural Area and the massive Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area.

Pickett CCC Memorial State Park and Pogue Creek Canyon State Natural Area were named a Silver-tier International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association in 2015. The combined property is known as Pickett-Pogue International Dark Sky Park. To meet this designation, Pickett-Pogue met a stringent criteria set forth by the IDA, worked in partnership with local communities and governments and performed modifications to facilities including installing night sky friendly lighting. With dark skies becoming increasingly hard to find, Pickett-Pogue is a dark sky oasis and a beacon for natural darkness stewardship.

How Dark is Dark? The Bortle Sky Scale
Using special equipment, park staff measured the night sky brightness at various locations in the park and natural area over a specific time period. The readings were converted into the **Bortle Sky Scale**. The Bortle Sky Scale ranges from one to nine with one being inky black darkness. Pickett-Pogue has Bortle Class 3 skies.

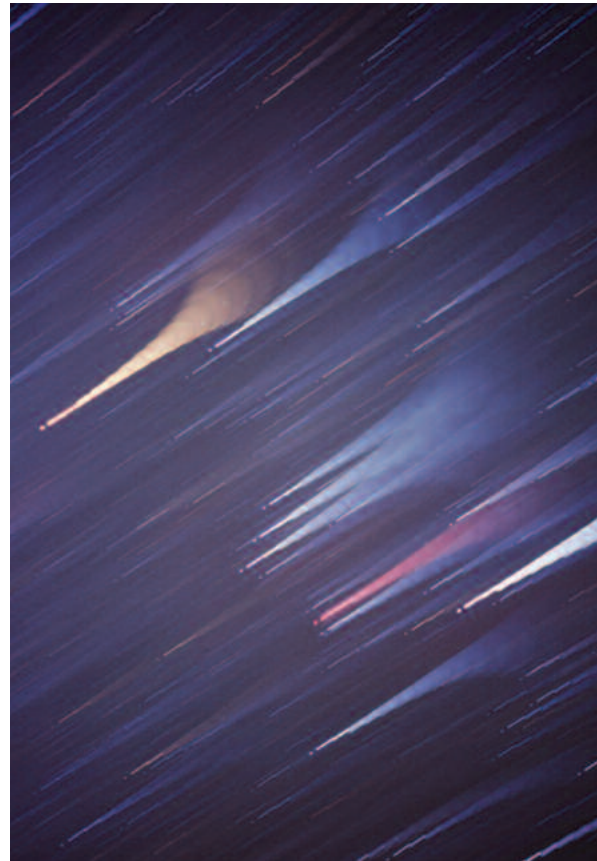


**PICKETT-POGUE
INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK**

www.darksky.org

Pickett-Pogue Astronomy Field

On a clear night the Pickett-Pogue astronomy field has great visibility. The Milky Way and meteors can be observed throughout the year. The astronomy field is located at the Pogue Creek Canyon State Natural Area's parking lot on Highway 154. The field is located above the gravel parking lot and electricity is available.



Photography credits: Theo Wellington, Richard S. Wright Jr. and Dean Easton



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Dark Skies

Dark skies and natural darkness play an important part in a healthy ecosystem. Over the years, there has been an increase of artificial light, creating light domes over cities that waste both money and energy and decrease our ability to see stars and planets. Even in rural areas, this excess light interferes with our view of the night sky and for many the Milky Way is invisible.

With an increase in artificial light, many nocturnal animals are affected by the lights. Inability to use night vision, trouble finding food, increased visibility to predators and migration path disruption are just some of the harmful effects of light pollution. Decreasing unnecessary light at night benefits both humans and wildlife.



The International Dark Sky Association Recommends

- Shield outdoor lights so the light is directed at the ground. This allows use of low wattage bulbs, saving money.
- Use motion sensors or timers so that lights are only on when needed.
- Reduce decorative lighting outside the home.

Dark Sky Viewing Tips

- Look for sites with clear horizons that offer wide expansive views.
- The darker the better. Go out on moonless nights for the best viewing.
- In cooler weather, dress warmly. Temperature drop swiftly at night and standing on cold ground can feel up to 10 degrees colder.
- Bring a folding chair and weather appropriate clothing.
- Use a red low light flashlight to keep light to a minimum. It can take up to an hour for your eyes to adjust to the dark sky. Low light flashlights make reading your star chart easy, without disturbing your night vision.



Events Near You

Many Tennessee State Parks partner with regional and local astronomy clubs to offer astronomy programs, dark sky viewings, star trail photography workshops and star parties. Programs are suited to all levels of interest and ability from amateur astronomers to seasoned stargazers.

- *Observe distant planets, far off galaxies and stars*
- *Learn to use a star wheel*
- *Identify the constellations*
- *On-going dark sky programs are offered at many state parks including the ones below.*

- 1 Bledsoe Creek State Park
- 2 Edgar Evins State Park
- 3 Fall Creek Falls State Park
- 4 Frozen Head State Park
- 5 Harrison Bay State Park
- 6 Indian Mountain State Park

- 7 Long Hunter State Park
- 8 Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park
- 9 Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park
- 10 Norris Dam State Park
- 11 Pickett CCC Memorial State Park
- 12 Roan Mountain State Park



Check the Tennessee State Parks online event calendar for specific astronomy events.

