

City of Gainesville, Florida

Office of Mayor Harvey L. Ward, Jr.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the aesthetic beauty and wonder of a natural night sky is a shared heritage of all humankind. The experience of standing beneath a starry night sky inspires feelings of wonder and awe, and encourages a growing interest in science and nature, especially among young people and out of area visitors within the local communities; and

WHEREAS, light pollution has scientifically-established economic and environmental consequences, which result in significant impacts to the ecology and human health of all communities. 80% of the world's population, including many people in the city of Gainesville, live under a dome of light pollution excessive artificial lighting at night that disrupts natural darkness and may never experience the visual wonder or ecological health benefits of living under a dark sky. Light pollution represents a waste of natural resources amounting to roughly \$3 billion dollars per year of wasted energy in the United States, and contributes to diminished energy security; and

WHEREAS, Gainesville, Florida is home to dozens of nocturnal wildlife species and these species rely on the undisturbed night environments to hunt, mate, and thrive. Birds that migrate or hunt at night navigate by the moon and starlight. Artificial light can cause them to wander off course towards dangerous nighttime landscapes of cities where collisions with buildings can be fatal; and

WHEREAS, Gainesville, Florida is home to the world-class University of Florida's Department of Astronomy. The department's Rosemary Hill Observatory provides students with hands-on observing and research experiences to help them and the wider community explore the wonders of the cosmos. Optical astronomy is both hindered and endangered by unfettered light pollution; and

WHEREAS, the International Dark-Sky Association is the globally recognized authority on light pollution and has created International Dark-Sky Week to raise awareness of light pollution, and provide free education, resources, and solutions to the public to encourage the protection of and enjoyment of dark skies and responsible outdoor lighting.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Harvey L. Ward, Jr., by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Gainesville, do hereby proclaim April 15-22, 2023 as

International Dark-Sky Week

in the City of Gainesville and invite all our neighbors to join me in not only observing and pondering upon this important week, but also in raising awareness and support for protecting our precious dark skies resources.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of the City of Gainesville, Florida, this 7th day of March, A.D., 2023.


Harvey L. Ward, Jr.
Mayor

