

# **DARK SKIES FOR MCKELLAR - a better way to go**

Many communities the world over are heeding research on the benefits of having dark night skies and are creating policy, guidance, and best practices for responsible, environmentally-supportive lighting systems.

Do you ever wonder why we see so few stars in the urban cities? Light escaping from over-lighting skyward-facing bulbs and unshielded sources pollute our skies and prevent a clear view of the heavens. It is estimated urban lighting allows people to see as few as 100 stars on a moonless night. Dark Sky initiatives will allow viewing over 3000 stars on a moonless night, even the Milky Way.

A recent story is told by a fisherman who often fished at night on Manitouwabing Lake in the early seventies. He described the beauty and tranquility of the stars from his boat, and how dismayed he is to have lost that view because of excessive shoreline lighting.

Some facts and tips coming with the new research and initiatives will help us return to dark skies here in McKellar:

Lighting glare is the visual discomfort from unshielded light where you can directly see the bulb or light source. This can be dramatically reduced with downcast lighting, shields on outdoor lights, dimmers and timers installed that limit lighting, fixtures that eliminate sideways and upward lighting, aiming lights down and away from the water, reducing wattage in bulbs, using a softer color, replacing elevated security lighting with downcast lamps and removing lights from docks. Avoid using one large bright fixture for security, studies show it does nothing to increase security but causes aggravation to your neighbors from light trespass.

Reduced shoreline lighting improves visibility on the water at night for safer boating. Studies show excess light in the sky effects migratory birds, wildlife, fish patterns, boating safety, nocturnal animal behavior and more. Wasted lighting is expensive. Most lighting modifications pay for themselves. With a little thought and care we can reduce the negative impact we have on our environment and the people and critters that live here with us. We live in a bit of paradise, let's keep it that way.

So join in, we can all do a little better resulting in a much improved environment, better yet seeing the beauty of our night skies.

For more information visit [darksky.org](https://darksky.org)  or [foca.on.ca](https://foca.on.ca)  or

 the Dark Sky Sites program of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, <https://rasc.ca/>