

# THE HISTORY OF BLANCO COUNTY FRIENDS OF THE NIGHT SKY

Prior to creating this list, the dates of accomplishments were not tracked. The first items on the list that are bulleted have no date but were probably in 2018-2020.

- Coordinated our efforts with the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and the Texas Chapter of IDA
- Worked with the Hill Country Alliance's Night Sky Team to establish new *Friends of the Night Sky* advocacy groups in eight other Hill Country counties and in West Texas
- Worked with the *Friends of the Night Sky* groups in other Texas counties
- Took darkness readings with Unihedron SQM-L meters in many parts of Blanco County to chart our progress
- Application to become an International Dark Sky Park was sent by LBJ State Park. It was certified.
- Worked with Pedernales Electric Coop to replace streetlights in the City Of Blanco. PEC's magazine had an article announcing PEC's light replacement initiative.
- Set up an information booth at a number of events including three Blanco Market Days
- Began free distribution of night sky friendly light bulbs at events
- Conducted educational Dark Sky Essay Contest in the Blanco High School

## ---2018---

Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky is formed in August, 2018

Wayne Gosnell gave a publicized talk at GEM of the Hills to encourage doing something to save our night sky.

Created a highly used educational website [www.BlancoCountyNightSky.org](http://www.BlancoCountyNightSky.org)

Created a Facebook Group

## ---2019---

Began working with Blanco City Chamber Of Commerce in their Night Sky Business Recognition program.

BCFNS involved in getting HOT funds bill created and passed through Texas Legislature and then into law for funding the change of lighting of hotels, motels, B&B's, etc. to Dark Sky compliance and worked with local Chambers Of Commerce to monitor results

Booth at the Dripping Springs Night Sky Festival

Trademarked *Deep in the Dark of Texas*<sup>TM</sup>

First Night Sky Song Contest

Produced CD called "*Deep In The Dark Of Texas*" based on the songs of contestants in the Song Contest. Carol Seminara of Fredericksburg created the name and gave it to BCFNS to trademark.

March 30: Vicki Guidry bought table cloth with our logo on it for exhibit tables

April 2: Completed first annual Middle School Art Contest

July: Had a display booth at Blanco County Fair. The *Wizard Of The Night Sky* made his first public appearance.

August: Created and Trade Marked *Wizard Of The Night Sky*™ character to do presentations plus meet and greets

August 20: Work began by Barbara Hudson and Larry Seiler to become a IRS 501(c)(3) organization

September 7: Display booth at LBJ Ranch event

September 11: Five Blanco businesses received certification as Recognized Night Sky Businesses

September 17: Lance Brown made a video of Bob Heinonen telling how to make a floodlight into a spot light using a plastic bottle

September 18: The Board decided to register BCFNS as a Texas Corporation. Larry Seiler and Barbara Hudson to get us through process.

October 18: BCFNS became a Texas Corporation

October 26: First Annual BCFNS Party at Los Senderos Ranch

December 19: First order of 10 member signs placed with SmartSign.com

## ---2020---

March 12: CD release party

March 18: Board decided to have Bob Heinonen investigate subscribing to a donor management system.

April: BCFNS became an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

April: Completed second annual Middle School Art Contest

April 15: BCFNS began using Little Green Light donor management as an experiment for 6 months with Bob Heinonen as the Data Base Administrator

October 18: Board decided to extend Little Green Light donor management subscription for 12 months

## ---2021---

Created an Advisory Board of experts in specialized fields to advise us

Helped LBJ Ranch National Historical Park develop an educational video to support its application for Night Sky certification

Upgraded public presentations using new light demonstration board

Placed identification ads in Blanco County News and Johnson City Record-Courier

Updated website to make it more mobile device friendly

January: Began publishing a newsletter every month

January 9: First mailing to expired members by Bob Heinonen

February: Sponsored of a hole at the Blanco County Rotary Club Annual Golf Tournament

April: Completed third annual Middle School Art Contest

September 15: Board decides to extend Little Green Light donor management subscription for another 12 months

---2022---

Completed City Of Blanco application to become International Dark Sky Community

January 19: Created a Lifetime Membership category

January 24-31: Conducted first Facebook Group Night Sky Poetry contest with 10 poems entered

January 31: Published Issue 22 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

January: Purchased laptop computer and projector for Powerpoint presentations

January 28: BCFNS volunteers Mike and Michelle Zarella completed their semiannual measurement of the darkness of the night sky in Northern Blanco County. Using the BCFNS's Sky Quality Meter (SQM-L), the readings are a key component in determining the success of on-going night sky presentation efforts.

February 8: BCFS Board member Barbara Hudson represented the BCFNS at the meeting of the Blanco County Eclipse Planning Task Force. The Task Force is headed by Blanco Mayor and BCFNS member Rachel Lumpee.

February 14: BCFNS President Wayne Gosnell met with Blanco's new City Administrator on the status of Blanco's International Dark Sky Community application and Outdoor Lighting ordinance enforcement.

February 28: Published Issue 23 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

February: Sponsored of a hole at the Blanco County Rotary Club Annual Golf Tournament

March 19: BCFNS President Wayne Gosnell met briefly with the Executive Director of the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce who expressed interest in revitalizing the Chamber's Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program.

March 21: BCFNS Board members Wayne Gosnell and Bob Heinonen participated in the organizational meeting of the Gillespie County Friends of the Night Sky, offering assistance and support in getting the organization up and running.

March 24: At the request of Blanco Mayor and BCFNS member Rachel Lumpee, BCFNS President Wayne Gosnell completed the night sky portion of the City of Blanco's application to be designated a certified Scenic City of Texas.

March 25: BCFNS Board members, Wayne Gosnell and Vicki Guidry, met with the Superintendent of the Blanco Independent School District and were assured that the outdoor lighting of the new tennis courts at Blanco High School will meet IDA standards.

March 25: BCFNS Board members, Wayne Gosnell and Vicki Guidry, met with the new principal of Blanco High School who expressed interest in night sky preservation issues and invited the BCFNS to make presentations to all his high school students.

March 28: Wayne Gosnell, BCFNS President and Night Sky Advisor to the Blanco Historic Preservation Commission, updated the Commission on night sky issues and the status of Blanco's application to become an IDA-designated International Dark Sky Community.

March 30: BCFNS President Wayne Gosnell and volunteer Sandy Switzer, conducted an informal outdoor lighting evaluation at the Blanco River Retreat.

March 31: Published Issue 24 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

April 4: Established this record of accomplishments.

April 23: Judging in the fourth annual Blanco County high schools and middle schools art contest took place at the Gem Of The Hills from 9:00AM until 11:00AM

April 26: Gathering and Star Party with announcement that Blanco was now an IDA International Dark Sky Community.

April 27: Article in the Blanco County News on page 5 entitled "Night sky art contest judging" with a black & white photo.

April 27: Article in the Johnson City Record Courier on page 9 entitled "Friends of Night Sky showcase art winners" with a full color photo.

April 30: Published Issue 25 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

May 9: The BCFNS sponsored a hole at the Rotary Club of Blanco County's Joe Garcia Memorial Golf Tournament. Contributing \$200 to the Rotary for its many benevolences, the BCFNS gained significant public recognition as a community-minded local organization while raising awareness of night sky preservation efforts in the county.

May 11: Wayne Gosnell made a presentation to the Blanco City Council to officially announce Blanco's designation as an International Dark Sky Community and talk about the requirements to maintain it

May 13: Wayne Gosnell provided information on how to form a night sky advocacy group to David Travis in Colts Neck, New Jersey.

May 13: Wayne Gosnell and Don Pitts conducted a quick outdoor lighting evaluation at Johnny's Yurts in Johnson City with an eye on qualifying the business as a recognized Night Sky Friendly Business of the JC Chamber of Commerce. Suggestions were made for improvement.

May 14: Wayne Gosnell and Bob Heinonen participated in a Hill Country Alliance/HEB Foundation seminar in Leakey, Texas, on how to form a grassroots organization.

May 15: Linda Whitlow and Wayne Gosnell manned a Night Sky Information Booth at the Cielo Springs Neighborhood Picnic. BCFNS members Elizabeth Miller and David Loose assisted; lots of community interest in having good outdoor lighting; recruited several new members for the BCFNS

May 18: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

May 31: Published Issue 26 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

June 20: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

June 30: Published Issue 27 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

July 31: Published Issue 28 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

August 9: Wayne Gosnell travelled to Kerrville to attend the semi-annual meeting of the Night Sky Team of the Hill Country Alliance

August 17: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

August 20: Had a display booth at Blanco County Fair. Won first place for best exhibit.

August 31: Published Issue 29 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

September 17: Wayne Gosnell and Bob Heinonen gave a presentation at REI in Austin on starting a non-profit group to the rejuvenated Travis County Friends of the Night Sky

September 21: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

September 24: Several volunteers manned a table at the Twin Sisters Raise the Roof Fundraiser Event.

September 27: Bob Heinonen and Barbara Hudson presented Jerry Thompson with a Certificate of Appreciation at the Blanco County Commissioners Court meeting.

September 30: Published Issue 30 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

October 1: Second Night Sky Song Writing Contest at Gem Of The Hills Activity Center in Blanco

October 19: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

October 31: Published Issue 31 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

November 8: First meeting of Educational Blitz Project Team

November 21: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

November 30: Published Issue 32 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*

December 3: Wayne Gosnell gave presentation to Red Oak Mountain POA at real estate office in Blanco

December 8: Four members of Wayne Gosnell, Vicki Guidry, Linda Whitlow and Bob Heinonen attend meeting of Comal County Friends of the Night Sky to exchange ideas.

December 8: Board members Wayne Gosnell and Elizabeth Miller attended Chamber of Commerce Mixer for Blanco, Dripping Springs and Wimberley

December 31: Published Issue 33 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 489 individuals.

December 9: Wayne Gosnell attend Hill Country Alliance Christmas Party

## ---2023---

January 15: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Facebook Group Poetry Contest started

January 18: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

January 29: Published Issue 34 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 482 individuals.

January 30: Published *PEC Fact Sheet*. Send email to 482 individuals.

February 15: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

February 28: Published Issue 35 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 489 individuals.

February: Sponsored of a hole at the Blanco County Rotary Club Annual Golf Tournament

March 15: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

March 29: Published Issue 36 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 485 individuals.

April 19: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

April 23: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Art Contest for Middle School and High School students in Blanco County is completed

April 25: *BCFNS Membership Gathering and Star Party* at Los Senderos Ranch, Blanco

April 29: Published Issue 37 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 494 individuals.

May 17: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

May 30: Published Issue 38 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 509 individuals.

June 21: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

June 29: Published Issue 39 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 518 individuals.

July 19: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

July 25: Published Issue 40 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 523 individuals.

August 15: *Educational Media Blitz* completed with mailing to over 7,000 Blanco County mail receptacles plus half-page ads in two county newspapers plus social media blitz plus survey of results

August 16: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

August 30: Published Issue 41 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 527 individuals.

September 20: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

September 26: Published Issue 42 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 532 individuals.

October 25: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

October 31: Published Issue 43 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 545 individuals.

November 15: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

November 16: Published Special Eclipse Issue 44 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 549 individuals.

November 17 Presentation to two 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Blanco Middle School by *Wizard Of The Night Sky* and Mr. Mollberg

November 30: Published Issue 45 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 550 individuals.

December 1: Presentation to two 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Blanco Middle School by *Wizard Of The Night Sky* and Mr. Mollberg

December 13: Holiday gathering at Gosnell's home

December 1: Presentation to three 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Blanco Middle School by *Wizard Of The Night Sky* and Mr. Mollberg

December 30: Published Issue 46 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 551 individuals.

## ---2024---

January 15: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Facebook Group Poetry Contest started

January 18: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

January 30: Published Issue 47 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 556 individuals.

January 31: BCFNS Board members assisted Blanco Precinct 1 Commissioner, Blanco Mayor, and Blanco Chamber of Commerce Executive Director to install Blanco's first International Dark Sky Community roadway entryway sign

January 31: BCFNS submitted Blanco's first International Dark Sky Community (IDSC) Annual Report to DarkSky International

February 7: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual BCFNS Facebook Group Poetry Contest completed with 4 entries and 31 voters

February 9: Wayne Gosnell met via Zoom with two representatives of **Starry Skies North** in Minnesota to discuss implementation of a *Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program*

February 21: Board of Directors monthly meeting at El Charro Restaurant in Johnson City

February 29: Published Issue 48 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 565 individuals.

March 1: Wayne Gosnell conducted a nighttime inventory of Blanco's major light polluters, taking photos and color temperature readings using an Opple light meter; he also identified several candidates to be recognized as Night Sky Business-friendly businesses

March 1: Presentation Team (featuring the **Wizard Of The Night Sky** aka Bob Heinonen and the **Musician Of The Night Sky** aka Bernard Mollberg) completed two programs for 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Blanco Elementary School

March 12: Two banners installed on the east side of US281 on the south side of Blanco announcing Blanco as an *International Dark Sky Community*. A picture and article was featured in the *Blanco County News* in its next issue.

March 15: Wayne Gosnell, as a private citizen and not on behalf of BCFNS, filed 11 complaints with the City of Blanco for violations of the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (OLO). These were the first OLO complaints to ever be filed.

March 17: A survey using *SurveyMonkey* was sent to the BCFNS email list asking for input on the best days of the week to have a meeting and the best times during those days. Thirty responses were received. The preferences in order of votes cast were 1) Wednesday morning, 2) Wednesday evening and 3) Wednesday afternoon.

March 23: BCFNS had an exhibit table at the first annual Blanco Founder's Day which was held on the Old Courthouse square. The Hill Country Astronomers brought two solar telescopes for use by the public. The **Wizard Of The Night Sky** and the **Musician Of The Night Sky** mingled with the crowd.

April 1: Published Issue 49 of the *BCFNS Newsletter*. Sent to 573 individuals.

April 16: BCFNS had an exhibit table at Blanco CoAPT's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Wellness Fair held at Blanco High School