



Frio Canyon Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program

Application Process

The Frio Canyon Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program is sponsored by Keep It Real-ly Beautiful (KIRB) and the Frio Canyon Chamber of Commerce and endorsed by the Hill Country Alliance. The program encourages the practice of responsible outdoor lighting. That is, lighting that is used only where, when, and at a level of brightness that is needed, keeping light from shining off premises onto neighbors' properties or up into the sky, helping to **keep the Hill Country night skies dark**. Several forms of recognition are given to businesses, government offices, and organizations that have Night Sky Friendly outdoor lighting, according to the criteria listed in this application.

Businesses or organizations earning recognition will receive A Certificate of Merit, a window decal display, the right to use the program's Night Sky Friendly Business logo in advertising, and listings as a Night Sky Friendly Business on the websites of the Frio Canyon Chamber of Commerce, Keep It Real-ly Beautiful and the Hill Country Alliance. The Frio Canyon Chamber of Commerce and Keep It Real-ly Beautiful will give special recognition to these businesses at their night sky events.

Program Background

The Hill Country is known to **attract visitors for "astro-tourism"**, with the Frio Canyon's dark night skies being perfect for skywatching. Frio Canyon residents and visitors are able to view the Milky Way on many clear nights, but this is extremely unusual for American communities. Over the last few years, light pollution has spread, diminishing our ability to view the night sky.

Thankfully, this trend is reversible. Development and growth in the Frio Canyon can and should continue in a graceful and carefully planned way, including plans for night sky friendly lighting. With a little bit of care, we can light our businesses and community while maintaining our starry nights as a valuable natural resource. What's more, Night Sky Friendly Lighting creates energy savings for our businesses and residents.

Certification Process

The Frio Canyon Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program begins with a self assessment as part of the program application. Compliance with Criteria 1 earns your business a certification at the One Star level. Compliance with Criteria 1 is required for any level of recognition. Multiple stars are earned for compliance with any of the next three criteria, resulting in certification at the Two, Three or Four Star levels. When your certification is achieved, a fee of \$10.00 will cover the cost of your recognition decal and framed certificate. When your application is complete, send your paperwork and fee to:

Night Sky Project Team c/o Keep It Real-ly Beautiful
P.O. Box 1969
Leakey, TX 78873

An appointment will be made for a business site review to determine your level of certification.

Thank you for helping to keep the Frio Canyon beautiful night skies dark!

For more information, visit www.hillcountryskies.org.

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Business Name: _____

Contact Person: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

Please answer the following questions about your lighting.

Criteria # 1: DIRECTION MATTERS---You must meet this criterion for any level of certification.

Is your lighting directed down toward the ground on your property instead of above the horizontal or onto your neighbor's property?

YES NO

Light fixtures should be pointed straight down or at no more than a 45 degree angle off the ground. They should have shielding preventing light from going where it is not needed, especially your neighbor's property or into the sky. The flyer "Better Lights for Better Nights", attached to this application, can help you choose light fixtures that prevent light from escaping into the sky. Fixtures should include shielding that keeps the light from shining directly into the eyes of people walking or driving near your business. Lights mounted on a hill may require additional shielding to keep light from shining off of your property.

Criteria # 2: BRIGHTNESS MATTERS

Is your lighting free of glare, using a relatively low lumen output? If your lights are glaring, making shadows and unlit areas appear too dark to see what's there, the answer is "NO".

YES NO

Lights that are "too bright" make it difficult or impossible to see in areas outside the illuminated area. Dangerous "dark spots" can result, especially for people with sensitive or aging eyes. Certain kinds of LED lights, although more energy efficient, have more lumen output (brightness) than necessary, resulting in more light pollution. Light that is too bright can also reflect off illuminated objects, bleeding light into the night sky. Reducing your wattage and lumens will reduce your utility bill and still allow for all the light you need.

Criteria # 3: LIGHT COLOR MATTERS

Is your lighting amber or warm white colored instead of blue or bright white?

YES NO

Lighting with a correlated color temperature of 3000 Kelvin or less is preferred; that is warm amber-white light. Many LED light fixtures, while great for energy conservation are outfitted with bright white and blue white bulbs registering a color temperature of 4000K or 5000K. Blue white light is harmful to humans, animals, insects and birds. A recent notice from the American Medical Association warns against human exposure to this type of lighting for health reasons. Many communities that have installed the brighter, bluer LEDs as streetlights have had to replace them with warmer amber-white lights after residents complained.

Criteria # 4: TIMING MATTERS

Is your outdoor lighting extinguished after business hours, unless for a specific need, listed below?

YES NO

Turning off your exterior lights will save you money. What's more, research has shown that bright exterior lights are not a deterrent to crime; they often can help light the way for trespassers. Motion detector lights are best for security lighting.

Number of YES answers (1-4, and must meet #1 criteria first): _____

Certification Earned: One Star Two Star Three Star Four Star

Review Team:

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

If you would like help becoming compliant with any of the 4 criteria above, please contact Patti Berkstresser at 830-232-5877 and a member of the review team will be scheduled to assist you.