



## Manitoulin Island Dark Sky Association (MIDSA)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Our mission** is to preserve the beauty of the night sky for future generations by establishing Manitoulin Island as a “National Dark Sky Sanctuary”, and to provide stewardship for this Sanctuary by establishing the Manitoulin Island Dark Sky Association - a community-based, not-for-profit organization dedicated to sharing the mysteries and mythologies, the science and the wonder of the night sky.

Since the beginning of time mankind has gazed up at the heavens. Our fascination with this vast endless beauty of space has inspired us both as individuals and as a people. We've fashioned timeless myths and legends and immortalized them as constellations. We've navigated the globe by charting the stars, given birth to astrology and astronomy, and formed theories on the fabric of space and time. We've explored our planet, our solar system, and our universe, inspired by the natural beauty and mystery of the night skies. But now, much of the natural wonder we once took for granted is threatened. Increasingly throughout the world, our cities are ablaze with light so strong it literally blots out the stars. In a great many parts of the globe, the night sky can be seen as nothing more than a fuzzy, faded glow overhead. Northern Lights are invisible to the naked eye. Our Dark Skies are endangered and quickly depleting as a global resource.

**Our effort** in obtaining the "National Dark Sky Sanctuary" designation has no negative or costly effects on any future growth and development of Manitoulin Island. It acts as a guide for shielded, more effective lighting systems, to increase energy efficiency without producing contaminating "skyglow". Establishment and enforcement of Lighting By-laws adopted by local First Nations and Municipalities would restrict any future outdoor lighting systems from polluting the skies at night, allowing our descendants to view and marvel at the same wonders of the universe as our forefathers.

Northern Ontario possesses an abundance of natural resources such as lakes, forests, wildlife, geology and climate that all contribute to our unique natural environment. Manitoulin Island, already quite a dark location owing to the surrounding water and minimal development, is a natural environment for a “Dark Sky Sanctuary”. By simply structuring By-laws to grandfather existing lighting systems, we ensure that no up-front costs or financial burdens are placed on the local populace and that any future upgrade or development be mandated to adhere to a lighting code designed specifically to prevent light pollution and maintain our ‘Dark Sky’ environment.

Stargazing, partnered with the spiritual essence of Manitoulin, is a natural economic incentive. MIDSA's premiere annual astronomy event, the “Great Manitou Star Party” attracts international visitors from as far away as the United States, Germany, England and South Africa, while cultivating added economic activities throughout the region.

**Our goal** is to help keep the night skies on Manitoulin pristine while marketing Manitoulin Island to the world as a "*Destination*" and leader in conservation of our greatest natural assets.