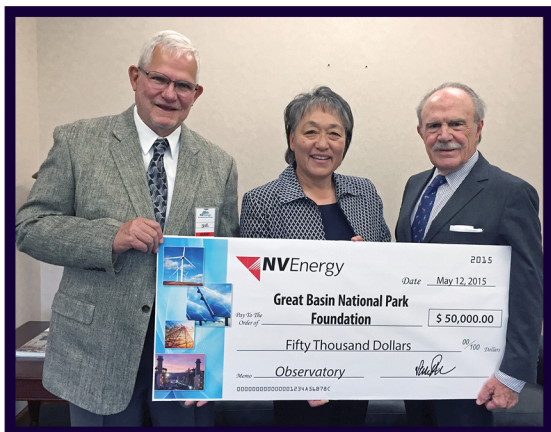


# After Dark

Updates from the Great Basin Observatory



## Fundraising



GBNP Foundation board members Dave Tilford, Mary Simmons, and Steve Brown were pleased to accept NV Energy Foundation's \$50,000 donation.

We are thrilled to announce that we have met our initial fundraising goal for the Great Basin Observatory! The Great Basin National Park Foundation received contributions ranging from \$10 to \$200,000! *Sagan Society* donors (\$100,000+) are the Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership, the David Nathan Meyerson Foundation, the Mount Cuba Astronomical Foundation, and the Niggli Family, who donated the 28-inch Planewave CDK700 telescope. All told, over \$850,000 has been raised, and construction is scheduled to begin soon. Now that our first goal has been met, we are looking to the future. We are raising funds for the education programs, specialized observing equipment, and operational support to ensure that the GBO can operate as intended, providing unmatched educational opportunities for students in the Great Basin region.

## Site Blessing



Photo by S.W. Mietz

Participants included Park, Tribal, and GBO representatives: Brandi Roberts, Dave Tilford, Nichole Andler, Rupert Steele, Trent Griffith, Steve Mietz, Nellie Griffith, Sally Marques, Courtney Williams, Pat Knight, Alvin Marques, Susan Schulz-Stark, Brent Stark, Gonnie Martenez.

On March 21, representatives from the Ely Shoshone, Duckwater Shoshone, and Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Nation came to Great Basin National Park to bless the land on which the observatory will be built. Representatives from the Park and the GBNP Foundation were honored to host the Tribes. The ceremony included spoken words and

song in English and Shoshone that articulated the connection between Native American Heritage and the Observatory's mission of discovery, education and inspiration in respect to the land and the mysteries of the Universe. With the Observatory, we all will gaze upon the same stars with a new eye of wonder and be amazed with the images we can share with the world.



Photo by K. Carroll

## Dark Sky Park Designation

Breaking News: We have just learned that Great Basin National Park has officially been named a **Dark Sky Park** by the International Dark Sky Association ([www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)). We all know that Great Basin has exceptional night skies, but it takes more than the Milky Way overhead to achieve designation. Contenders go through a rigorous application process and must demonstrate robust community support

for dark sky protection. According to the IDA website, Great Basin National Park “is a truly notable dark-sky resource worth protecting...the Park has undertaken efforts to improve its own lighting as well as to educate both Park visitors and residents of neighboring communities on the importance of dark skies at Great Basin and the need to protect them.” Congratulations to our favorite Dark Park!

## Events



The “First Light” of the Great Basin Observatory, so named because it will be the first time the telescope is opened up to the skies above, is being planned for August 25, 2016 in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. The day will include other “centennial” activities, such as burying a time capsule, guest speakers, and an astronomy program. Details will be posted on the GBO webpage and Facebook page closer to the event date. For more information on things to do at and near the Park, please visit [www.nps.gov/grba](http://www.nps.gov/grba) or [www.greatbasinheritage.org](http://www.greatbasinheritage.org). Information on local lodging can be found at [www.greatbasinpark.com](http://www.greatbasinpark.com).

## Who We Are

The Great Basin Observatory is a collaborative effort of Great Basin National Park; the Great Basin National Park Foundation; and four partner universities: University of Nevada, Reno; Western Nevada College in Carson City; Southern Utah University in Cedar City; and Concordia University in Irvine, CA. These partners have joined together in order to build and operate the first research-grade telescope in a National Park for the benefit of students, scholars, and Park visitors. The GBO will enable researchers to explore fundamental

questions about our universe, and its location in Great Basin National Park underscores the need to preserve night skies as a park resource.

Learn more at [www.greatbasinobservatory.org](http://www.greatbasinobservatory.org).

Follow us at [www.facebook.com/GBObservatory](https://www.facebook.com/GBObservatory).

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