

Yarmouth * Acadian Shores

N O V A S C O T I A

Astro-Tourism

Sustainable Opportunities for Rural Destinations




NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES



Yarmouth & Acadian Shores is located in Kespukwitk, one of seven districts in Mi'kma'ki, and is home to Wasoqopa'q First Nation. Mi'kma'ki is the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.



Neil Mackenzie BA, CDME, CDMP
CEO YASTA
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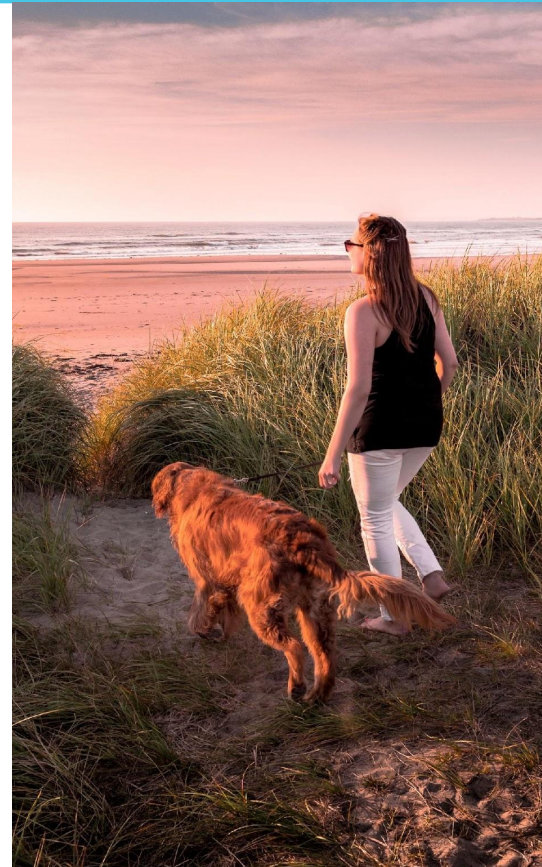
Tim Doucette *Founder*
Deep Sky Eye Observatory
Starlight Development Society
 [LinkedIn](#)

- Who we are
 - Our story
 - The value of tourism / what visitors tell us
 - Marketing a Starlight Tourist Destination
 - Sustainability
- 
- A night landscape featuring a lighthouse on a rocky island, with its light reflecting in the water. The sky is filled with stars, and the overall scene is dark and atmospheric.



The Yarmouth & Acadian Shores Tourism Association (YASTA) is the official Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) for Yarmouth & Acadian Shores

YASTA Core Partners



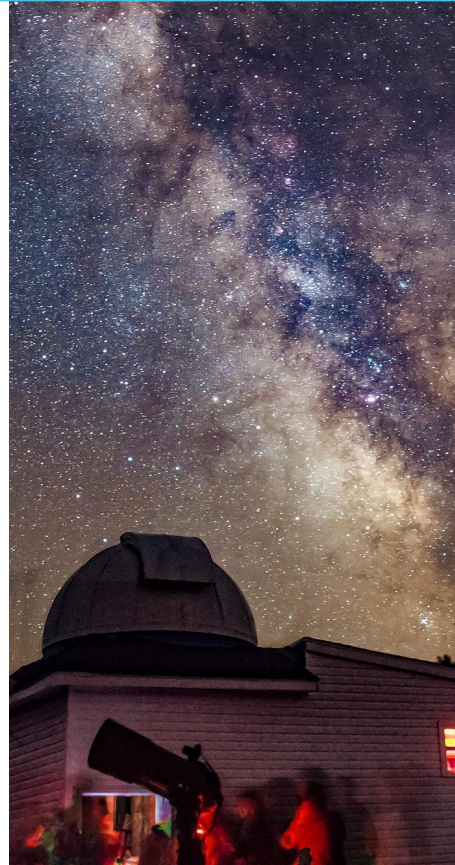
Every night (almost), the stars shine bright.

Yarmouth & Acadian Shores is where you can find some of the darkest and clearest skies in North America.



Southwest Nova
Biosphere
Reserve





Our Country, Province & Region – Powered by Tourism

Canada

\$132.9B

Economic Activity
Annual · Canada

\$52.5B

GDP Contribution
Canada 2024

2M+

Workforce
1 in 10 Canadian jobs

\$3.7B

NS Tourism Revenue
2025 · +8% vs 2024

Nova Scotia - Tourism Grows at Home (2025)

3 Million

Room nights sold
in NS 2025

+1% vs 2024

+8%

NS tourism revenue
growth

Outpacing national +3%

44%

of NS tourism spending
from Nova Scotians

Domestic market vital

18%

US visitor share
of NS revenues

Our primary ferry market

+4%

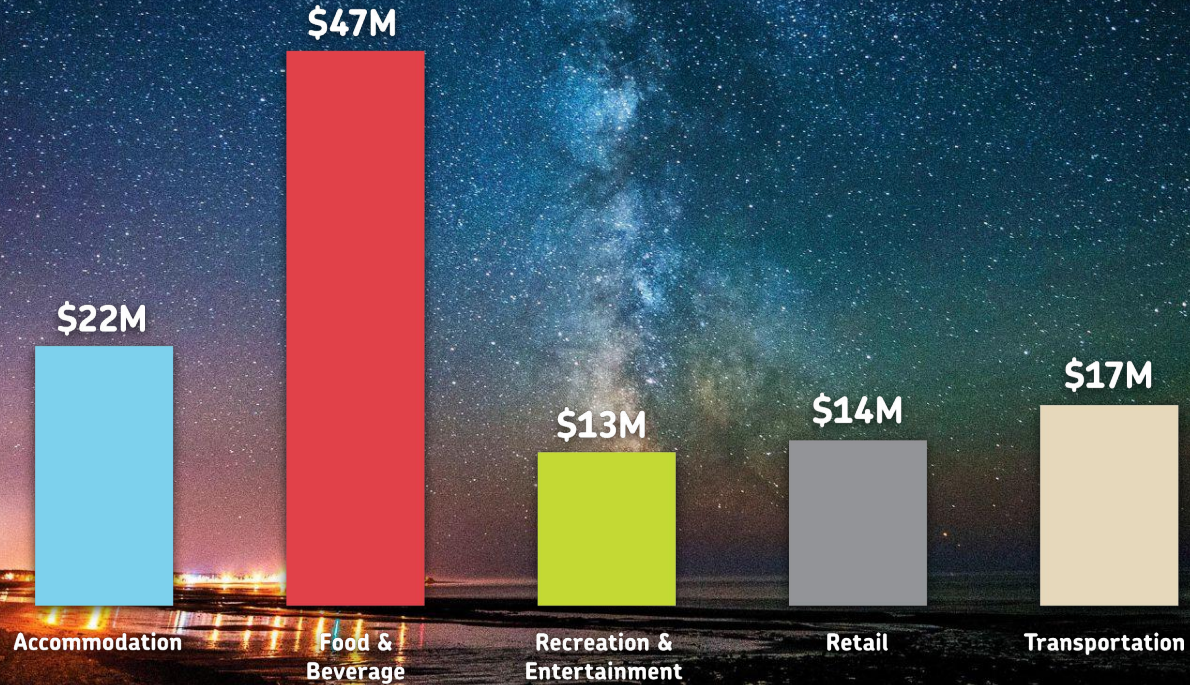
**YAS room nights
growth 2025**

3,000 more nights sold

Total Regional Tourism Spend – 2019 to 2025



2025 Spend by Category



\$114M

2025 YAS Revenue

+4.7% vs 2024



TOURISM POWERS MAIN STREETS AND THE REGION

Local Impact & Community Vitality

Yarmouth & Acadian Shores is a small region that punches above its weight. Tourism supports local shops, restaurants, accommodations, guides, attractions, operators, and cultural organizations and more and helps keep our region alive.

77% Peak occupancy Sept 2025

51% Annual avg occupancy 2025

+4% YAS room nights growth vs 2024





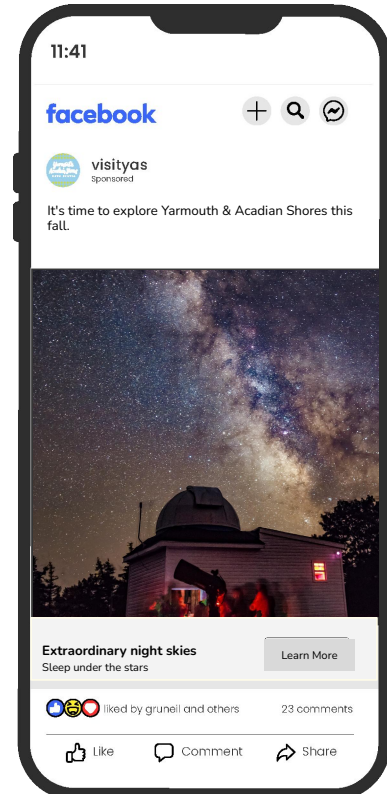
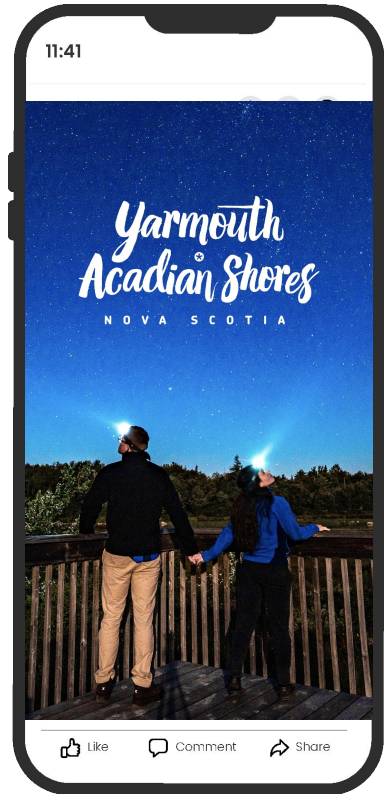
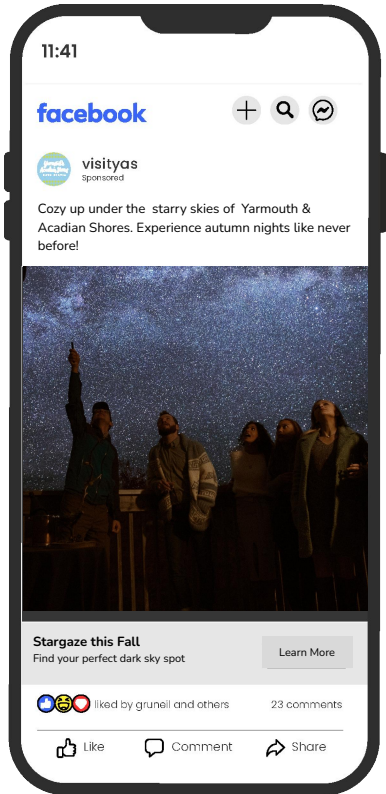
What visitors tell us

- Stargazing aligns with visitor demand for authentic experiences:
 - 71% of past vacation visitors **likely to go stargazing.**
 - Top motivations include “exploration/discovery” (14%) and “natural beauty/outdoor activities” (12%).
- Stargazing builds on existing attractions, such as the award-winning, Trout Point Lodge and Deep Sky Eye Observatory.
- Creates new opportunities: guided stargazing, astrophotography, dark-sky accommodations.
- **Supports shoulder-season and off-peak visitation.**
- Supports ongoing content and marketing to promote astro-tourism experiences and sustainable nature-based travel.

(Source: MQO_TNS_2036-VOV_YASTA FINAL.pptx)

Marketing a Starlight Tourist Destination

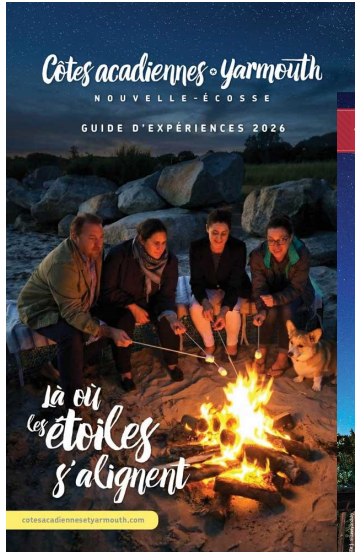
Omnichannel · Paid · Earned · Owned · Telling our story to the right people



**Paid Social
Ad targeting**

Marketing a Starlight Tourist Destination

Omnichannel · Paid · Earned · Owned · Telling our story to the right people



Signature Experiences

Night Skies full of wonder

Did you know that Yarmouth & Acadian Shores is home to North America's first Starlight Reserve and Destination designated by the Starlight Foundation? Find more night sky experiences inside this guide.

Best places to stargaze in YAS

- Arroyo Lodge
- Cape Fancu Lighthouse
- Deep Sky Eye Observatory
- Elmwood Lake Provincial Park
- Forest Glen Adventures
- Port Maitland Beach
- Trout Point Lodge
- Wedgeport Nature Trail

Sky Bubbles: your private retreat with the universe on display.

Deep Sky Eye Observatory
Nectaral Sky Theatre Experience

You'll start your experience learning about the basics of astronomy, the night's celestial wonders, and the Deep Sky Eye observatory while sitting back in a comfortable zero-gravity chair. Outside, under the beauty of the summer Milky Way, learn to recognize the night sky using points of reference such as Polaris (North Star) and various constellations.

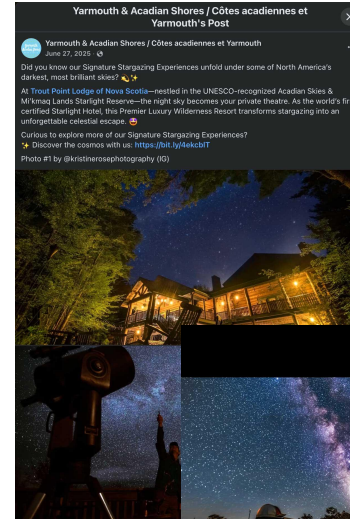
Visitors can explore planets and deep-space objects through multiple telescopes on the observation platform. Galaxies, nebulae, star clusters, the Moon, and planets are all within reach of the eyes sky in Quinon. Book your experience today.

338 Fratten Rd., Quinon, Nova Scotia
902-648-2723 | [deepskye.com](https://www.deepskye.com)

Starlight Foundation

Learn more

YAS Destination Guide
Produced in-house



YAS Social Media Channels
Organic Growth

Light Pollution



The Value of the Dark Sky

Environmental Protection: Reduces harm to wildlife and ecosystems.

Public Health: Reduces sleep disruptions and health risks.

Energy Efficiency: Saves money by minimizing wasted light.

Astrotourism: Expands tourism and attracts visitors.

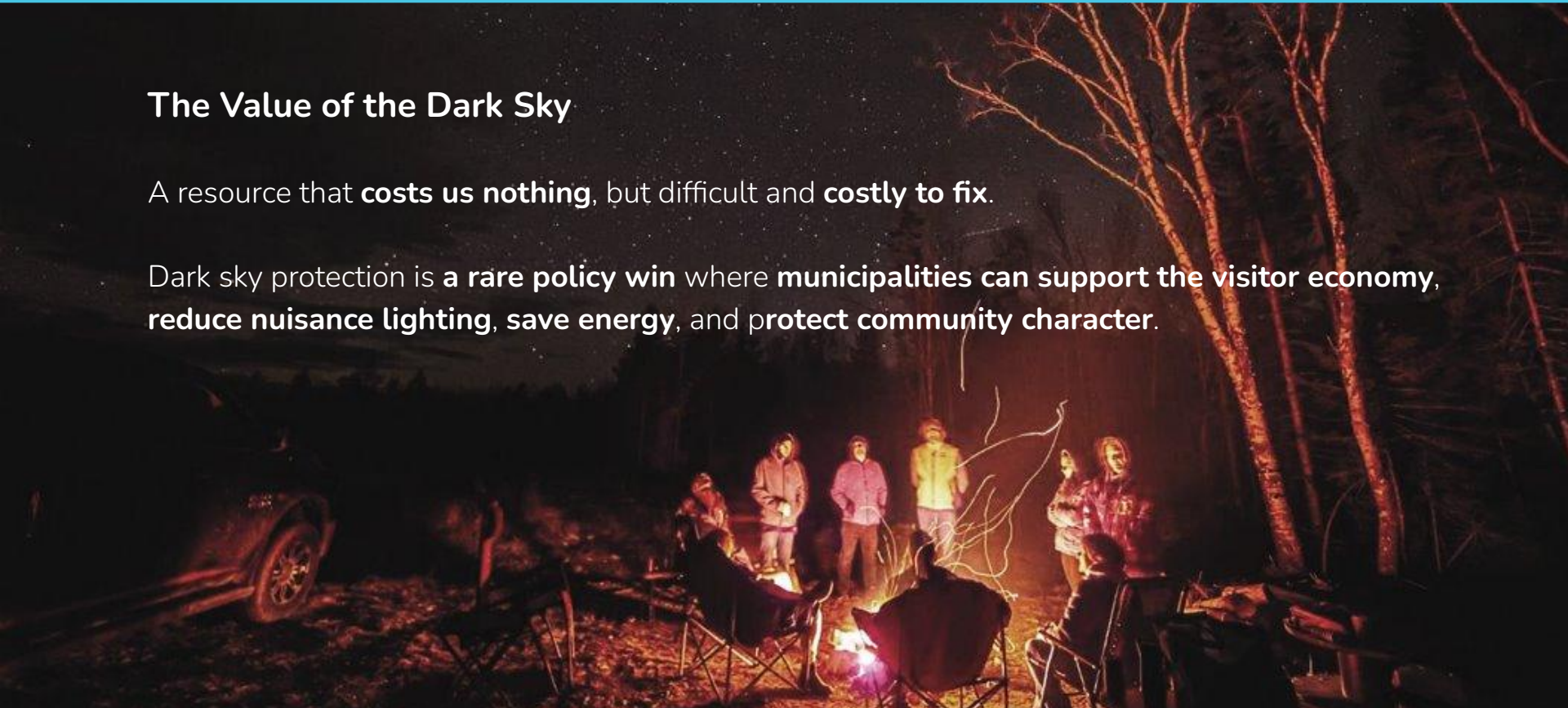
Preserves Heritage: Protects cultural and scientific connections to the night sky.



The Value of the Dark Sky

A resource that **costs us nothing**, but difficult and **costly to fix**.

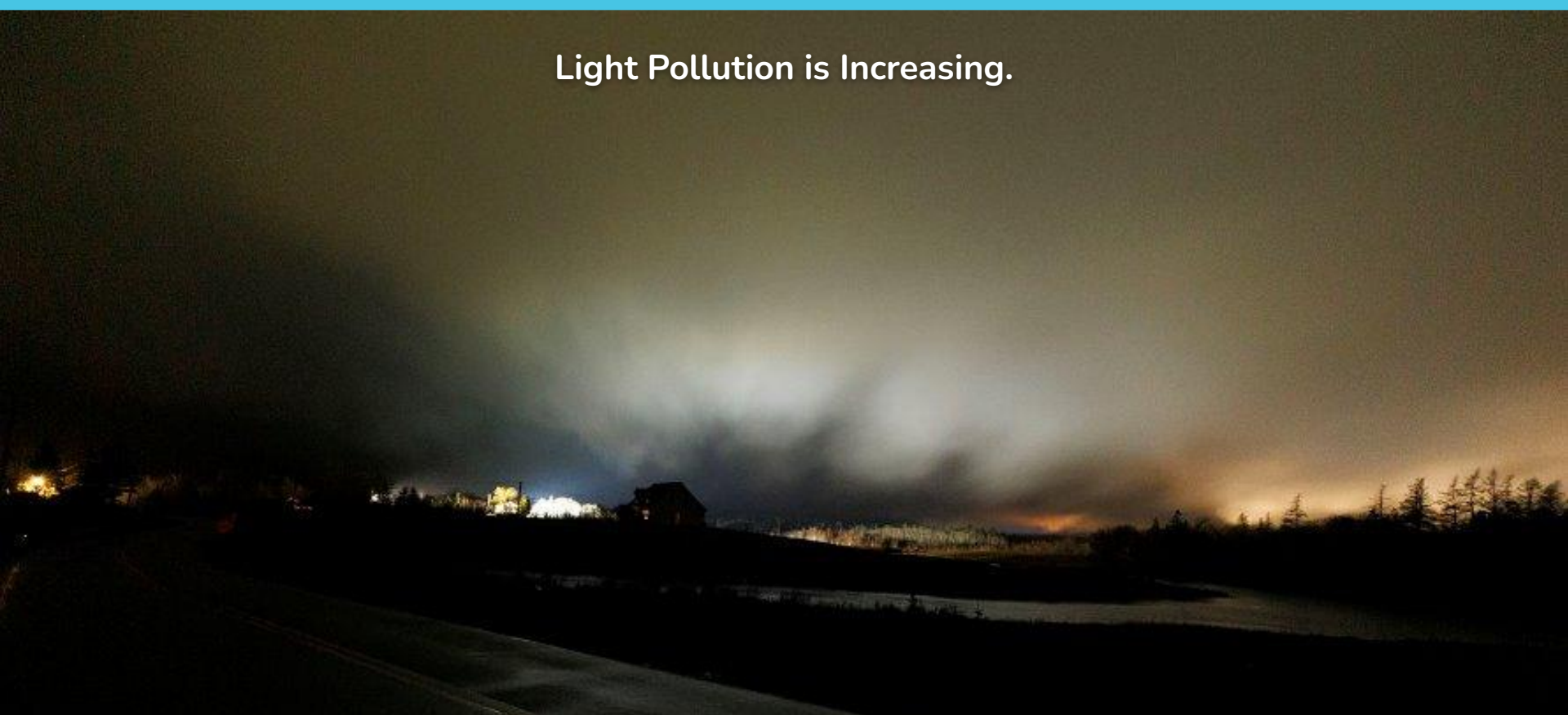
Dark sky protection is a **rare policy win** where **municipalities can support the visitor economy, reduce nuisance lighting, save energy, and protect community character**.



Light Pollution is Increasing.



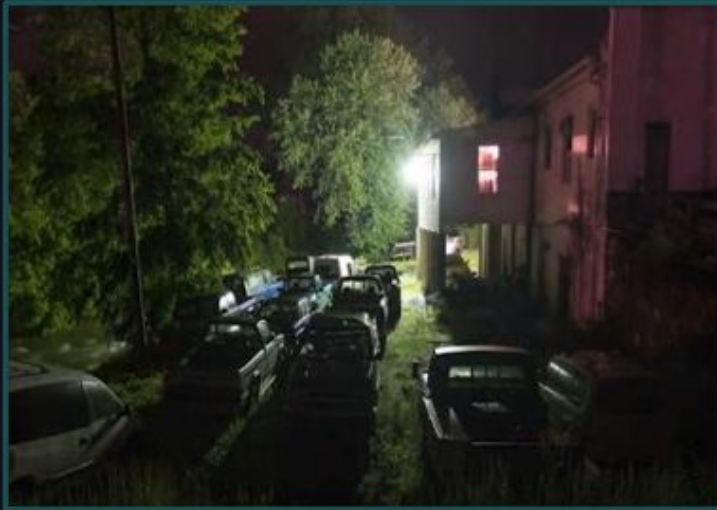
Light Pollution is Increasing.



How can we reduce light pollution?

SHIELDING		COLOUR		BRIGHTNESS		TIMING		NEIGHBOURS	
 NO SHIELD	 FULL CUTOFF SHIELD	 BLUE OR PURE WHITE	 AMBER OR WARM WHITE	 ~5,000 Lumens	 ~250 Lumens	 Motion Sensor	 Outdoor Timer	 Light Trespass	
X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓

Myth: More Light = Better Security.



Reality: Better Light = Better Security



Cold (5000K) 850 Lumens



Warm White (2700K) 500 Lumens



Cold (5000K) 850 Lumens



Warm White (2700K) 500 Lumens





Astrotourism

- **You Don't Need to Be an Astronomer to Benefit from Astrotourism**
- Any business can connect to the magic of the night sky by creating products, experiences, or promotions inspired by stars, or the wonder people feel under a clear night sky.
- Ex: An ice cream shop could create a **“Milky Way Cone.”**
A brewery could craft a **dark-sky themed beer.**

More Examples In Our Presentation on May 7th @ Yarmouth & Area Chamber Of Commerce

What We Ask

- **Act locally now.** Use existing municipal tools to improve lighting, educate the public, lead by example, and protect dark skies as a shared asset.
- **Clarify provincial authority over time.** Explore clearer MGA wording on intrusive lighting, glare, and light trespass as nuisance concerns.



“Tourism is a transformative force that can foster sustainable development and inclusive growth.” Taleb Rifai, former Secretary-General of the UN World Tourism Organization, said: (UNWTO, 2017)

Every visitor counts, every dollar helps. From cruise ships in our harbour and ferry passengers crossing the bay to travellers discovering us online, each person plays a vital role in building Yarmouth & Acadian Shores. Sustainable tourism drives manageable growth in rural communities, strengthening our economy and supporting a vibrant future for all.

Questions & Discussion

yarmouthandacadianshores.com

novascotiastarlight.com

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