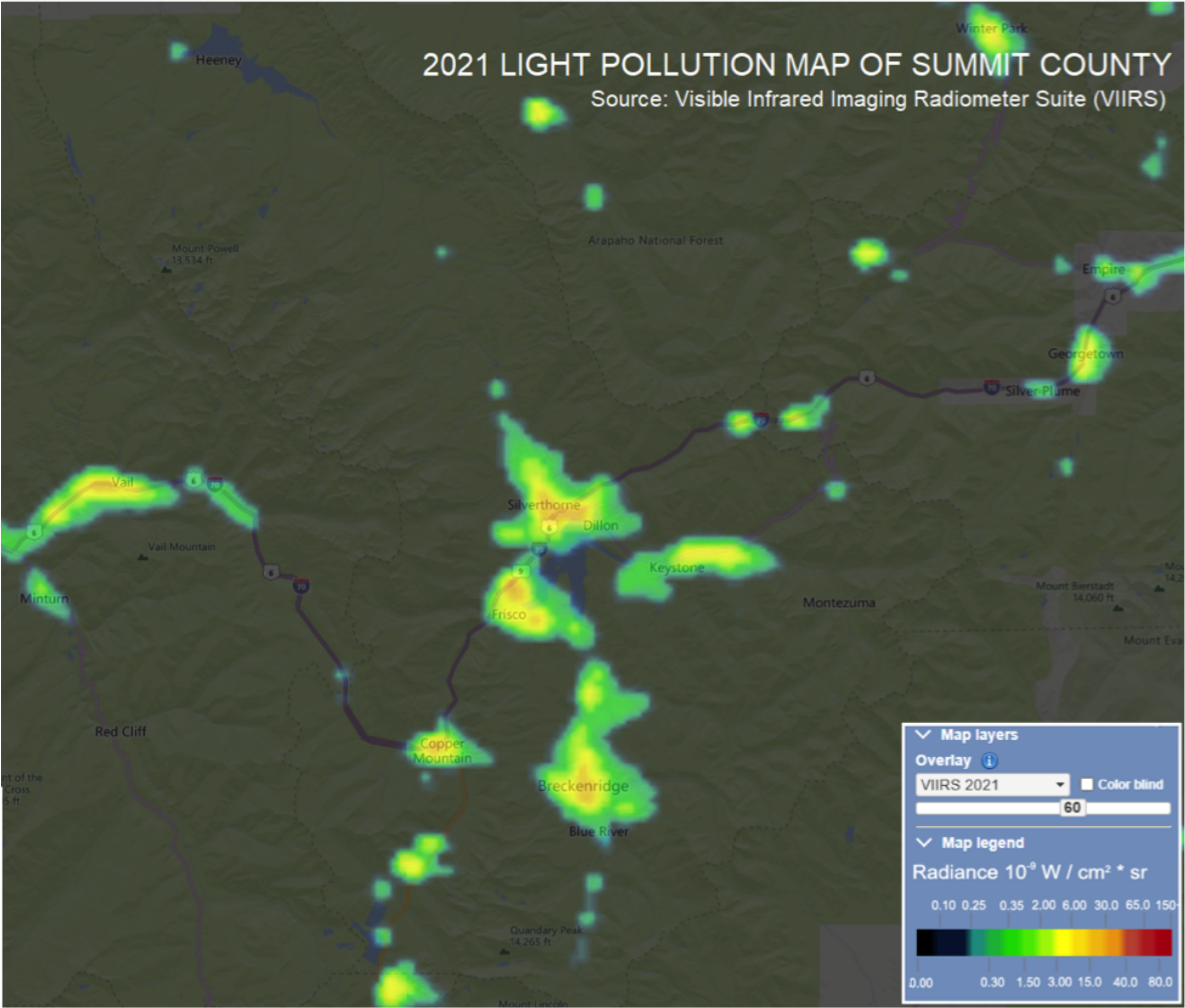


# Get Wild: Lights off and stars on: Let's protect the night sky — our shared heritage with all living things

Sports [FOLLOW SPORTS](#) | 22h ago

Martie Semmer  
Get Wild



An image showing light pollution in Summit County on the website [Lightpollutionmap.info](https://lightpollutionmap.info)  
[LightPollution.info](https://lightpollutionmap.info)/Screen image

“What if we are the last generation to see the night sky?” asks Diane Knutson, president of the International Dark-Sky Association board of directors.

The [Light Pollution Map](#) shows that light pollution is increasing at an alarming rate throughout the world. Unfortunately, in the communities and open spaces of Summit County, [light pollution](#) also continues to escalate.

Research shows that overuse and misuse of artificial light at night can lead to adverse impacts, including deaths and extinction of many species. Light pollution — as glare, light trespass/spill light, uplighting, skyglow and overlighting — is known to have harmful effects on the well-being of humans, wildlife and vegetation.

Light pollution also is a major cause of wasted energy, fossil fuels and money. When a sizable amount of outdoor lighting is wasted, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions that artificially warm the atmosphere contributes significantly to climate change.

Fortunately, this silent threat can be reversed. More and more Coloradans are realizing the economic, ecological, cultural and societal benefits of preserving and protecting the nighttime environment.

The June 2022 [Unveil the Night](#) from Colorado's Office of Economic Development International Trade promotes best stewardship practices, not only in Colorado's 15 certified International Dark-Sky Communities and Parks, but also throughout Colorado. Unveil the Night highlights the "International Dark-Sky Association and Illuminating Engineering Society guidance for responsible use of artificial light at night that can be applied when at home and when recreating and camping in Colorado's great outdoors."

The lighting practices noted in Unveil the Night include:

1. Turning off lights when not in use, and using lights only where and when you need them.
2. Keeping indoor light indoors — use curtains at home and covering windows and openings in RVs, camper vans, and tents.
3. Using warm-color temperature lights — in particular red-light flashlights, headlamps, filters and coverings — when light is needed.
4. Using only the minimum brightness necessary.
5. Shielding all lights and pointing them downward.

A special thank you goes to Colorado House District 61 Representative Julie McCluskie for championing Colorado HB22-1382 Support Dark Sky Designation and Promotion. Bipartisan support for this bill led to the bill's passage, which Governor Polis signed into law in Westcliffe on May 27. The new law notes the detrimental impacts of light pollution on tourist destinations and places throughout Colorado.

Colorado's Dark Sky law will provide funding under the Office of Economic Development International Trade for the International Dark-Sky Association's Colorado Chapter to offer technical assistance to a selected number of places that apply for International Dark Sky Places certification through the International Dark-Sky Association headquarters office in Tucson. The five place-certification categories include communities, parks, reserves, sanctuaries and urban night sky places. Certification is the only insurance policy that our cherished night sky — essential to all living things — will be protected and preserved. Also, the new law requires that education and outreach take place to promote certified International Dark Sky Places in Colorado, along with preservation efforts and best stewardship practices that protect Colorado's treasured nightscape.

Former astronaut Col. Ron Garan has given us both hope and a challenge: "What if we are the generation that gets it right?"

Governor Polis's Proclamation declaring June 2022 Dark Sky Month in Colorado provides an answer to Garan's challenge: "WHEREAS, through dark sky education, outreach, practices and policies, a connection to the natural nighttime environment can be reestablished for present and future generations."

If you are interested in learning more about protecting Colorado's dark skies, you can register for IDA Colorado's July 13 special zoom meeting on the International Dark-Sky Association Colorado's homepage [IDAColorado.xyz](#).







Martie Semmer

After a 2019 introduction in Westcliffe to the wondrous night sky, Martie Semmer, International Dark-Sky Association Colorado Board member and Western Colorado Regional Coordinator, remarked that the sky is the limit as she continues learning about and advocating for the preservation of the night sky. For more information, visit [DarkSky.org](https://www.darksky.org/).

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