

Darker skies and better lighting coming to Ojai

Submitted by the Ojai Valley Green Coalition

The dark — and lower energy bills — are coming to Pat and Julie McPherson's home. The McPhersons installed new exterior lights that will down-light walkways and their driveway. The lights also naturally shield the environment from unnecessary light glare, which once disturbed their neighbors and could endanger animals' nocturnal habits.

The McPhersons chose to voluntarily comply with the new Exterior Lighting Ordinance, which was

passed in August by the Ojai City Council. The Ojai Valley Green Coalition (OVGC) and other community members worked for five years to get the ordinance passed. OVGC worked with the International Dark Skies Association to help city staff and City Council draft an ordinance that would not only reduce unnecessary lighting through the night, but also encourage locals to upgrade inefficient lighting to more cost-saving and effective lighting. At the heart of the ordinance is the goal to save energy, to protect the



Before.

environment and to prevent "light doming" of the valley, which can interrupt nocturnal animals, confuse migrating birds and cause sleep disturbance in humans. To that end the ordinance requires

that lights which are not shielded and downward-directed be turned off at 10 p.m.

The McPhersons say they found it simple to install energy-efficient and "dark sky-friendly" lighting products. They



After

replaced the light-inefficient fixtures on their front gate and near their front door, and also constructed a new rock wall adjacent to their driveway, complete with built-in vented lighting.

Ojai city residents should look for an informational postcard in the mail soon. There are other resources available for all valley residents as well; visit Ojai City Hall or call OVGC at 669-8445.