present from Flagstaff and Phoenix in their figure 4. More stray light comes to the US Naval Observatory Flagstaff Station from Flagstaff, a close, small city with very stringent fixture requirements in place, than from Phoenix, a distant, large city with less stringent requirements.

The impact of fully shielded fixtures is rather small. The authors use 10% as the amount of light directed upward for "typical" community lighting fixtures, but a sample of commonly installed fixtures tested by the National Lighting Product Information Program[2] had uplight values averaging less than 0.3%. Counting only partially cut-off fixtures like the one illustrated in figure 3 of the article, the average uplight value was still less than 0.5%. Therefore, a value of 10% misrepresents what is actually being installed. Limiting the typical value of 0.3% uplight to 0% from fully shielded fixtures will have little incremental effect on reducing sky glow beyond current practice. Parenthetically, the statement attributed by the authors to members of the lighting profession that partially shielded fixtures permit wider spacing than fully shielded ones is incorrect; many fully shielded fixtures can be spaced farther apart than many unshielded ones.[3]

The direction of light leaving the property matters most in terms of light trespass and glare. Both are also measures of wasted light and to some communities can be just as important as sky glow is to astronomers. The outdoor site-lighting performance (OSP) system[1] has been used to develop methods to measure and limit light trespass onto adjacent windows from the lights illuminating, for example, a car dealer's lot. Similarly, glare into the eyes of automobile drivers from a fixture on a golf driving range can be measured, and limits can be established.

Our systematic review of current outdoor lighting practice and of the reasons people complain about light pollution[1] shows the state of outdoor lighting with regard to glow, trespass, and glare and suggests how to make improvements using the OSP system. Fully shielded fixtures are one way to limit wasted light, but they are not sufficient to reverse any of the three problems called light pollution. Luginbuhl and coauthors point out that unintentional use of vegetation and other structures reduces by 50–60% the impact of wasted light contributing to sky glow. Given that value, intentional use of vegetation and structures to prevent light from leaving a property could be more effective at controlling sky glow than the use of fully shielded fixtures advocated by the authors.

The OSP system is a practical computational tool to compare proposed and existing designs that limit wasted light with those used in current practice. It also gives owners and communities practical methods and effective criteria for minimizing glow, trespass, and glare not only to slow the growth of wasted light—including encroachment on the night sky—but to reverse it. We therefore applaud the authors for making the case to reduce wasted light as it affects astronomical observations, but many more issues associated with outdoor lighting need to be considered, including its benefits. With practical and effective tools, each community can best decide how to address the multifaceted issues of light pollution.

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Luginbuhl, Walker, and Wainscoat reply:

We appreciate the concern of Mark Rea, John Bullough, and Jennifer Brons for aspects of light pollution other than sky glow, and we support increased awareness and reduction of all forms of light pollution and energy waste. Our article was explicitly about the impacts on astronomical observatories and science, though to a large extent the careless lighting practices that increase sky glow over observatories also cause light trespass, glare, and energy waste. Nevertheless, many techniques used to protect observatories, in particular the full shielding of fixtures to control direct uplight, have wide applicability for national parks, coastlines, and anywhere citizens want to preserve or restore their ability to see stars in the night sky.

Of course, distance and lighting amounts are critical factors. If direct uplight were a tiny fraction of total light output, approaches other than improving shielding might be more productive for reducing sky glow. But the observational evidence does not support the low uplight fraction Rea and coauthors suggest. Using measurements of how sky glow varies with distance and inventories of light fixtures, other researchers find uplight percentages of 8–15%.[1–3] So direct upward emission, whatever the distance or amount, dominates sky glow. Eliminating it in communities with typical shielding and near-ground blocking would reduce sky glow by 35–75% for observation distances of 50–200 km.

The writers' suggestion that vegetation could be intentionally used to decrease light pollution impacts may have some merit, though vegetation is not something on which astronomers or lighting designers have much influence. In any case, the modeling shows that the impact of direct upward emissions remains disproportionate even in the presence of substantial blocking by structures or vegetation.

Whatever uses the outdoor site-lighting performance metric may have for evaluating other aspects of light pollution, it is not a good metric for evaluating sky glow. It contains no information about the direction light is propagating away from a lighting installation, nor does it distinguish between upward- and downward-directed light. As our work and that of others[1,2,4] demonstrate, direction is critical in considering most aspects of light pollution.

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Hot topics in cold fusion

In his letter to PHYSICS TODAY (February 2010, page 10), Jacques Read raises an

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