



Soundscape Activity

Silent Hike/Silent Sit

Conduct all or part of a hike with no talking. Give each participant an opportunity to point out something they find interesting or fascinating to the group, again, without talking. Instruct them to raise their hand when they see something they want to share. Let them be creative in how they show the others what they found, for example: gently poke at a mushroom that is filled with spores, so the group can watch the “brown smoke” billow out. Or they could pantomime a bird singing and point in the bird’s direction. The longer this activity lasts, the more in tune the group becomes to their surroundings. To conclude, have the group discuss how the forced silence affected their experience.

Another way to quiet a group is to separate them along a trail and have them each sit for 10 – 15 minutes with a paper and pencil (crayons work, too). Instruct them not to talk (they should be far enough apart to make this difficult) and just listen for several minutes. During this time they may want to draw or write about what they see and hear. Bring the group together to share their drawings or writings. Discuss how it felt to be silent in nature.



Mother and daughter participating in a listening exercise and survey at in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. NPS Photo



National Park Service
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The Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division works to protect, maintain, or restore acoustical environments throughout the National Park System. We fulfill this mission by working in partnership with parks and others to increase scientific and public understanding of the value and character of soundscapes and to eliminate or minimize noise intrusions.

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