



# Soundscape Activity

## Create a Wind Sock

### Materials Needed:

- One tin can per participant
- Multiple colors of crepe paper or material strips
- Masking tape
- One 20" piece of string or yarn per participant

### Teacher's Preparations:

Paint the tin can, or cover it with construction paper. Cut 5-6 pieces of crepe paper into 24" strips. (If using fabric, cut the pieces to roughly 2" x 24".) Punch 2 holes directly across from each other in the sides of a tin can as close to the bottom edge as possible. Thread a 20" piece of string through the holes and tie to hang the wind sock.

The introduction to this activity should identify the terms "acoustic environment" and "soundscape" and explain that acoustic environments are unique to every park (see <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/sound> for more information on these terms). The teacher can list sounds that are significant to the soundscape of one or more parks, such as muskets firing or a loon's call. Have the audience consider how these sounds may be different from those they would hear at home.

The introduction should also include a discussion about the protection of a park's acoustic environment, and make a distinction between desirable and undesirable sounds in a park. The teacher can encourage the group to list both types of sounds.

### Group Activity:

First the group will "collect sounds" in two or three contrasting locations within a park. They are to sit alone for several minutes (as time allows) in each area and write down all the sounds they hear. Teachers may want to instruct the group on how to focus on sounds by closing one's eyes, remaining quiet and still, and trying to identify sources of sounds.

After sufficient time has passed, gather the group to create their wind socks. Have group members list the sounds they heard, and then assign a corresponding color of fabric or crepe paper to each different sound.

Give each participant a prepared tin can (see above). They will then tape a colored strip of paper or fabric for each sound they heard to the inside top of their can. The strips should overlap slightly.

Once the wind socks are created, ask for volunteers to share what sounds they included in their windsocks. Encourage discussion of how they felt when hearing the different sounds. Ask if some created pleasant feelings, and others, unpleasant feelings. Ask them to ponder how their park experience would be changed if the natural or cultural sounds in the park were drowned out by human noises, such as traffic or loud conversations. Finally, have them consider the five sounds they think are most significant in defining the park's acoustic environment.



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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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