

Trying To Save Silence

Here we are in the Hoh Valley Rainforest. This is a cathedral, my cathedral.

In this forest is the quietest place in the entire United States, and it's only one square inch in size. My mission is to keep it that way.



I'm Gordon Hempton. I'm a sound tracker. I travel the globe in search of vanishing sounds, including the most endangered of all, which is simply silence.

Noise pollution is nearly inescapable. The Hoh Valley is the quietest, least noise-polluted place in the entire lower 48. I don't know if I can save silence, but I know that I can try.

So it was 12 years ago, 2005 Earth Day, that I hiked up the Hoh River Valley. It took three miles just to escape the noise of the parking lot. That's when I was looking in every direction for which way I should go. I saw the elk trail, love to follow their advice because they love quiet just like I do; and they led me right to the spot.

It's just through that tree, then off into the woods.

I defend this one square inch of silence by doing both quiet and noise monitoring.

When a noise intrusion occurs, I locate the noise maker, send them a letter, and ask for compliance. This matter is urgent. Within ten years, it's likely that there will be no quiet places left unless we take action.

When I first started, I did not think silence would go extinct in my lifetime; and if that happens, the quiet will disappear and the wildlife will be devastated. The One Square Inch of Silence foundation is pressing our politicians to pass a single piece of legislation that will designate Olympic National Park as the world's first quiet park, off-limits to aircraft.

All things are possible. The Earth is here and it's beautiful; and, for me, it all starts here in the Hoh Valley.

Questions.

1. What's Gordon's job? _____
2. What is the quietest place in America called? _____
3. What organization did Gordon create? _____
4. What does Gordon do when a noise intrusion takes place? _____

Discuss.

1. Do you think silence is a kind of noise? Or the opposite of noise?
2. Name 8 things that produce noise pollution and bother people. Which are the worst?
3. How do we measure noise pollution? How should a city or government?
4. What things can we do to stop noise pollution?
5. Why do people need silence, periods of silence?
6. What are some effects, symptoms, consequences of noise pollution?
7. What's the quietest place you know of or have experienced?
8. Is nature full of silence and man full of noise? Or is it more complicated than that?

Questions.

1. What's Gordon's job? He's a sound tracker.
2. What is the quietest place in America called? It's called the Hoh River Valley.
3. What organization did Gordon create? He created the "One Square Inch Of Silence" foundation
4. What does Gordon do when a noise intrusion takes place? He locates them, sends them a letter and asks them for compliance.

Discuss.

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