Three Questions:

1. What affects the visitors’ experiences in every park but seldom is included in the planning process?

2. Why is this?

3. What can we do about it?
What has been overlooked?

**Soundscape:**
- All aspects of an acoustic environment
- The way it is perceived
- The way it affects the intended use


Why is this?
History of reaction to noise has been regulatory

• NEPA (1969) and Noise Control Act of 1972

• Policies and criteria established by federal agencies during 1970s: HUD, FAA, FHWA, FRA, FTA
History of reaction to noise has been regulatory

- NEPA (1969) and Noise Control Act of 1972
- Policies and criteria established by federal agencies during 1970s: HUD, FAA, FHWA, FRA, FTA
- Policies based on quantitative criteria (decibels)

What's wrong with this approach?

- Follows rather than assists planning process
What's wrong with this approach?

- Follows rather than assists planning process
- Impact criteria seldom consider:
  - Quality of the soundscape
  - Soundscape's effect on visitor experience
  - Suitability of soundscape for planned uses
- May result in "band-aid" solutions
National Parks Overflights Act of 1987

- Preservation of natural soundscape
- Air tours, snowmobiles, personal watercraft

“Natural sounds are part of the special places we preserve. Rustling winds in the canyons and the rush of water in the rivers are the heartbeat and breath of some of our most valuable resources.”
Robert Stanton, NPS Director 1997-2001

Soundscape in National Parks

Soundscape – not just for natural areas
Soundscape – not just for natural areas

What can we do about it?

Soundscape Design:
• An integrated process to evaluate, plan, and improve an acoustic environment
Soundscape Design

• Occurs during a project’s planning phase

• Emphasis is on compatibility of uses with environment

• Addresses subjective and aesthetic aspects
Soundscape Design:

- Occurs during a project’s planning phase
- Emphasis is on compatibility of uses with environment
- Addresses subjective and aesthetic aspects
- Integrated approach to answer the question: “What should this space sound like?"

Soundscape Design: Site and Surroundings

Soundscape Design Process:
1. Existing Soundscape (Surroundings)
Soundscape Design Process:
1. Existing Soundscape (Surroundings)

Soundscape Design Process:
2. Other External Sounds (Intrusions)
3. Planned Uses (as Receiver and Source)

4. Add or Subtract
Soundscape Design Process:
4. Add or Subtract

Three Questions:

1. What affects the visitors’ experiences in every park but seldom is included in the planning process?

2. Why is this?

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Every landscape has a soundscape. Will you design it or hope for the best?