



Olympic National Park

Hoh Rainforest
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Hear Our Olympics

Fighter jet noise over Olympic National Park is drowning out natural sounds.

Olympic National Park and its wild surroundings are unique. The park is a sanctuary, offering peace, solitude and the opportunity to enjoy natural quiet and the sounds of nature. Olympic National Park is “the most acoustically diverse” and “least noise polluted” place in the Lower 48 states, according to local resident and natural sound expert Gordon Hempton. Visitors and residents alike use the park year-round, with nearly 3.4 million visitors in 2016.

“Olympic National Park is the best natural area in the entire Pacific Northwest... it is unmatched in the world.”

International Union for Conservation of Nature, 1981 World Heritage nomination

But the park has noisy neighbors – and it’s only getting worse. The Olympic Peninsula is within minutes of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), which has served as a military airbase since World War II. More recently, NASWI has become home to squadrons of EA-18G “Growlers,” so-called because of the deep, cacophonous roar that their powerful engines make. The

Navy has recently based more than 80 Growlers at NASWI, and plans to increase that number up to 160. The Navy proposes to increase Growler training over and around Olympic National Park.

Growlers are too loud for this quiet place, and are degrading the park’s natural resources. In a 2009 report on Jet Engine Noise Reduction, the U.S. Naval Research Advisory Committee identified Growlers as some of the loudest aircraft in the skies. The jets can damage hearing in people nearby. The noisy training will impair some of the most popular wilderness, trails and visitor centers of Olympic National Park, including the famous Hoh Rain Forest and spectacular wilderness beaches. The park’s wildlife, much of which relies on sound to hunt and find mates, will suffer as well.



Navy EA-18G “Growler” Jet.
Courtesy of US Navy, Paul Farley



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The Navy can and should conduct Growler training elsewhere. According to the Navy's own analysis, training at the Olympics is a nonessential convenience. Olympic airspace is the closest to the Navy's runways on Whidbey Island, but there are other airbases and military airspace available to them. One example is Mountain Home Air Force Base in southern Idaho, a short flight away, where the Navy currently conducts similar training.

Help us save the sounds of the Olympics.

Join our Hear Our Olympics campaign at npca.org/hearourolympics.

Take action!
Make Olympic National Park
a Certified Quiet Park.

Sign our petition at npca.org/hearourolympics

91%

of visitors to national parks come to enjoy the natural sounds

24

species of flora and fauna are found nowhere else

U.S. Navy electronic-warfare training proposal



The Olympic Marmot, one of the 24 species unique to the Olympics. CCO J. Maughn



Ruby Beach

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