

Song Path is a compositionally guided listening tour of natural spaces. The Song Path at Gooseberry Falls starts at the upper falls and follows the Gitchi Gummi Trail loop ending at the visitors center. Song Path is designed to be a silent tour in which you can listen to the natural and man made sounds in the park as a piece of music as you hike. I have marked a few spots along the trail that I found interesting while hiking. You will have the most satisfying experience if you follow your own ears as you hike so follow these suggestions as needed.

Start by hiking in to the place along the upper falls trail along the river marked by a star on the map. Once you have reached a comfortable place along the river to start, close your eyes and engage in the following listening meditation.

1. Begin by taking slow, deep breaths in and out. Focus on the sound, contour, and pace of your breath, do this for around a minute.
2. Listen to the sound of water flowing over the rocks in the stream. Focus only on this sound and try to tune other sounds out. Do this for around a minute.
3. Turn your head from side to side and focus your attention further up and down stream. Notice how the sound of the water in the valley seems to change as you do so.
4. Shift your attention to the sound of the wind blowing through the trees. Notice how it rises and falls at irregular rhythms and how the sound blends in with the sound of the water at times. Also, notice how it moves from left to right and front to back and up the hills of the valley. Listen for about a minute.
5. Listen to the sounds of birds, insects, and other animals in the park. Pay special attention to rhythms that begin to emerge and notice how each bird or animal sounds different depending on how close or far from you it is. Do this for a minute.

6. Now open your ears to the entire space and listen to how all of these sounds work together. Listen for the distant sound of the falls, planes flying overhead, and cars passing along highway 61. All of these noises make the music along the Song Path.
7. Open your eyes and begin following the song path but keep all the sounds that are present around you in your in your ears and as you move, listen to how all of these sounds seemingly shift and change as you hike through different landscapes.

Points of Interest

1. **Upper Falls Overlook 1.** The falls dominate the soundscape.
2. **Upper Falls overlook 2 (observation deck).** The sound of cars crossing the bridge begins to compete with the falls themselves.
3. **Hwy 61 Bridge Walking Path.** The sound of cars and trucks passing overhead creates an amazing resonance under this bridge. You can also hear both the lower and upper falls clearly from here.
4. **Gitchi Gummi Trail Steps.** Listen to the sounds of rich wildlife and changing landscape as you ascend the steps to the upper Gitchi Gummi Trail.
5. **Lake Superior Approaches.** Notice the sounds of waves crashing against the beech in the distance on the shore of Lake Superior. Notice how they compare with the distant sound of cars and trucks passing along highway 61.
6. **Shelter and Lake Superior Overlook Number 1.** Look out over the shoreline and listen to the mighty sounds that come from the bottom of the cliffs as well as sounds further out to the horizon.
7. **Lake Superior Overlook Number 2.** Take a second listen over the walls of this overlook and notice how the sound of waves crashing against the rocks below sounds very present. As you leave, keep this sound in your ears and see if you can also hear the distant sound of the road. Compare the two.
8. **Nelsens Creek.** Stop and listen as you begin to hear the sound of Nelsens Creek in the valley below. There are several places to listen here and you should stop often. Use the sound of the creek to sonically map the different parts of the valley below and notice how the sound of the creek changes as you walk along it.
9. **Highway overlook along the Munger Bike Trail.** This overlook is accessed by a trail that connects the Gitchi Gummi trail to the Munger Bike Path that is not on the regular park map. You will come to a split in the trail after you have left the creek behind. Cross the Munger Trail then proceed as near as is safe to the cliff edge that overlooks highway 61 to hear the sound of cars passing up close. Focus on this sound as you approach and notice how the sound changes when you can actually see the road itself.
10. **Insects in the grass along the Munger Bike Trail.** As you proceed along the bike trail back to the bridge, listen to the various sounds of insects and frogs in the prairie grass along the edge of the trail.
11. **Bridge again and stone wall.** As you cross the bridge, this time take a left to cross the highway overhead and then a right to head back to the visitors center. As you do, notice how the sound of the cars and the falls change as you round the corner towards the visitors center along the large stone wall to your right.



