



Northern California's Redwood Coast

59 MUST-DO HIKES FOR EVERYONE

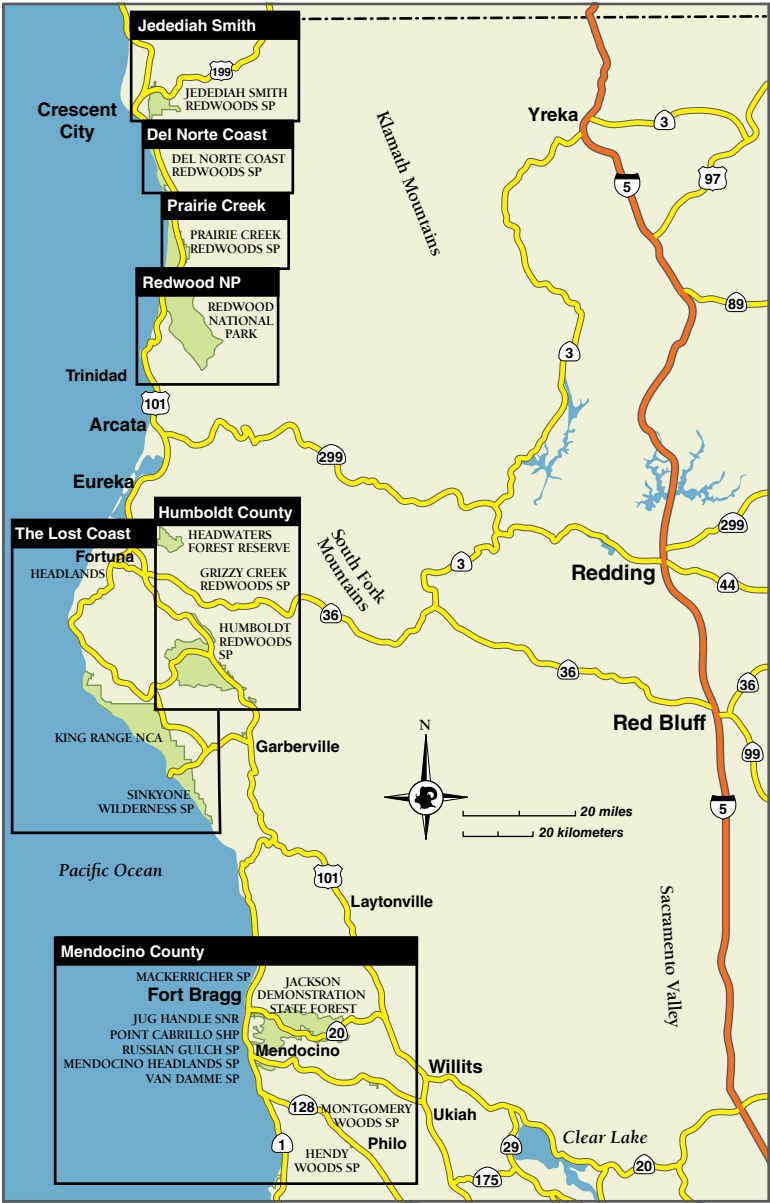


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Northern California's Redwood Coast



Contents

The Top Trails Series	iii
Northern California's Redwood Coast Map	opposite page
Northern California's Redwood Coast Trails Table	viii–xi

Using Top Trails	xiii
Organization of Top Trails	xiii
Choosing a Trail	xiv

Introduction to the Redwood Coast	1
Geography & Topography	1
Flora	2
Fauna	4
When to Go	5
Trail Selection	5
Key Features	5
Trail Safety	6
Fees, Camping & Permits	7

On the Trail	8
Have a Plan	8
Carry the Essentials	8
Other Useful Items	10
Trail Etiquette	10
Map Legend	10



CHAPTER 1

Mendocino County	13
----------------------------	----

1 Big Henty Loop	18
2 Montgomery Woods Trail	21
3 Fern Canyon & Pygmy Forest Loop	25
4 Chapman Point & Spring Ranch Headlands	29
5 Big River Haul Road	32
6 Mendocino Headlands	35
7 Russian Gulch Loop	39
8 Point Cabrillo Light Station	43
9 Ecological Staircase Trail	47
10 Chamberlain Creek Falls Loop	50
11 Ten Mile Beach	53



CHAPTER 2

The Lost Coast 57

12	Lost Coast Trail: Needle Rock to Bear Harbor	63
13	Lost Coast Trail: Needle Rock to Whale Gulch	67
14	Lost Coast Trail: Hidden Valley to Nicks Camp	70
15	Lost Coast Trail: Black Sands Beach to Gitchell Creek	74
16	Lightning Trail to King Peak	77
17	Lost Coast Trail: Mattole River to Sea Lion Gulch	81
18	Lost Coast Headlands: Fleener Creek & Guthrie Creek Trails	86



CHAPTER 3

Humboldt County 91

19	Franklin K. Lane Loop	97
20	Stephens Grove Loop	100
21	Nature Trail Loop	103
22	Founders Grove & Mahan Loop	106
23	Rockefeller Grove Loop	109
24	Big Trees Loop	112
25	Bull Creek & Homestead Loop	115
26	Bull Creek Flats & Big Trees Loop	118
27	Allens Trail	122
28	High Rock River Trail	125
29	Girdled Tree	128
30	Drury-Chaney Loop	131
31	Cheatham Grove	134
32	Elk River Trail	137



CHAPTER 4

Redwood National Park & Vicinity 142

33	Trinidad Head Loop	148
34	Agate Beach & Rim Trails	152
35	Stone Lagoon	157
36	Redwood Creek Trail	160
37	Lady Bird Johnson Grove	164
38	Tall Trees Grove	167
39	Emerald Ridge Loop	170
40	Dolason Prairie Trail	174
41	Lyons Ranch Loop	178
42	Coastal Trail: Skunk Cabbage Section	181
43	Trillium Falls Loop	184



CHAPTER 5

Prairie Creek 188

44	Fern Canyon Loop	194
45	Irvine & Miners Loop	197
46	Big Tree Loop	201
47	Brown Creek Loop	204
48	West Ridge & Prairie Creek Loop	207
49	Hope Creek & Ten Taypo Creek Loop	210
50	Ossagon Trail	213



CHAPTER 6

Del Norte Coast Redwoods 216

51	Yurok Loop & Hidden Beach	221
52	Coastal Trail: Hidden Beach to Klamath Overlook	224
53	Damnation Creek Trail	228
54	Coastal Trail: Crescent Beach Overlook to Enderts Beach	231



CHAPTER 7

Jedediah Smith Redwoods 234

55	Boy Scout Tree Trail	239
56	Stout Grove Loop	242
57	Leiffer & Ellsworth Loops	245
58	Simpson-Reed & Peterson Loop	248
59	Myrtle Creek Trail	251

Appendix 1:	Top-Rated Trails	254
-------------	----------------------------	-----

Appendix 2:	Campgrounds & RV Parks	256
-------------	----------------------------------	-----

Appendix 3:	Hotels, Lodges, Motels & Resorts	260
-------------	--	-----

Appendix 4:	Major Organizations	262
-------------	-------------------------------	-----

Appendix 5:	Useful Resources	263
-------------	----------------------------	-----

Index	264
-----------------	-----

About the Author	270
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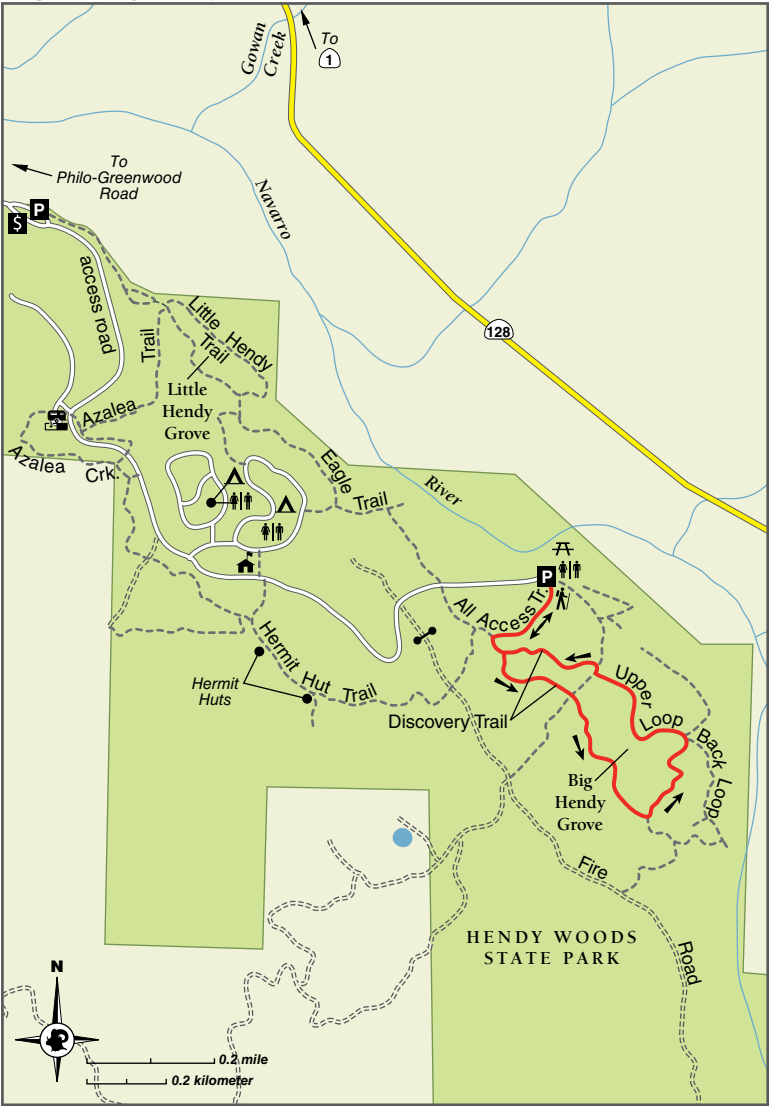
Northern California's Redwood Coast Trails

					USES & ACCESS							
Trail Number/Hike Name		Page	Difficulty	Length in Miles	Type*	Day Hiking	Backpacking	Running	Biking	Dogs Allowed	Wheelchair Access	Child-Friendly
1. Mendocino County												
1	Big Hendy Loop	18	1	1.4								
2	Montgomery Woods Trail	21	2	1.5								
3	Fern Canyon & Pygmy Forest Loop	25	3	9.0								
4	Chapman Point & Spring Ranch Headlands	29	2	2.9								
5	Big River Haul Road**	32	2	9.0								
6	Mendocino Headlands	35	1	3.2								
7	Russian Gulch Loop	39	3	7.1								
8	Point Cabrillo Light Station	43	1	2.3								
9	Ecological Staircase Trail	47	3	5.0								
10	Chamberlain Creek Falls Loop	50	3	2.9								
11	Ten Mile Beach	53	3	11								
2. The Lost Coast												
12	Lost Coast Trail: Needle Rock to Bear Harbor	57	2	6.2								
13	Lost Coast Trail: Needle Rock to Whale Gulch	63	2	4.6								
14	Lost Coast Trail: Hidden Valley to Nicks Camp	67	3	8.3								
15	Lost Coast Trail: Black Sands Beach to Gitchell Creek	70	2	7.4								
16	Lightning Trail to King Peak	74	4	5.4								
17	Lost Coast Trail: Mattole River to Sea Lion Gulch	77	2	7.6								
18	Lost Coast Headlands: Fleener Creek Trail	81	2	1.0								
18	Lost Coast Headlands: Guthrie Creek Trail	86	3	2.0								
3. Humboldt County												
19	Franklin K. Lane Loop	97	1	0.5								
20	Stephens Grove Loop	100	1	0.7								
21	Nature Trail Loop	103	1	0.7								
22	Founders Grove & Mahan Loop	106	1	1.3								
23	Rockefeller Grove Loop	109	1	0.6								
24	Big Trees Loop	112	1	0.6								
25	Bull Creek & Homestead Loop	115	2	2.5								
26	Bull Creek Flats & Big Trees Loop	118	3	9.4								
27	Allens Trail	122	4	2.6								
28	High Rock River Trail	125	3	2.0								
29	Girdled Tree	128	1	0.6								
30	Drury-Chaney Loop	131	1	2.2								

*Refer to the Trail Table Legend on page xvii.

**Horses allowed

Big Hendy Loop



TRAIL 1

Big Hendy Loop

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Running, Child-Friendly

LENGTH & TIME: 1.4 miles, 1 hour

VERTICAL FEET: Nominal

DIFFICULTY: 1 2 3 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Loop

START & FINISH: N39° 04.454' W123° 27.969'

FEATURES: Redwoods

FACILITIES: Campgrounds, Picnic Area, Restrooms, Visitor Center, Wineries Nearby

Near the fringe of the bucolic Anderson Valley, Hendy Woods State Park is a fine spot for enjoying some magnificently tall old-growth redwoods without the crush of tourists common to the more popular parks along US 101. Farther inland, Hendy Woods is not as foggy as parks closer to the ocean and typically experiences warmer temperatures as well.

The tall trees, some more than 16 feet in diameter and more than 300 feet tall, are found within two areas of the park, both of which occupy a floodplain alongside the meandering Navarro River. The premier site, Big Hendy Grove, is an 80-acre parcel with numerous old-growth specimens. For a park of this size (600 acres), there is an extensive network of hiking trails, offering numerous extensions to the short trip described here.

Although it's not as famous as the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, the Anderson Valley is a fine wine region in its own right, specializing in cool grape varieties such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Chenin Blanc, and Pinot Noir. Several wineries are located within a few miles of Hendy Woods; a wine tasting and a picnic lunch would make a lovely pairing with your hike.

Best Time

As with most coast redwood groves, Hendy Woods is open year-round. Summer is the busiest season. The park is often deserted in the winter, even during periods of good weather. Spring and fall are perhaps the optimum time to enjoy the redwoods, when temperatures are cool and visitation is low.

Finding the Trail

Drive on CA 128 to a junction with Philo-Greenwood Road, 6 miles west of Boonville and 17 miles east of CA 1. Follow Philo-Greenwood Road 0.6 mile to the signed entrance for Hendy Woods State Park, which is just past a bridge over the Navarro River. Turn left and follow the park road 2 miles to its end at

the day-use parking lot, which has picnic tables and vault toilets. The park has two campgrounds: Azalea and Wildcat.

Trail Description



A large sign and trail map mark the start of the hike, ►1 which initially follows the wide track of the All Access Trail into the deep shade of an old-growth redwood forest. A box nearby contains interpretive pamphlets loaded with botanical information about the redwood forest corresponding to 13 numbered posts along the way (the pamphlet is also available at the park's website, tinyurl.com/hendywoodssp). You don't have to wait long at all to stand beneath some impressive specimens, as the Big Hendy Grove harbors quite a number of very old and very tall redwoods. Soon after crossing a run-down footbridge, turn left at a junction ►2 with the Discovery Trail.



Follow a counterclockwise route on the Discovery Trail to match the sequence of the numbered posts, reaching a junction ►3 with the Upper Loop section after 0.2 mile. Continue straight ahead onto the Upper Loop, walking through a ground cover of redwood sorrel and sword and bracken ferns. In springtime you may see beautiful trilliums scattered about the forest floor.

Reach the next junction after 0.3 mile, where the trail ahead is the Back Loop. You could add an extra 0.4 mile to this rather short hike by following the Back Loop, but since doing so would take you away from the most magnificent redwoods in the Big Hendy Grove, which occur on the northeast leg of the Upper Loop, turn left at the junction. ►4 The farther you progress on the Upper Loop, the more magnificent the redwoods become, towering over an unbroken swath of redwood sorrel. After 0.2 mile of splendid redwoods, you reach the second junction ►5 with the Back Loop.

Turn left at the junction, and follow the east leg of the Upper Loop through shady forest another 0.3 mile to junctions ►6 with the Discovery Trail and, a few yards farther, the Meadow Trail. Continue straight at both junctions, rejoining the interpretive trail near post 10. After 0.2 mile, you reach the close of the loop ►7 and then retrace your steps 0.1 mile back to the day-use parking lot. ►8



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at trailhead
- 2 0.1 Left at Discovery Trail junction
- 3 0.3 Straight at Upper Loop junction
- 4 0.6 Left at first Back Loop junction
- 5 0.8 Left at second Back Loop junction
- 6 1.1 Straight at Discovery Trail and Meadow Trail junctions
- 7 1.3 Right at All Access Trail junction
- 8 1.4 Return to trailhead

TRAIL 7

Russian Gulch Loop

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Running, Biking, Wheelchair Access

LENGTH & TIME: 7.1 miles, 7.8 miles (winter); 4–6 hours

VERTICAL FEET: +750'/-750' +775'/-775' (winter)

DIFFICULTY: 1 2 **3** 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Loop

START & FINISH: N39° 19.861' W123° 47.676'

FEATURES: Redwoods, Flora, Stream, Historical Interest, Waterfall

FACILITIES: Campground, Picnic Area, Restrooms

Note: At press time, Fern Canyon Trail, from the trailhead to the Falls Loop junction, was closed for renovation, but it is expected to reopen.

Easy access from CA 1 and a straightforward hike along a wide, gently graded road combine to make the well-named Fern Canyon Trail in Russian Gulch State Park quite popular. The first 1.5 miles receive plenty of use from cyclists, families with strollers, and wheelchair users, as well as bipeds interested in an easy stroll alongside a placid stream. The trail courses through a canyon carpeted with lush vegetation, including second-growth redwood forest.

The traffic diminishes a bit beyond where bikes must be parked. Here the road narrows and the grade increases slightly for the next half mile to the start of the Falls Loop Trail, where a 0.9-mile, 175-foot climb leads to a picturesque 36-foot-tall waterfall. By following the loop as described below, you will find a higher dose of peace and serenity.

Best Time

Russian Gulch State Park is open year-round. Spring offers the bonus of scattered wildflowers. During winter, when the campground is closed, you'll have to walk an additional 0.7 mile round-trip.

Finding the Trail

The well-signed entrance to Russian Gulch State Park is on the ocean side of CA 1, 2 miles north of Mendocino and 6 miles south of Fort Bragg. From the entrance station, follow the narrow park road as it curves east underneath the highway, and continue through an open gate to the day-use parking area near a locked gate just beyond the campground. The nearby restroom has running water. In winter, park in the lot near the first gate, which is locked when the campground is closed for the season.

Trail Description

Walk along the paved road 1.5 miles beyond the locked gate, ►1 following the course of Russian Gulch Creek upstream. Officially dubbed the Fern Canyon Trail, the road passes through a narrow canyon filled with lush vegetation. Along with the namesake plants, the stream banks harbor moss-draped alders, big-leaf maples, tan oaks, and willows. Large old-growth redwood stumps scattered about the forest testify to the immense giants that once stood in this valley before logging began in the mid-1800s. The recreation hall near the trailhead is on the former site of a shingle mill. Picnic tables and a bike rack mark the end of the nearly level, 1.5-mile section of road. Bicyclists wishing to go farther will have to leave their bikes at the rack and continue on foot. ►2

The road narrows and the grade increases a tad, although the hiking remains quite pleasant for the next 0.5 mile to where the creek forks. Reach a junction with the North Trail, which angles sharply behind and to your left (the return route for the full loop). Ten yards ahead, you reach a second junction, ►3 with the Falls Loop Trail. For the shortest route to the falls and back, take the left fork, reaching the falls in 0.9 mile. Otherwise, veer onto the right fork.

The right-hand trail crosses the main branch of Russian Gulch Creek on a wood bridge and then starts climbing stiffly up the hillside above the south fork, switchbacking once on the way to the top of a ridge, where the grade eases. After 0.2 mile the trail turns north and continues the pleasant stroll through mixed forest for another 0.4 mile back toward Russian Gulch. At the brink, you hear the creek again, as the trail descends toward the bottom of the canyon amid Oregon grape, rhododendron, and tan oak, reaching a junction ►4 with the East Trail at 3.5 miles. Continue heading downstream above the creek for a short distance to the top of the falls.

Steep, often slippery stone steps lead to the base of the 36-foot-high falls, ►5 where a stout wood bridge spans the creek. Little sun reaches the area, creating a cool and moist environment for the lush vegetation bordering the silvery falls. You will no doubt be sharing this delightful scene with fellow admirers, especially on weekends.

Away from the falls, the trail closely follows the creek southwest down Russian Gulch. Wood-berm steps and a trio of bridges aid the 0.9-mile descent to the close of the loop at the Fern Canyon Trail junction, ►6 with the North Trail junction shortly beyond. The fastest and easiest route back to the trailhead would be to retrace your steps along the gently graded Fern Canyon Trail. However, with a little extra effort, you can vary your return by veering uphill to the right and following the North Trail back to the campground.

From the junction, the North Trail makes a stiff but short, switchbacking, 250-foot climb up the wall of the canyon and then follows a gently graded route through mixed forest along the north rim of Russian Gulch. Soon after crossing the last of four bridges over seasonal swales, you reach a junction ►7 with the first of three laterals to the North Boundary Trail, 0.7 mile from the Fern Canyon Trail junction. The easy, forested stroll continues a half mile to the next lateral junction ►8 and another half mile to the third lateral junction. ►9





Waterfall in Russian Gulch State Park

After another quarter mile along the rim, the trail starts a switchbacking descent toward the floor of the canyon and a junction ►10 with the Fern Canyon Trail in the middle of the campground. Unless you're here in winter, turn left and follow the paved road 0.2 mile to the trailhead parking area ►11 (winter visitors should turn right and walk along the road for 0.2 mile to the trailhead near the first gate).



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at Fern Canyon Trailhead
- 2 1.5 End of road open to bikes
- 3 2.0 Right at Falls Loop junction
- 4 3.5 Straight at East Trail junction
- 5 3.6 Waterfall
- 6 4.5 Right at Falls Loop junction and right at North Trail junction
- 7 5.4 Straight at first lateral to North Boundary Trail junction
- 8 5.9 Straight at second lateral to North Boundary Trail junction
- 9 6.4 Straight at third lateral to North Boundary Trail junction
- 10 6.9 Left at Fern Canyon junction
- 11 7.1 Return to Fern Canyon Trailhead

Lost Coast Trail: Needle Rock to Bear Harbor

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Backpacking, Running

LENGTH & TIME: 6.2 miles, 2–4 hours

VERTICAL FEET: +575'/-750'

DIFFICULTY: 1 2 **3** 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Out & Back

START & FINISH: N39° 56.569' W123° 57.871'

FEATURES: Beach, Flora, Wildflowers, Wildlife, Views, Historical Interest, Secluded, Backcountry

FACILITIES: Campgrounds Nearby, Restrooms, Visitor Center

While much of the time hikers spend on the 29-mile south section of the Lost Coast Trail is in the forest, this part travels through mostly open terrain, with stunning ocean scenery on the way to one of the most scenic spots on the Lost Coast: Bear Harbor. Thanks to a trailhead a long way from anywhere—requiring a final approach on a 3.5-mile, narrow, steep, and unpaved access road—you may have a good chance for some solitude.

Abundant marine wildlife potentially seen on this trip includes harbor seals, sea lions, migrating gray whales in spring, and numerous species of tide-pool creatures. On land, you may see black-tailed deer or Roosevelt elk. The skies are often filled with a profusion of birds, including brown pelicans, black oystercatchers, cormorants, sandpipers, terns, gulls, ravens, and an occasional osprey or bald eagle.

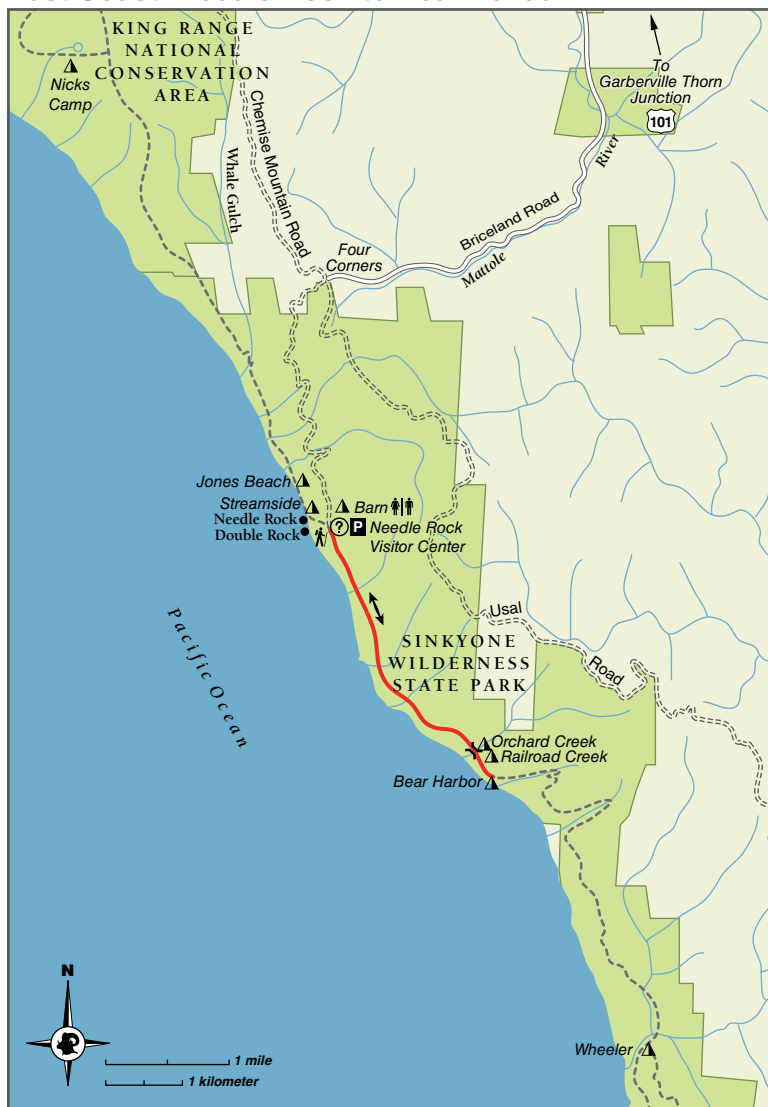
The remote location and resulting potential for solitude belie the size of the human population the area once boasted in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with a dairy near Needle Rock, a wharf and narrow-gauge railroad operating out of Bear Harbor, and a lumber mill at Usal Beach. While most of the human activity is long gone, the Needle Rock Visitor Center occupies the old dairy's ranch house.

Because it's an inland route, tides are of no concern on this section of the Lost Coast Trail. Hikers should be aware, however, that rattlesnakes, although uncommonly seen, are present in this community, as are poison oak and ticks (particularly in spring).

Best Times

Even though the Lost Coast Trail can be hiked anytime the weather is accommodating, spring and fall are typically the best seasons. While temperatures

Lost Coast: Needle Rock to Bear Harbor



are generally moderate during summer months, fog often drapes the Northern California coastline with an omnipresent veil. Along with typically clearer skies, spring offers the bonus of a vibrantly colorful array of wildflowers on the low bluffs above the beach from mid-April through May. The annual migration of California gray whales occurs during late winter and early spring. Fall also offers generally clear weather, with the characteristic dried grasses of the Golden State replacing the spring flowers. Ticks seem to be less pervasive in autumn as well.

Finding the Trail

Leave US 101 in Garberville at Exit 639B, and follow Redwood Drive 2.5 miles north to the small town of Redway. Drive west on Briceland Road, which becomes Mendocino County Road 435, and proceed 12.5 miles to Thorn Junction (where the road becomes Shelter Cove Road if you were to continue straight). Turn left to stay on Briceland and continue 9.75 miles, passing through the small community of Whitethorn. Continue straight on Briceland Road at an intersection with Usal Road. Beyond this intersection, the last 3.5 miles are unpaved, narrow, steep, winding, and possibly impassable during wet weather. Plan on a 1-hour drive from Garberville to the Needle Rock Visitor Center, where there is a nominal parking fee (\$6 in 2022).

Trail Description

From the Needle Rock Visitor Center, ►1 follow the course of Briceland Road, a narrow dirt road that at one time provided vehicle access to Orchard Creek Camp. Due to ongoing safety issues, the road has been closed to motorized travel for several years, leaving access solely to pedestrians and equestrians. For 2.7 miles, the old road rolls up and down, crossing Flat Rock Creek and passing the promontory of High Tip. Beautiful ocean views are frequent accompaniments to the journey, as are numerous bird, seal, and sea lion sightings. The road ends at a large parking area, ►2 with Orchard Creek Camp a short walk upstream along a trickling brook.



Bear Harbor on the *Lost Coast Trail*



Beyond the old parking area, singletrack trail makes a bridged crossing of Orchard Creek and then heads downstream 0.2 mile to Railroad Creek Camp, ►3 with three developed campsites tucked beneath eucalyptus trees. Continue across Railroad Creek on a bridge, and proceed another 0.2 mile downstream on pleasantly graded tread to Bear Harbor, ►4 which provides by far the most scenic of the campsites in the area, with four sites boasting fine views of the ocean. At the conclusion of your visit, retrace your steps to Needle Rock.



POINT OF INTEREST

Bear Harbor

As remote and wild as the Lost Coast seems today, the area was once the western terminus of the Bear Harbor & Eel River Railroad, as still evidenced by the rusted rails dangling over the rocks on the north side of Bear Harbor. A small wharf was completed in 1885 for shipping tanbark and railroad ties. Construction of a 10-mile railroad connecting Bear Harbor to a site near Indian Creek began in 1893. Moody, the terminus, was named for Lew Moody, who built a hotel and saloon nearby. The Southern Humboldt Lumber Company took over the railroad in 1902 for the purposes of transporting lumber. A 7.5-mile extension of the line to a mill and millpond at Andersonia (across the river from present-day Piercy) was finished in 1905. A new, larger wharf at Bear Harbor was also built.

Although logs were eventually delivered to the millpond via the railroad, a series of unfortunate events prevented the mill from producing any lumber. Harvey Anderson, the president of the lumber company, died in 1905 after being struck in the head by a timber brace pulled by a steam engine. Tax problems, right-of-way issues, and, finally, damage from the Great Earthquake of 1906 halted milling operations before they could begin. New buyers were prevented from restarting the operation, thanks to subsequent litigation and a damaging flood during the winter of 1925–26, which broke the millpond's dam and sent logs into the Eel River.

Ultimately, the Southern Humboldt Lumber Company's legacy was a million-dollar mill that never milled. The railroad's locomotives were later restored and placed at Fort Humboldt State Park. Andersonia became a ghost town but was used temporarily as a construction camp during the building of US 101.



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at Needle Rock Visitor Center
- 2 2.7 Orchard Creek Camp
- 3 3.1 Bear Harbor
- 4 6.2 Return to Needle Rock Visitor Center

Franklin K. Lane Loop

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking,
Child-Friendly

LENGTH & TIME: 0.5 mile, ½ hour

VERTICAL FEET: Nominal

DIFFICULTY: 1 **2** 3 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Loop

START & FINISH: N40° 12.892'
W123° 47.169'

FEATURES: Redwoods, Wildflowers

FACILITIES: Picnic Area, Nearby
Campgrounds

This short, virtually flat loop trail is many people's introduction to the wonders of the coast redwoods. This is the first significant grove in Humboldt Redwoods State Park that is encountered by visitors coming from the major population centers in the south.

Best Time

The trail is open year-round. As the first path encountered by northbound motorists on the Avenue of the Giants, the Franklin K. Lane day-use area receives considerable interest, despite the lack of restrooms. As with redwood groves in general, spring offers an added sprinkling of color from wildflowers.

Finding the Trail

A sign marks the turnout for the Franklin K. Lane parking area on the east side of Avenue of the Giants at milepost 28.6, just north of the community of Phillipsville. Northbound drivers should leave US 101 at Exit 645 and drive 2.8 miles. Southbound motorists should leave US 101 at Exit 650 and follow signs for Miranda/Phillipsville, which will lead you to Avenue of the Giants in about half a mile; turn right onto Avenue of the Giants and drive 1.9 miles. The trailhead is equipped with picnic tables and bearproof trash bins. Attached to a bench in the picnic area is a memorial plaque to Franklin K. Lane, a California politician and first president of the Save the Redwoods League. Lane also served under President Woodrow Wilson as secretary of the interior, helping establish the National Park Service.

The park has three campgrounds: Hidden Springs, Burlington, and Albee Creek. In the community of Myers Flat is the privately owned Giant Redwoods RV and Camp.

Franklin K. Lane Loop



Trail Description

From the parking area ►1 the trail heads north into a shady forest with initially very little ground cover, soon reaching a junction ►2 at the bottom of a low berm. Go straight ahead and climb quickly to the top of the berm, where redwood sorrel and ferns suddenly carpet the forest floor. This part of the grove is blessed with some fairly impressive redwood trees, as you pass through a sawed gap in a large downed specimen and continue toward a hill. Keen eyes will spot



the roadbed of the former alignment of the highway, which was relocated to its present position in the early 1900s. Proceed to the base of the hill, and then curve along the base, following a counterclockwise loop through the forest.

Eventually, the trail reaches a downed redwood near a four-by-four post with directional arrows. Generally, the redwoods seem to be less impressive on the west side of the grove, but you do pass a massive downed sequoia on the way to the close of the loop. ►3 From there, retrace your steps to the parking area. ►4 Watch for poison oak, especially on the second half of the loop.



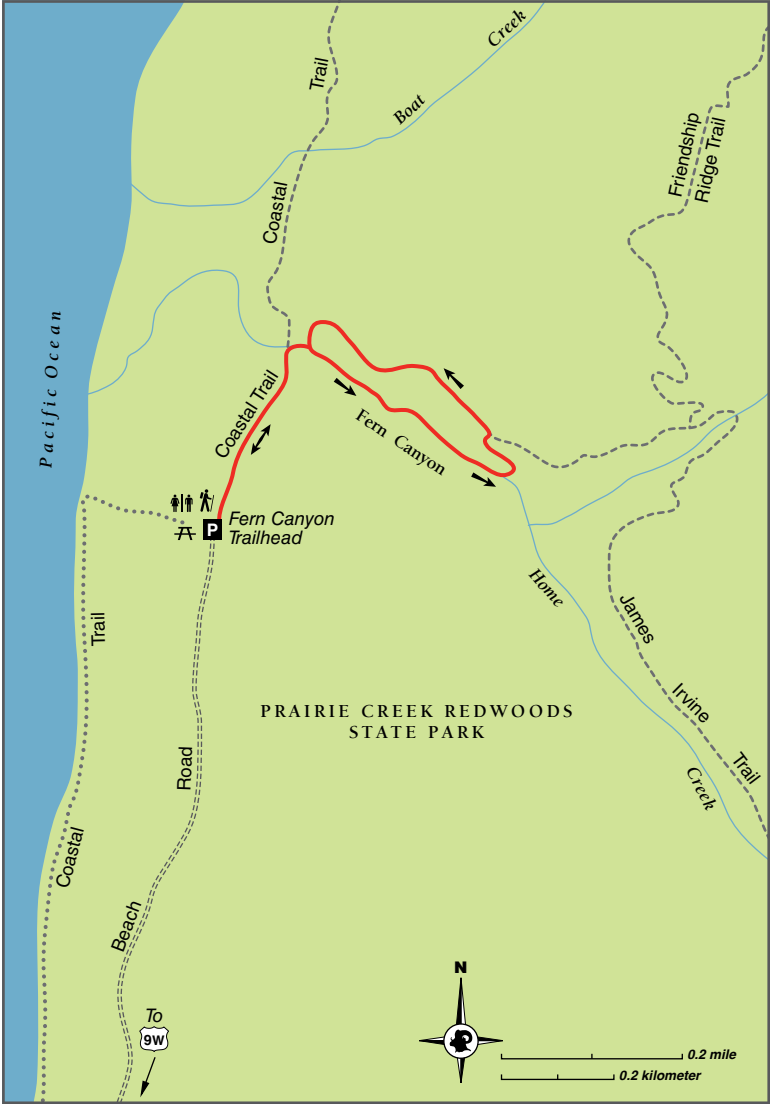
MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at Franklin K. Lane Trailhead
- 2 0.1 Straight at loop junction
- 3 0.3 Straight at loop junction
- 4 0.4 Return to trailhead

Franklin K. Lane was the first president of the Save the Redwoods League.



Fern Canyon Loop



Fern Canyon Loop

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Running

LENGTH & TIME: 1.6 miles, 2 hours

VERTICAL FEET: +175'/-175'

DIFFICULTY: 1 2 **3** 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Loop

START & FINISH: N41° 24.045'
W124° 03.929'

FEATURES: Stream, Beach,
Redwoods, Flora

FACILITIES: Campground, Picnic
Area, Restroom

The short Fern Canyon Loop shows visitors a wide range of highlights, including ocean beach, a lush stream canyon, and the park's namesake, the coast redwood. The 40-foot-tall canyon walls of Home Creek were formed in the 1800s by the destructive practice of hydraulic mining. Nature has done much to heal those wounds by carpeting the vertical walls with a solid mat of ferns, creating a stunning visual delight. Starting near the beach, the loop soon winds upstream through this magical gorge and then climbs above the canyon to return through a brief stretch of redwood and then spruce forest.

Best Time

Although the Fern Canyon Trail is technically open year-round, during the rainy season the access road may be impassable to many vehicles at the creek crossings above Gold Bluffs Beach. Also, because the numerous plank bridges used for stream crossings in Fern Canyon are in place only during summer, hikers should expect wet fords the rest of the year. Foggy conditions are often prevalent in summer, especially in the morning, less so during spring and fall.

Finding the Trail

From the Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center, drive north on US 101 for 4.6 miles, passing through the town of Orick, to a left turn onto Davison Road/Gold Bluffs Beach Road. Follow the road across Elk Meadow past the left-hand road into the day-use parking area (which has vault toilets and picnic tables) to the end of the asphalt. Follow the narrow dirt road through a dark and gloomy section of forest, which opens up on the approach to the coast.

Reach the Gold Bluffs Beach Entrance Station, where you'll have to show a permit in season and pay a day-use fee (see page 191) unless you have a national-park or state-park pass. From there, the road parallels Gold Bluffs Beach and passes a day-use parking area and campground on the way to the Fern Canyon Trailhead parking area at the end of the road. The road crosses a pair of streams that may be impassable when the water is high.

Trail Description

From the trailhead, ►1 follow a section of the Coastal Trail through alders for 0.2 mile to Home Creek, immediately downstream from the mouth of Fern Canyon. On the far side of the creek is a junction ►2 between the continuation of the northbound Coastal Trail and the James Irvine Trail, headed uphill (the return route). Rather than proceed on either of these trails, turn upstream and follow the gravel streambed into Fern Canyon.



Follow a nearly level course over the gravel into a steep-walled gorge draped with ferns, a radical departure from the typical V-shaped, steeply dropping canyons of the Northern California coast. Fern Canyon feels similar to a Columbia River Gorge side canyon. Along with the most common five-finger fern, this area hosts several other varieties, including bladder, bracken, California wood, deer, lady, leather, licorice, sword, and woodwardia. From June to September, planks are installed for the numerous crossings of Home Creek on the way up the serpentine canyon. Outside of those times, be prepared for wet feet—wear

Hikers in Fern Canyon



waterproof footwear or sturdy sandals. Farther on, the walls rise even higher from the creekbed, topping out at more than 60 feet at their highest point.

The enchanting journey eventually comes to an end after about a half mile, where upstream the canyon assumes a more typical demeanor. From there, a signed path makes a steep but brief winding climb up the left-hand hillside, via numerous wood-beam stairs, to a junction ►3 with the James Irvine Trail.

Turn left and follow dirt tread back down toward the beach, crossing several bridges and boardwalks on the way through predominantly Sitka spruce forest. At the bottom of the descent, you reach the Coastal Trail junction. ►4 Turn left and retrace your steps 0.2 mile to the parking lot. ►5



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at Fern Canyon Trailhead
- 2 0.2 Right at Fern Canyon and Coastal Trail junction
- 3 0.8 Left at James Irvine Trail junction
- 4 1.4 Left at Fern Canyon and Coastal Trail junction
- 5 1.6 Return to Fern Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL 51

Yurok Loop & Hidden Beach

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Running,
Child-Friendly

LENGTH & TIME: 2.3 miles,
1–2 hours

VERTICAL FEET: +200'/-200'

DIFFICULTY: 1 2 3 4 5

TRAIL TYPE: Semiloop

START & FINISH: N41° 35.654'
W124° 05.951'

FEATURES: Beach, Views,
Wildflowers

FACILITIES: Restrooms, Picnic Area

The Yurok Loop, in an outlying section of Redwood National Park, visits an area once inhabited by a tribe of Native Americans, although almost all evidence of their presence has disappeared over the years. The striking scenery includes beautiful ocean vistas and patches of dense coastal foliage. By adding the out-and-back trip to Hidden Beach, hikers can access a remote stretch of sandy beach and ocean surf backdropped by picturesque sea stacks.

Best Time

The trail is open year-round. However, hiking it during and immediately after winter storms can be wet and miserable. Wildflowers add splashes of color to the hillsides in spring and early summer.

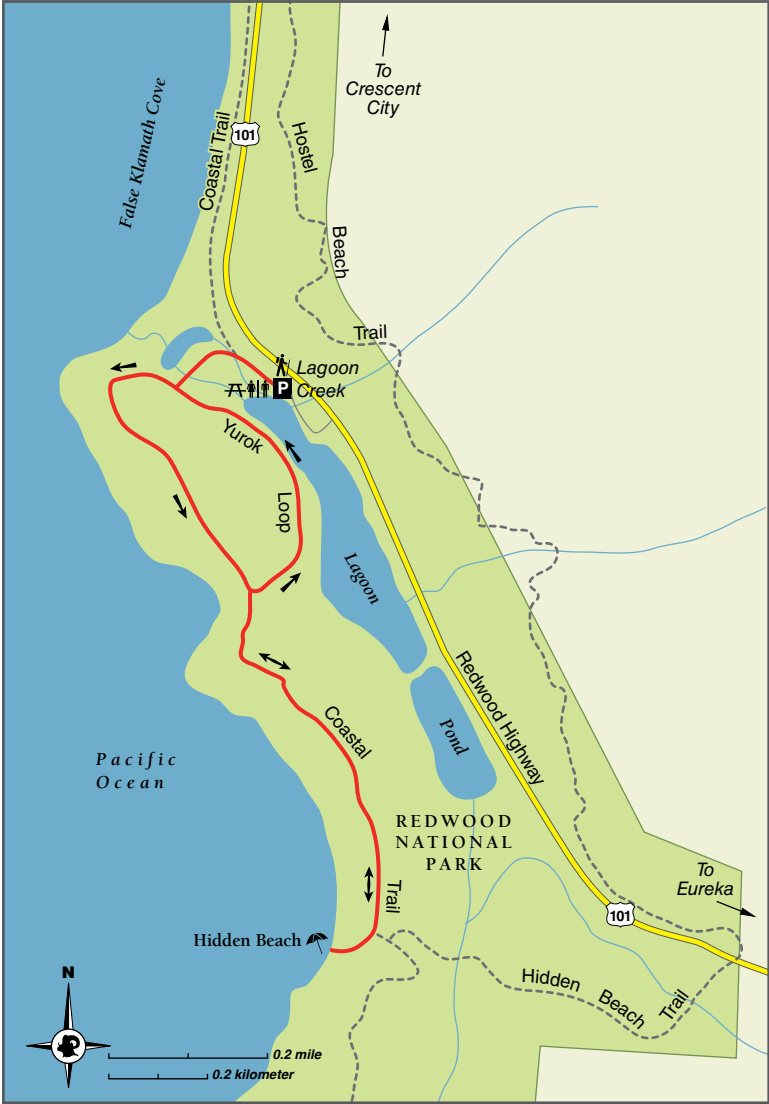
Finding the Trail

About 14 miles south of Crescent City and 5 miles north of the town of Klamath, leave US 101 at the signed turnoff for Lagoon Creek Picnic Area, which is at the north end of Lagoon Pond and just south of False Klamath Cove. The nearest public campground is south of the trailhead within a section of Redwood National Park. Free, first-come, first-served Flint Ridge Backcountry Camp has 11 sites (without water). There are several private RV campgrounds along the Klamath River. To the north of the trailhead, within Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, is Mill Creek Campground.

Trail Description

From the northwest side of the parking lot ►1 take a wide track into mixed forest to a ►2 Y-junction, where the northbound Coastal Trail veers right. Veer left, soon crossing a bridge over the outlet from Lagoon Pond. Following an old roadbed, the trail passes through open terrain where a Yurok village once stood. Soon you reach a second junction, ►3 with the beginning of the Yurok Loop.

Yurok Loop & Hidden Beach



- H** Take the right-hand path, and dive into a tunnel of coastal vegetation until you break out into the open with a stunning view of the ocean highlighted by several sea stacks. A park bench nearby invites passersby to linger and enjoy the view. Beyond, the trail moves into viewless forest and continues southeast to a junction **►4** between the Coastal Trail, continuing southbound, and the Yurok Loop, which circles back toward the trailhead (your return route).
- Proceed ahead on the Coastal Trail, with fine views of the beach and the ocean. Pass a short lateral on the right leading down to a camping area beneath



View from *a section of the Coastal Trail*

a grove of spruce trees. At 0.5 mile from the previous junction, you reach a junction ►5 with the trail to Hidden Beach.

Turn right and make a short, steep descent to a pile of driftwood, followed by a stretch of boulders and finally the sand of Hidden Beach. ►6 Because the area is about 0.5 mile from the closest road, you may have it all to yourself.



After enjoying Hidden Beach, retrace your steps back to the junction with the Coastal Trail, turn left, ►7 and head back 0.5 mile to the junction ►8 with the Yurok Loop. Turning right onto the loop, the trail bounces up and down before smoothing out along the northwest bank of Lagoon Pond. The alder-filled forest is thick enough to block any views of the lily pad–covered water. After 0.4 mile, you close the loop section at the junction, ►9 turn right, and turn right again at the next junction, ►10 soon returning to the trailhead. ►11



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at trailhead
- 2 0.05 Straight at northbound Coastal Trail junction
- 3 0.1 Right at Yurok Loop junction
- 4 0.7 Straight at Yurok Loop junction
- 5 1.2 Right at Hidden Beach junction
- 6 1.25 Hidden Beach
- 7 1.3 Left at Coastal Trail junction
- 8 1.8 Right at Yurok Loop junction
- 9 2.2 Right at junction
- 10 2.25 Right at northbound Coastal Trail junction
- 11 2.3 Return to trailhead

Boy Scout Tree Trail

TRAIL USE: Day Hiking, Running**LENGTH & TIME:** 5.6 miles,
2–4 hours**VERTICAL FEET:** +750'/-750'**DIFFICULTY:** 1 2 3 **4** 5**TRAIL TYPE:** Out & Back**START & FINISH:** N41° 46.138'
W124° 06.587'**FEATURES:** Waterfall, Redwoods**FACILITIES:** None

Given its distance from the megapopulation centers of Northern California, you would think Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park would receive fewer visitors than the more popular redwood parks farther south. But the Boy Scout Tree Trail seems to defy convention, as the small parking area is often full on summer weekends. The only trail to enter the heart of the park's backcountry, it traverses through attractive groves of old-growth redwoods on the way to an immense coastal sequoia and a scenic waterfall. The trail's distance from the highway allows visitors the opportunity to enjoy the redwoods the way they should be enjoyed—in peace and quiet.

As redwoods tend to have shallow root systems, intermittent stretches of the Boy Scout Tree Trail have an abundance of bare tree roots coursing across the tread. These can be quite slippery, especially when wet—watch your footing!

Note: Howland Hill Road is regraded annually sometime during the spring, requiring about two weeks of work to complete. During this time, the road is gated past the park boundary at the intersection with the Pellum Ridge Trail road on weekdays, which requires an extra 1.9-mile walk to access the trailhead. Contact the Hiouchi Visitor Center (707-464-6101) about current conditions if you plan on hiking this trail on a weekday during the month of May.

Best Time

The trail can be hiked at any time during the year, although rainy spells in winter make the tread muddy and unappealing. The waterfall is typically at a dramatic zenith in early spring.

Finding the Trail

From US 101 in Crescent City, head east on Elk Valley Road 1 mile, and turn right onto Howland Hill Road. Follow this road 2.7 miles to the trailhead parking area, which is 0.2 mile past the Nickerson Ranch Trailhead. There is enough parking for about a half dozen vehicles along the road.

Across from the trailhead are two vault toilets, bearproof trash and recycling containers, and handicapped parking.

Boy Scout Tree Trail



Trail Description



A gently graded trail ►1 leads away from the road into old-growth redwood forest, soon crossing a wood-railed bridge over a sluggish stream. Climb stiffly before the grade eases again and a couple of massive downed redwoods provide classic examples of plant succession in the redwood forest. A lengthy descent leads to a set of steps down to a bridged crossing of Jordan Creek, 1.6 miles from the trailhead.

Ascend a set of steps and tackle a short climb, followed by a rolling traverse through the forest. Soon, a couple of very short-legged switchbacks guide you down to a short bridge over a side stream and then around the nose of a ridge above the creek. Follow the creek downstream, and then veer into a side drainage and cross another bridge. Beyond the bridge, work your way back into the main channel and reach an unmarked junction ►2 with the short lateral to the Boy Scout Tree on the right. A short path zigzags up the steep hillside to the base of the twin-trunked giant.

Continue northwest from the junction, soon crossing two more bridges and rounding a hillside on the way to Fern Falls. ►3 Reach the base of the falls, which spills down black rock bordered by moss and ferns—a most picturesque sight. Nearby, tall old-growth redwoods stand guard. After enjoying the falls, retrace your steps to the trailhead. ►4



MILESTONES

- 1 0.0 Start at trailhead
- 2 2.5 Boy Scout Tree
- 3 2.7 Fern Falls
- 4 5.4 Return to trailhead

Rhododendron and redwoods on the Boy Scout Tree Trail



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today, there's a trail
for you on California's
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