TRAILS OF NORTHERN SAN MATEO COUNTY

Map 1: Daly City/Pacifica to Hwy 92

LEGEND

Trails/Trail Use

- Paved Path or Trail (bicycles & hikers)
- Multiuse Fire Road (bicycles, horses & hikers)
- Multiuse Trail (bicycles, horses & hikers)
- Fire Road (hiking & horses, no bicycles)
- Trail (hiking & horses, no bicycles)
- Fire Road (hiking & bicycles, no horses)
- Paved Trail or Path (hiking only)
- Dirt Trail or Path (hiking only)
- Stairway
- Service Road (restricted) Not a Trail
- Route on beach
- Route on street/sidewalk
- Planned future trail
- California Coastal Trail
- Bay Area Ridge Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail
- Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail
- 0.3 Distance in Miles

Symbols

- Trailhead
- Parking
- Ranger Station
- Campground
- Group Camp
- Picnic Area
- Drinking Water
- Building
- Museum or Visitor Center
- Old-growth redwoods
- Restroom
- School
- Library
- Gate
- No Access
- Views
- Steep
- Dog Play Areas

Land Use/Habitats

- State Park
- City Park
- Urban
- Businesses
- Shopping Center
- Grassland
- Coastal Scrub
- Forest
- Beach
- Marsh

True North / Magnetic North 13.43° EAST (2015)

0 0.5 1.0 MILES

0 0.5 1.0 KILOMETERS

0 1000 2000 FEET

Scale 1:35,700
Contour interval 50 feet (for most of map 1) with 200-foot index contours
Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) 1000 meter grid, WGS 84, Zone 10S

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Established in 1972, GGNRA is our nation's most-visited National Park. Originally the park's southern outpost was Fort Funston, but it expanded into San Mateo County beginning with Sweeney Ridge and Milagra Ridge in 1984.

Milagra Ridge, usd as a military base during WWII and the Cold War, preserves coastal prairie and coastal scrub habitat and two species of endangered butterflies. Easy trails have great coastal views.

From atop **Sweeney Ridge,** Gaspar de Portola's 1769 expedition discovered San Francisco Bay (and Ohlone Indian villages all around it). The Anza expedition returned in 1776 to establish San Francisco and Mission Dolores. On this broad-shouldered ridge you can discover a piece of the natural world–brush rabbits, coyotes, wildflowers, and weather–still thriving at the edge of the urban Bay Area.

Added in 2002, **Mori Point** preserves a dramatic headland at the south tip of Pacifica's Sharp Park Beach. The marshes adjoining Laguna Salada are home to endangered San Francisco garter snakes and red-legged frogs.

Added in 2014, **Rancho Corral de Tierra** preserves rugged ridges and canyons on the south slope of Montara Mountain. Existing trails on old ranch roads are sometimes steep; GGNRA is working with local communities to develop better access.

Daly City

San Francisco's **Ocean Beach** extends four miles into Daly City, below looming, erosive sandstone cliffs. The northern access is the sand ladder at GGNRA's Fort Funston; the southern access is Mussel Rock, where the San Andreas Fault comes ashore through a remarkably ill-sited capped landfill (watch for coyotes). In good conditions you can walk the whole beach, but be alert–the beach is impassible in storms and very high tides.

San Bruno Mountain State and County Park has a variety of habitats thanks to its west-east orientation. It is home to more than a dozen rare and endangered plants and three federally listed endangered butterflies. Something is in bloom most of the year. Fog keeps the brushy Saddle area and Radio Ridge moist much of the year, while the grasslands on the Southeast Ridge turn golden in summer. Nearby, the north-facing canyons above Brisbane are wooded in live oak, bay laurel, and buckeye.

Well-built trails at the core of the park circle the Saddle and ascend to Radio Ridge. You can also drive or bike up Radio Road to the summit, and amble east along the Southeast Ridge for several miles with uninterrupted views.

Pacifica Parks & Beaches

Pacific Manor Beach is tough to love; a narrow strip of sand best reached by a ramp/stairs from Pacific View Apartments. Northward the beach extends nearly to Mussel Rock; southward is quickly squeezed by cliffs and riprap.

Scenic **Sharp Park State Beach** stretches from Pacifica's popular fishing pier to GGNRA's Mori Point (described above). The paved path along the seawall continues as a well-trod dirt embankment overlooking Sharp Park golf course and Laguna Salada.

Rockaway Beach is bisected by protruding hotels and restaurants, but the cove's two short beaches, crashing surf and rocky headlands are enjoyed by walkers, surfers and restaurant patrons.

Families frolick on wide, flat **Pacifica State Beach (Linda Mar Beach);** surfers hover offshore. Near the north end are willows and hummocky dunes which are a nesting area for snowy plovers. Cottages climbing San Pedro Point add to the classic beach town feel.

San Pedro Valley County Park includes several fine trails on the north slopes of craggy Montara Mountain, plus an informative visitor center open on weekends. The picnic area is often sunny when the rest of Pacifica is foggy.

Coastal scrub habitat on the park's lower slopes includes blue blossom, coffee berry, toyon, ocean spray, and silktassel. Higher up Montara Mountain the hardwood chaparral habitat blends manzanita, chinquapin, toyon, hazelnut, and huckleberry.

Montara and Moss Beach

McNee Ranch, the inland portion of **Montara State Beach,** has a simple trail network of twisty old roads that were precursors to today's Hwy. 1. You can walk or bike from Pacifica to Montara, or climb 1898-foot Montara Mountain for great views of the coast. The summit's unusual, weathered granite outcrops and hardy chaparral lend a high-altitude feel, whether you are in the fog or high above it.

San Mateo County's **Devils Slide Trail** follows scenic old Hwy. 1 with dramatic geology, views, and nesting seabirds. Activists defeated Caltrans' proposed 4-mile Devils Slide Bypass in the 1990s. The Tom Lantos Tunnel, which opened in 2013, bypasses just the slide itself.

Nearby, Pacifica Land Trust has restored **Pedro Point Headlands'** motorcycle-scarred coastal scrub habitat, and built trails to an overlook above Mussel Rock.

Gray Whale Cove is a sheltered, clothing-optional beach bound by tall granite cliffs. It's also a trailhead for McNee Ranch. Crossing busy Hwy. 1 can be difficult; be careful!

Montara State Beach is the first big beach south of Devil's Slide. The mile-long beach has coarse, yellow granite sand and the south end has unusual granite tide pools.

Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in Moss Beach has some of California's finest tidepools. The broad, rocky intertidal zone is home to sea stars, anemones, snails, hermit crabs, and other creatures. Seals sometimes bask near shore. Collecting and disturbing marine life is prohibited; access to some areas may be restricted to protect the reef from over-use. Groups of 10 or more must make a reservation before visiting.

Pillar Point Bluff is a recent addition to the Reserve, thanks to Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). Trails amble along the broad, uplifted ridge. Pillar Point is occupied by an Air Force missile tracking station for Vandenberg AFB.

Quarry Park is a new, 517-acre County park in El Granada. Trails follow a network of hillside carriage roads laid out in 1906 as part of Daniel Burham's plan for the town. Vegetation is dense eucalyptus with poison oak and pampas grass; there are occasional views. The park adjoins and may someday connect to Rancho Corral de Tierra.

Northern Foothills and Bayside

San Francisco's **Peninsula Watershed** collects 10% of the City's water supply from local streams; its three big reservoirs also store water from the East Bay and Sierras delivered by the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct. Shaped by the San Andreas Fault, the linear valleys and ridges are cloaked in a tapestry of habitats from coastal scrub and manzanita to oak, Douglas fir and redwood groves.

To protect water quality and habitat, most of the 23,000-acre watershed is closed to the public. Access to gray service roads is restricted. SFPUC schuedules frequent docent–led walks and rides along the Fifield-Cahill Ridges. Future access may change to an individual permit system. Nearby parks (and I-280) overlookthe watershed and provide access to similar terrain.

GGNRA holds a scenic easement over the entire Watershed. On the east edge is a scenic and recreation easement where San Mateo County's paved **San Andreas** and **Sawyer Camp trails** are popular with joggers, bicyclists, and hikers. These are part of the **Crystal Springs Regional Trail.**

Junipero Serra County Park marks the beginning of warmer, drier, inland habitats. On its lower slopes, Coast live oak and Bay laurel groves foster an understory of soaproot, iris, and poison oak. Near the summit, eucalyptus and pine shade picnic areas which offer views of the Bay and the airport. The east slope preserves a fragment of the flowery meadows which once extended to the Bay.

Coyote Point Recreation Area in San Mateo overlooks San Francisco Bay, and features picnic areas, a playground, wind-surfing/kayaking launch areas, a swimming beach, and marina. At the top of the hill is CuriOdyssey, an excellent hands-on children's nature and science museum; and adjacent wildlife center with small mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles. You can follow the Bay Trail for several miles in each direction, from Millbrae to Foster City.

On your Visit:

Take only pictures, leave only footprints. Do not collect plants, animals or minerals.

Use designated trails to help protect fragile habitat.

Travel at a safe speed: no more than 15 miles per hour; slow 5 miles per hour (or stop) to pass others.

Swimming is not recommended. The Pacific Ocean is dangerous due to sudden large waves, undertow currents, and cold water. Beaches do not have lifeguards.

Stay back from top and bottom of cliffs.

Learn to recognize and avoid **poison oak** (green or red rounded leaves-of-three) and **stinging nettle** (a tall, spiny mint).

Fires are prohibited except in designated fire rings or grills (bring charcoal or firewood–no wood gathering). At State beaches, fires must be in a container which can hold and carry hot coals (take them with you).

Smoking is generally prohibited on trails due to fire danger.

Overnight:

Most parks are **day-use only.** Stay overnight at:

- **Point Montara Lighthouse Hostel** : 45 dorm beds, 4 private rooms, lounge, kitchen. Closed 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Office open 7:30-9:30 a.m. and 4:30-9:30 p.m. Reservations are essential in summer and on weekends.
- **Francis Beach** (C8): 55 campsites, 2 sites for hikers and cyclists; some accessible sites. Tables, food lockers, fire rings, restroooms, and cold outdoor showers.
- **Sweetwood Group Area** (C7) holds up to 50 people. Call the State Parks camping number to reserve.
- **RV campgrounds** in Pacifica, Pillar Point & Half Moon Bay.
- Coyote Point County Rec. Area has **RV sites** by reservation.
- **Motels, hotels, inns, and bed and breakfasts** between Pacifica and Half Moon Bay, and along US 101 and El Camino Real.

Dogs:

GGNRA currently allows leashed dogs at **Fort Funston, Milagra Ridge, Sweeney Ridge,** and **Rancho Corral de Tierra,** but regulations may change.

State Parks allow leashed dogs only in picnic areas and campgrounds (they must sleep in tents or vehicles), but they are also allowed on trails at Half Moon Bay State Beach and McNee Ranch.

San Mateo County Parks prohibits dogs from most parks, but allows leashed dogs on the Bay Trail at Coyote Point; Devils Slide Trail, the Coastal Trail at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, and trails at Pillar Point Bluff, Mirada Surf, and Quarry Park.

MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District allows leashed dogs only at Pulgas Ridge and Thornewood Preserves.

Check locally about dogs in **city parks.** All parks allow **guide and service dogs** for people with disabilities.

Dogs must be leashed and/or respond to voice control at all times. Don't chase shorebirds or other wildlife.

Cats:

Mountain lions tend to be shy but are occasionally seen in the Santa Cruz Mountains. If you meet one, stay erect, face the lion, make yourself big, don't run, and keep children close. Avoid hiking or running alone, and after dark. Further precautions are posted at many trailheads.

See Map 2