



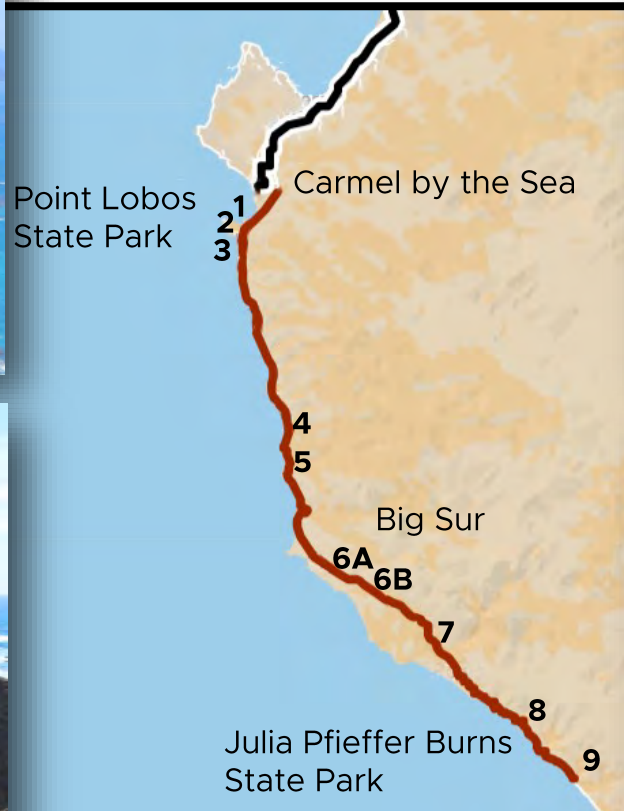
# Hiking Trail Maps from Big Sur to Santa Cruz

[Carmel-by-the-Sea to Big Sur Driving Tour](#)

[Carmel-by-the-Sea to Santa Cruz Driving Tour](#)

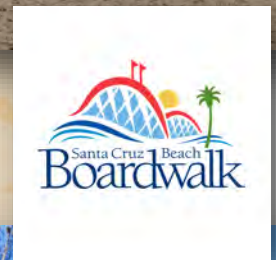
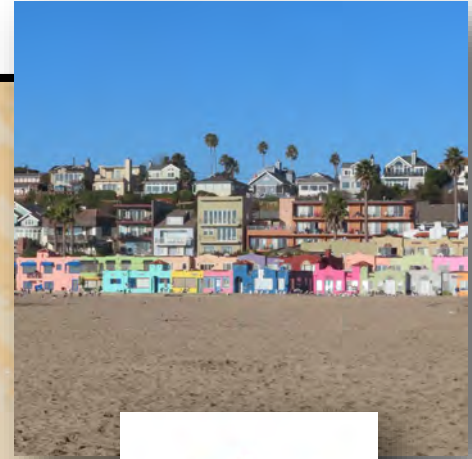


# Carmel-by-the-Sea to Big Sur Hiking Trails



1. [\*\*\*Point Lobos: Whaler's Cove\*\*\*](#)
2. [\*\*\*Point Lobos: Sea Lion Point and Cypress Grove\*\*\*](#)
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9. [\*\*\*Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park: McWay Falls\*\*\*](#)

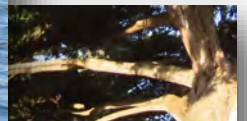
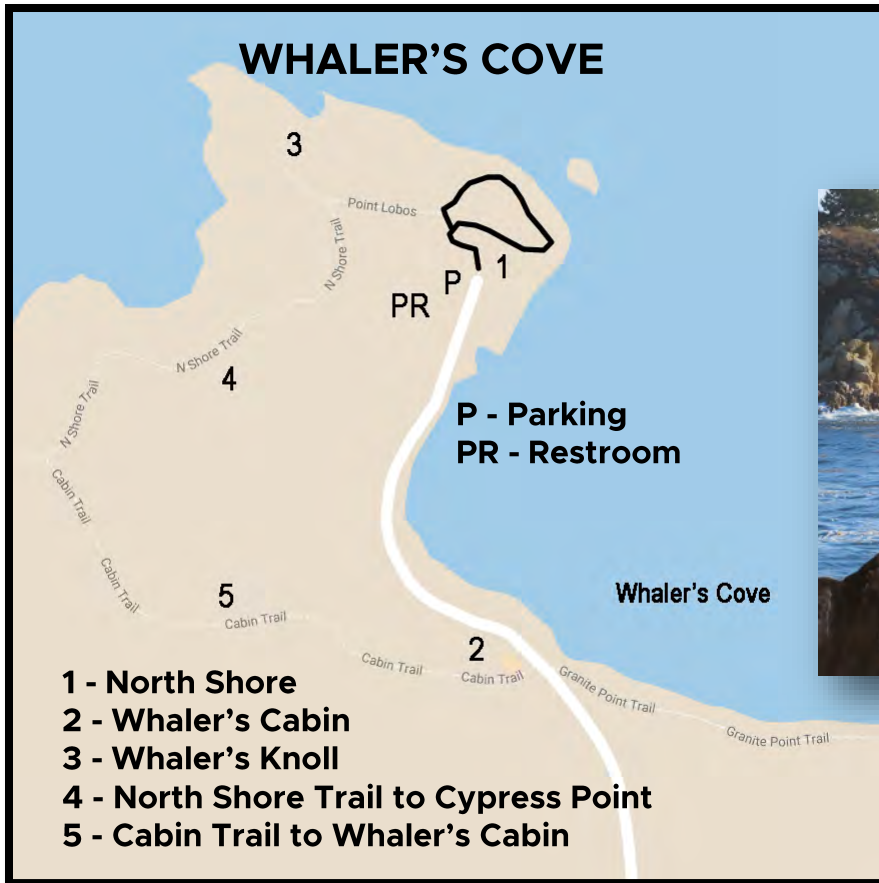
# Carmel-by-the-Sea to Santa Cruz Hiking Trails



10. [\*Ft Ord State Park\*](#)
11. [\*Moon Glow Dairy/Elkhorn Slough\*](#)
12. [\*Forest of Nisene Marks\*](#)
13. [\*Capitola\*](#)
14. [\*Santa Cruz Mission Park\*](#)
15. [\*Natural Bridges State Park\*](#)

# 1. Point Lobos: Whaler's Cove

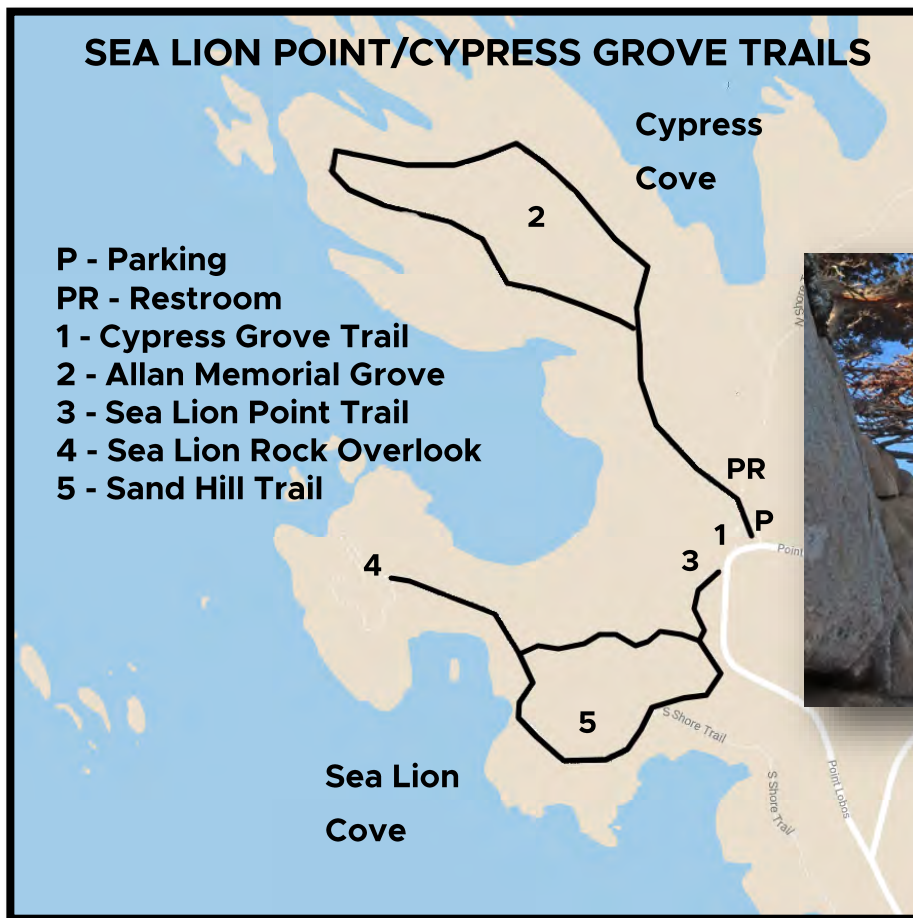
**Highlights:** ♦Point Lobos was one of the major shore whaling and abalone stations along the coast of California from 1862 to 1879. ♦Easy to moderate difficulty hiking trails offering incredible views of Carmel Beach and Pebble Beach ♦Whaler's Cabin Museum, which opens at 9 am when staffing is available, is worth a visit



**Directions:** ♦Park in the parking area to explore the many connected hiking trails. ♦The parking area has a public restroom and informational exhibits for Point Lobos Underwater Reserve a popular scuba diving location. ♦On the north end of the parking lot, the trailhead is clearly marked North Shore Trail. Climb the stairs to the top of the hill then follow the trail to your right around Canary Point. Here you will have views of Carmel-by-the-Sea as well as Whaler's Cove. You may continue off this trail up the hill or finish the loop back at the top of the stairs to the parking area.

## 2. Point Lobos: Sea Lion Point and Cypress Grove

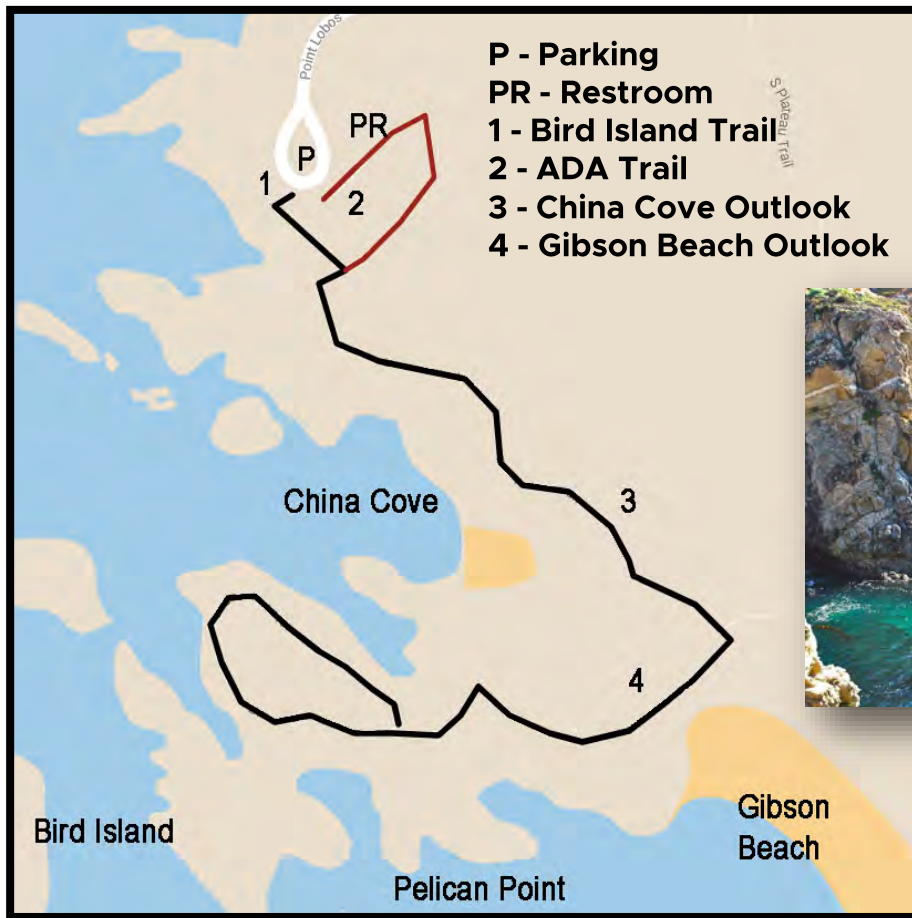
**Highlights:** ♦ The **Cypress Grove Trail** winds through an amazing stand of Monterey cypress, one of the two naturally growing stands remaining on Earth ♦ A second trail leads to **Sea Lion Point** offering some incredible views of the local Sea Lion population. ♦ Public restroom available.



**Directions:** ♦ The **Cypress Grove Trail** starts near the restroom and heads North. Follow this  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile walk through coastal scrub to the **Allan Memorial Grove Loop**. Enter the loop to the right and follow this through the gnarled old cypress grove to the coast. The trail then continues around the point, climb some stone steps to a lookout before continuing around the point with dramatic views over the ocean. ♦ The orange velvety “stuff” you see is *Trentepohlia* an algae that lives symbiotically on the trunks of trees and rocks. ♦ From the southern end of the parking lot near the handicap parking area is the trailhead to **Sea Lion Point**. This trail is a little over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile and is wheelchair accessible. Follow Sea Lion Point out to the coast then return to the parking lot via the **Sand Hill Trail**.

# 3. Point Lobos: Bird Island/China Cove/Gibson Beach

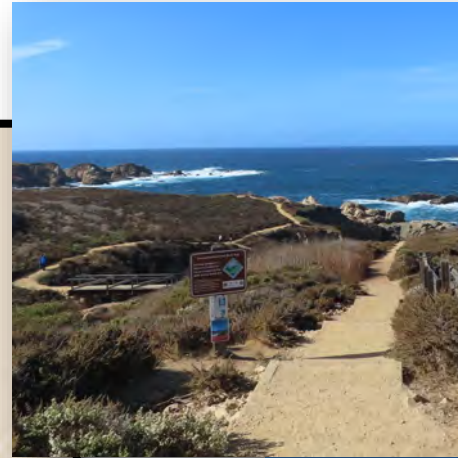
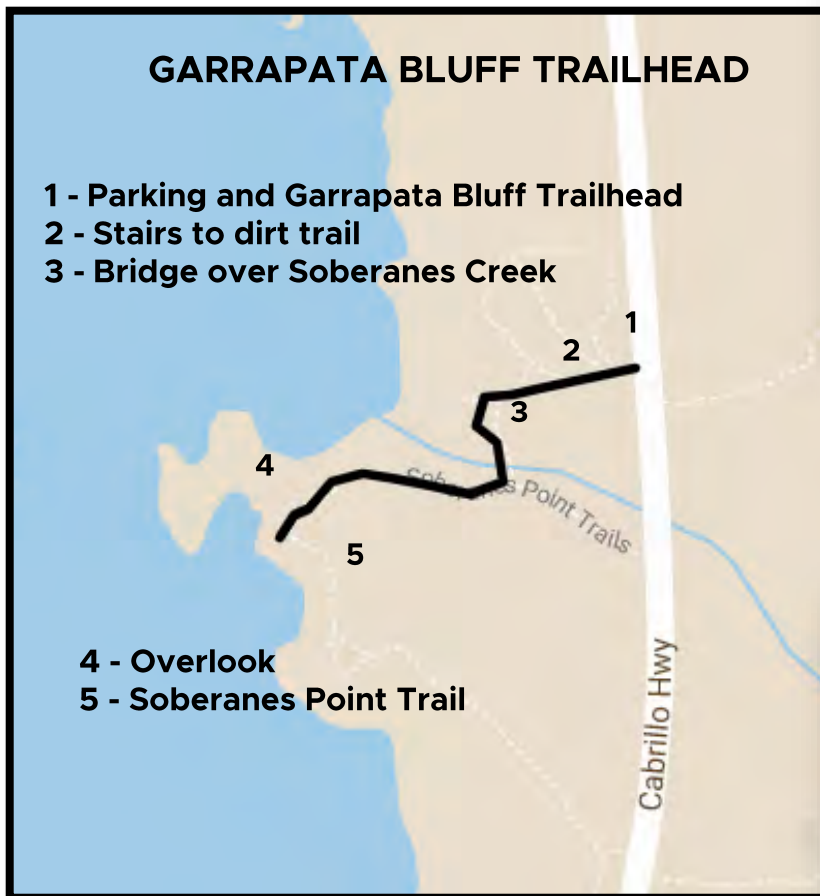
**Highlights:** ♦Enjoy the jade-green waters of China Cove and views of China and Gibson Beach where the harbor seal pups between April and May ♦ADA accessible trail available ♦Public Restrooms



**Directions:** ♦From the parking lot you may use either the level ADA trail or the stair case to reach the top of the hill. ♦From here follow this ¾ mile trail round trip by **China Cove** where brown pelican and Brandt's cormorant nest along the rock wall. Continue straight and then turn right and cross the bridge overlook of Gibson Beach. From here you may follow the trail around a loop to view Bird Island. ♦There are a number of benches to sit and take in the view from various locations along this hike.

## 4. Garrapata Bluff Trailhead

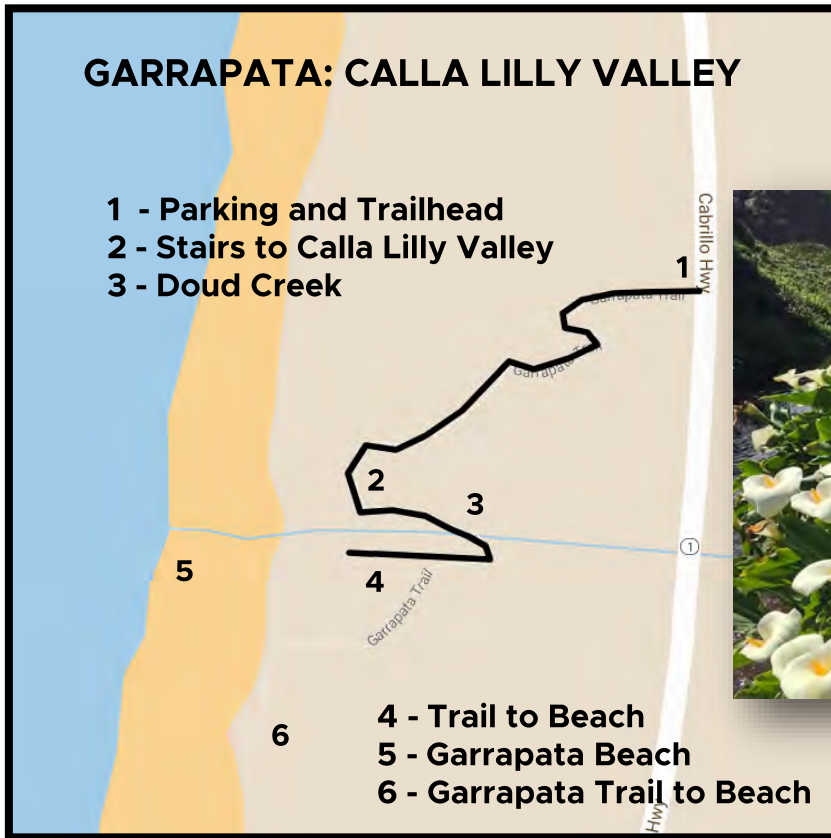
**Highlights:** ♦Garrapata is nestled at the base of the Santa Lucia Range and encompasses several miles along the rocky shoreline. ♦Walk along the coastal bluff to overlook the ocean and offshore sea stacks made up of granitic rock, marine sandstone, shale and volcanic rock. ♦Easy ¼ mile trail with beautiful overlook of the Pacific Ocean



**Directions:** ♦The parking turnout for Garrapata Bluff Trail is on your right as you travel South on Highway 1 after mile marker #66. ♦The trailhead is near the southern end of the parking area. Look for the opening in the fence and take the wooden stairs down to the dirt trail. ♦This trail will fork left across a bridge over Soberanes Creek. Continue along the bluff to the ocean overlook.

## 5. Garrapata: Calla Lilly Valley

**Highlights:** ♦ Easy hike on trails through coastal shrub and California sagebrush to Calla Lily Valley at the foot of a hidden beach and cove. ♦ ½ mile with most spectacular views of Calla Lilies in bloom (**best viewed between February and April**)

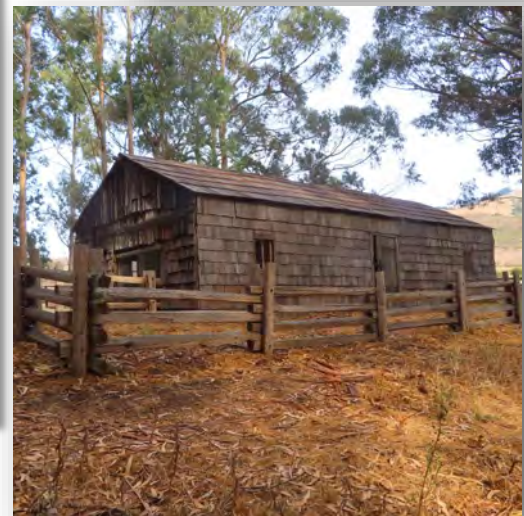
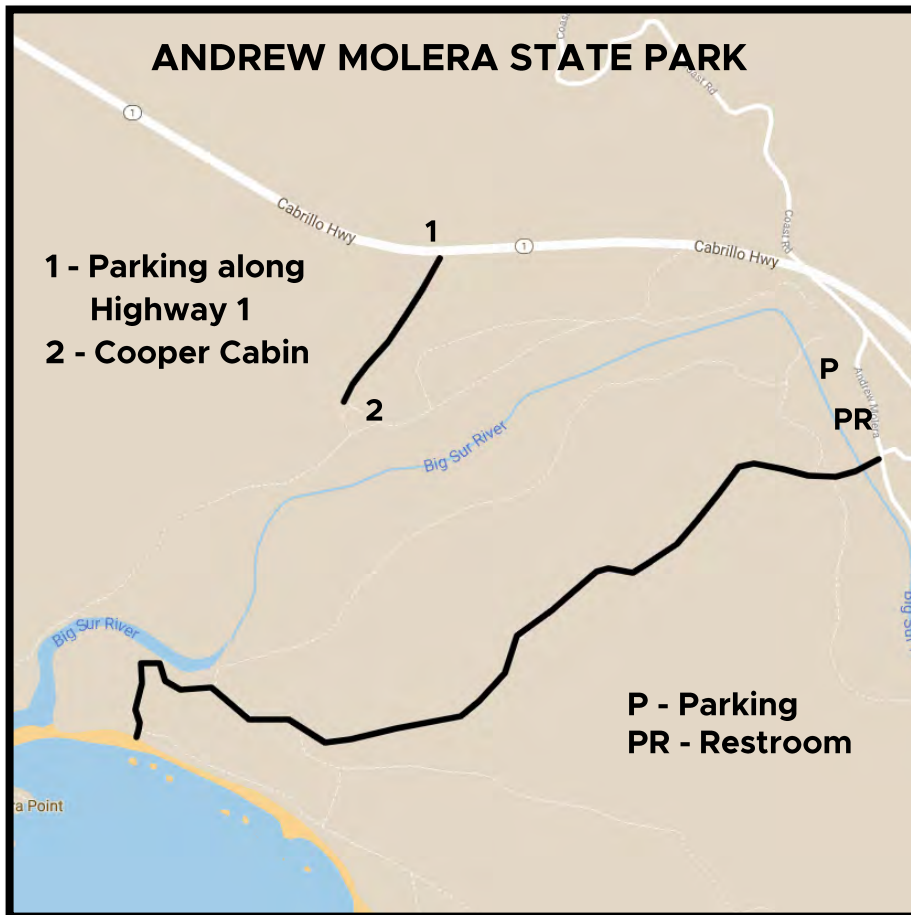


**Directions:** ♦ The parking area for this trailhead is 2 ½ miles south of the Garrapata Bluff Trail and located at this GPS location (36.423663, -121.912374) ♦ The trailhead is located near the southern end of this parking area. The gate is marked with the #18 and is directly across the highway from the private property of Doud Creek Ranch. ♦ Follow the dirt trail through coastal shrub for about 5 minutes until you reach the set of stairs descending to Doud Creek that cradles Calla Lily Valley, the epicenter of the scenic bloom. You may stop here or continue across Doud Creek on a tiny footbridge. From here you may walk directly out to the sand of a small beach. **The surf here is quite dangerous so make sure to enjoy the water from the shore.**



# 6A. Andrew Molera State Park: Cooper Cabin

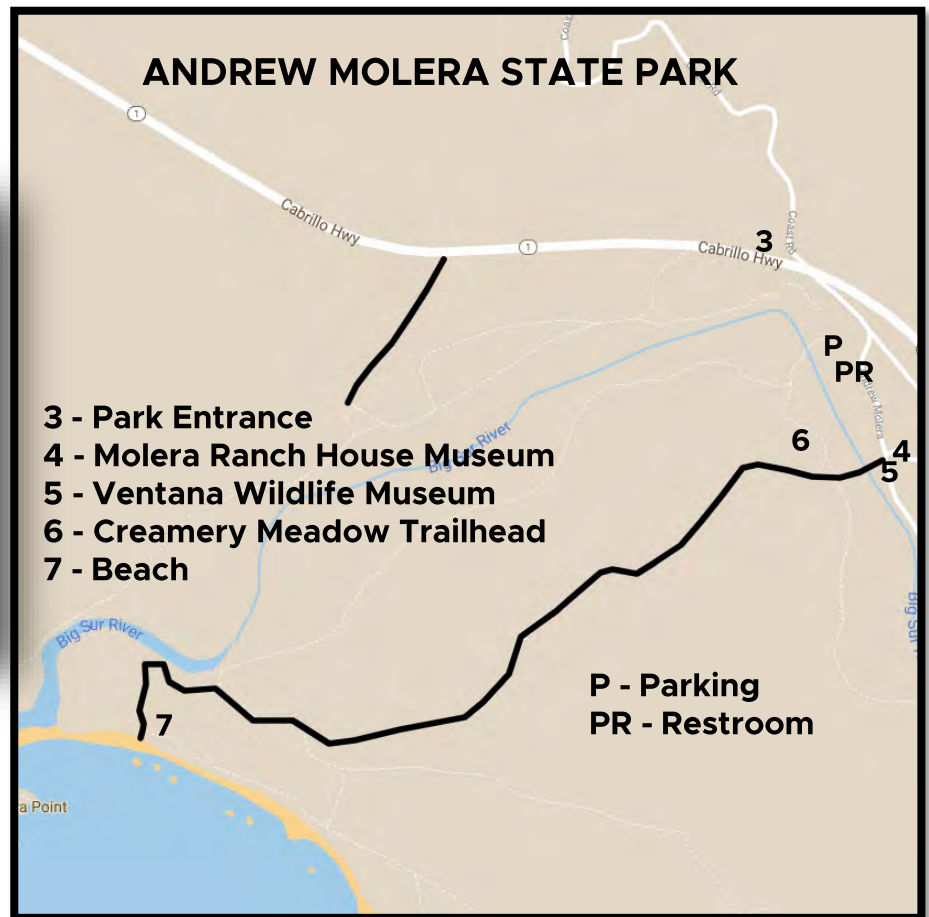
**Highlights:** ♦ Easy 1/4 mile hike to view the historic Cooper Cabin a red-wood log cabin built in 1861 by George Austin for John Bautista Rogers Cooper a sea captain and merchant. The cabin served as a dwelling for Cooper's ranch hands ♦ The cabin is the oldest surviving building on the Big Sur Coast.



**Directions:** ♦ Currently the only way to view the Cooper Cabin is by parking on the side of the highway about 1/4 mile before the entrance to the Andrew Moera State Park ♦ The GPS coordinates for the trailhead and parking area is **36.288773, -121.851450**. From this location look for the opening in the fence and a sign that reads "Not a through trail" and "Park entrance 1/4 mile." Follow the dirt path about 1/4 mile inland off the highway to the old grove of eucalyptus trees.

## 6B. Andrew Molera State Park: Creamery Meadow Trail

**Highlights:** ♦ Explore the historic **Molera Ranch House Museum** and **Ventana Wildlife Society Discovery Center** ♦ Ford the Big Sur River as you hike along the scenic Creamery Meadow Trail ♦ Public restrooms available.



**Directions:** ♦ As you head South on Highway 1 turn right into the driveway for Andrew Molera State Park ♦ Follow the road to the ranger booth and pay the parking fee. If you have a parking receipt for another California State Park visited on the same day this will qualify as your parking fee. ♦ There is a public restroom in this parking lot ♦ From the parking lot walk back to the ranger booth and turn right under the white wooden arch. Follow this road to an “intersection” and turn left and pass the Ventana Wildlife Society Discovery Center and Molera Ranch House Museum

◆ **Discovery Center** is home to the condor exhibit *Bringing the Condors Home* - learn about condors and the efforts to recover the birds to the wild. [Currently this is closed and not planned to be open again until 2022]

◆ The **Molera Ranch House** was once a part of the El Sur land grant and home of the ranch foreman. The restored foreman's home gives visitors a glimpse into Big Sur's rich past. The museum includes displays and artifacts about Big Sur pioneers. Your best chance of finding this open will be on the weekends during the summer for a few hours in the afternoon.

◆ Walk back to the "intersection" and continue straight a few yards and you will come to the Big Sur River. During the summer there will be a seasonal footbridge over the river. At all other times of the year if you want to follow the **Creamery Trail** to the beach you will need to wade the river. Depending upon the amount of water you might be wading up to your knees.

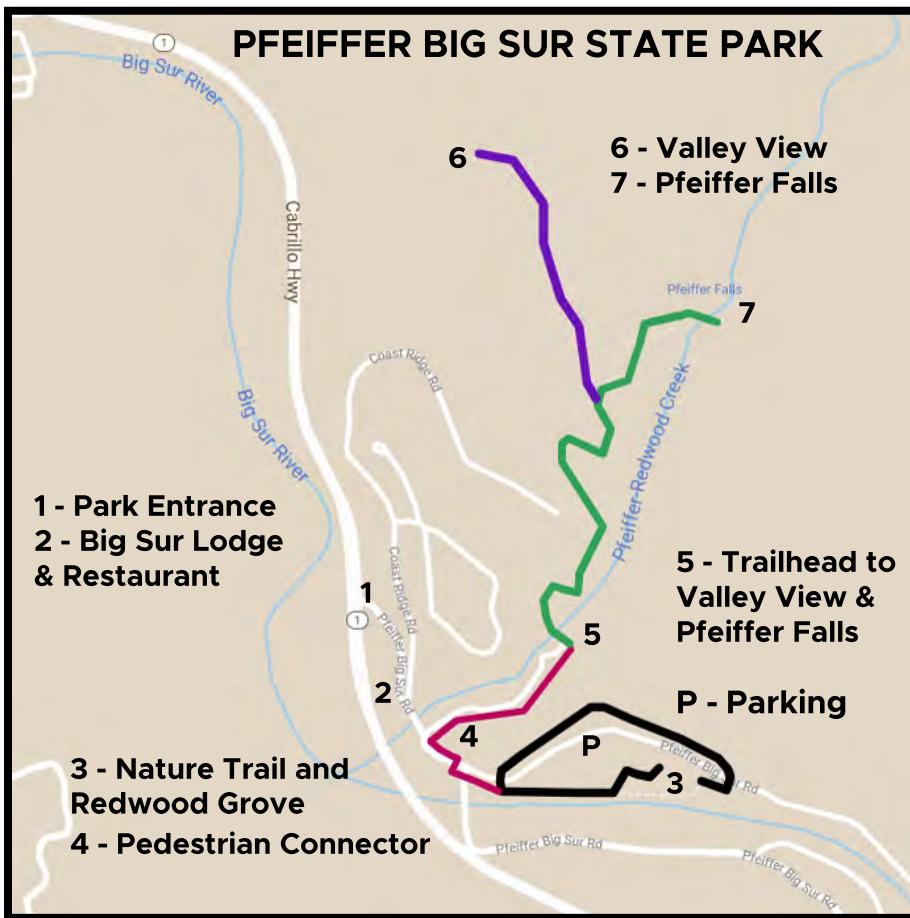
◆ Once on the other side of the river your hike will pass through the Creamery Meadow where the Cooper-Molera family grazed their cattle. Today the land has returned to mostly a wild state with pastures covered in waist high grass dotted with native flowers.

◆ Follow the trail and you will end up at the beach looking out onto Molera Point ◆ [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=582](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=582)



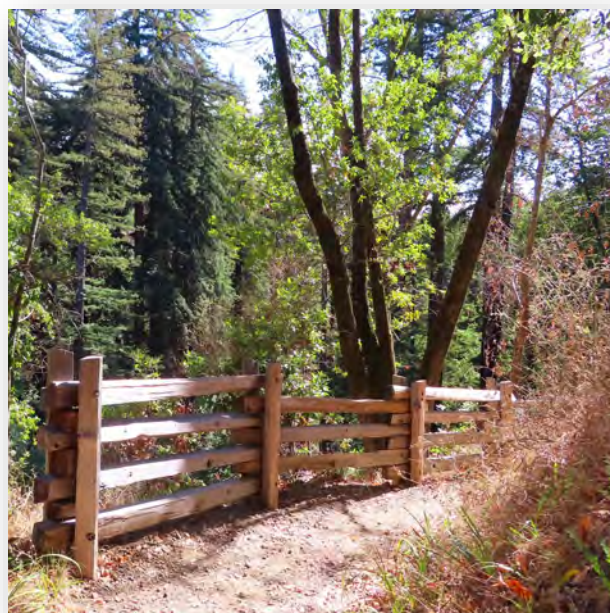
# 7. Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

**Highlights:** ♦ **Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park** is loved for the serenity of its forests and the pristine, fragile beauty of the Big Sur River as it meanders through the park. It is a place where the land, the sea, and forests of giant redwoods adjoin in a rugged landscape jigsaw puzzle.



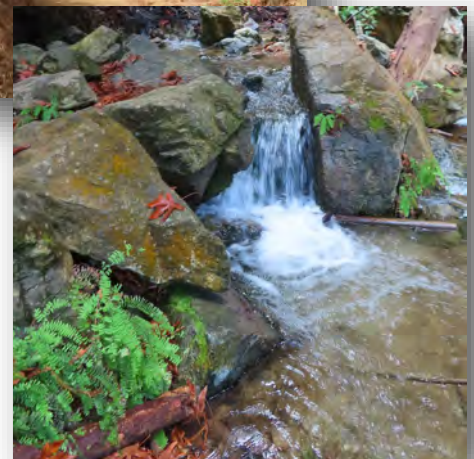
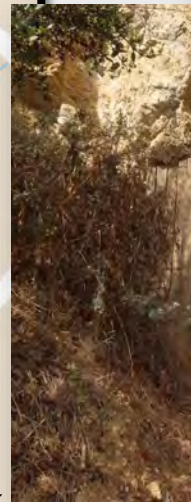
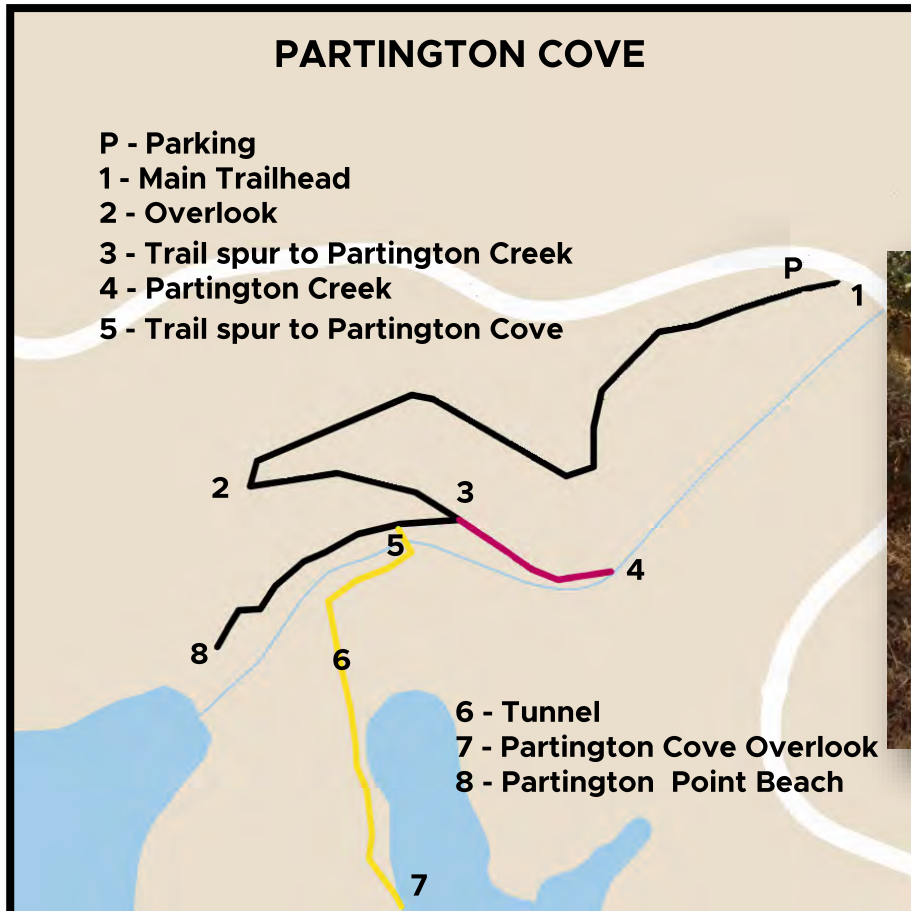
**Directions:** ♦ There is a parking fee for this state park. Use a parking receipt from a California State park you have visited earlier in the day or pay the parking fee ♦ From the parking lot look for the **Nature Trail** trailhead at the north end of the parking area. You may take this  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile loop all the way around and end back in the parking area where you began.

◆ There should be some brochures at the start of the trail that points out a few trees along the trail, such as the bay laurel, coast live oak and redwood. To complete this loop cross the street and pick up the trail near the sign that reads River Path and Parking Lot. To return to the parking lot, turn left. To continue to the Big Sur Lodge and other trails, turn right and follow the River Path. This will lead to a redwood board walk through a lovely redwood grove. ◆ After the grove follow the sidewalk pedestrian corridor to the Big Sur Lodge restaurant. Look for a circular sign that pictures the rings of a redwood tree on one side and forest animals on the other. From this location cross Pfeiffer Big Sur Road to the trail on the other side. Turn left and follow this trail around to the trailhead to the Valley View Trail. ◆ The **Valley View Trail** is about 1 ¾ miles round trip with a 600 foot elevation gain. This is a lovely trail and worth the effort if you enjoy hiking through redwoods. ◆ Currently (Spring 2021) the **Waterfall Trail** which intersects the Valley View Trail is being renovated from rain damage. Another great hike when it is open. ◆ Before you leave the park make sure you check out the Homestead Restaurant and Espresso House at the Big Sur Lodge. You may dine inside or outside or pick up a snack to go. ◆ Restrooms are available for restaurant patrons.



## 8. Partington Cove Trails

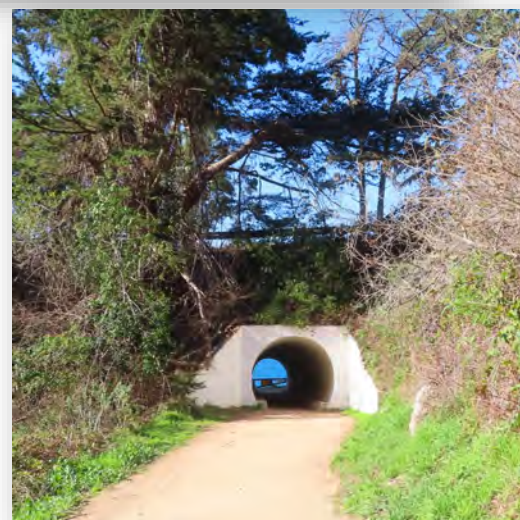
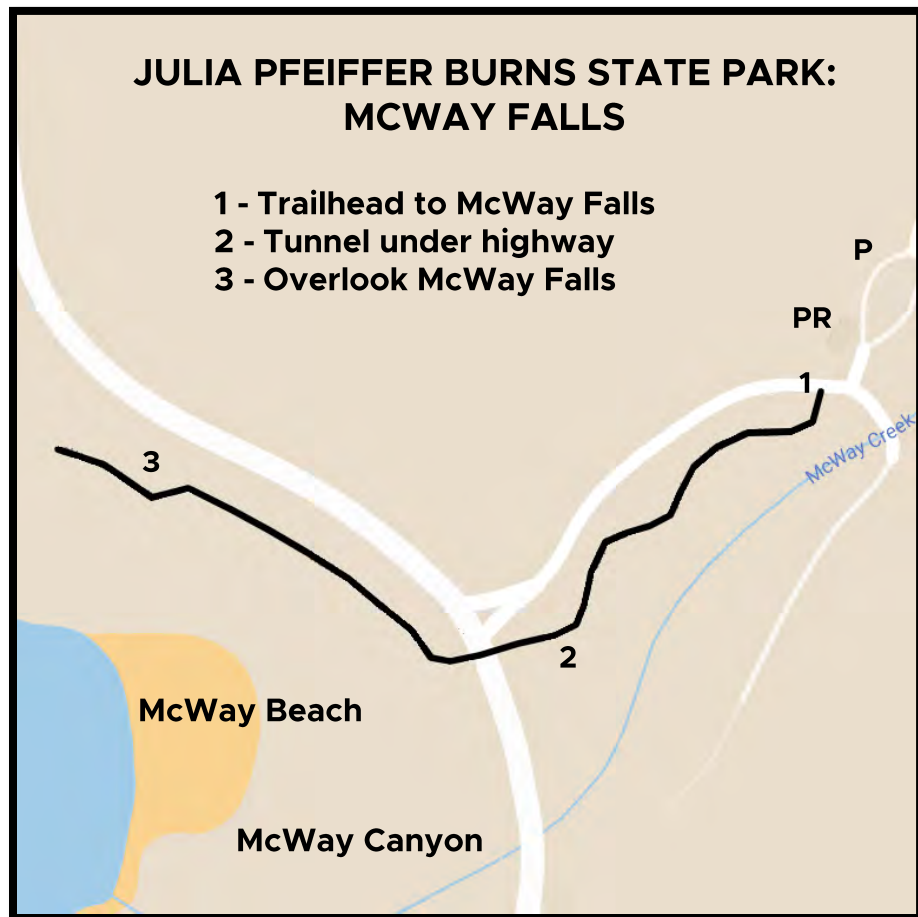
**Highlights:** ♦ Several moderate to easy hikes ♦ Visit breathtaking hidden coves where Native Americans, lumbermen and bootleggers plied their trade ♦ View the crashing waves on the rocky cliff shorelines of Partington Point Beach



**Directions:** ♦ From the parking area on the right side of the highway locate the trailhead behind the metal gate ♦ Follow this trail downhill, take the switch back left ♦ At the next switchback you may take the spur off to **Partington Creek** then head back to the main trail ♦ Shortly you will come to another spur, this one off to the left goes through **Partington Cove Tunnel** to view the rugged coastline and azure blue waters of **Partington Cove** ♦ Back to the main trail follow the path to the **Partington Point Beach**. *Please stay back away from the crashing surf as it is as dangerous as it is mesmerizing.*

# 9. Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park: McWay Falls

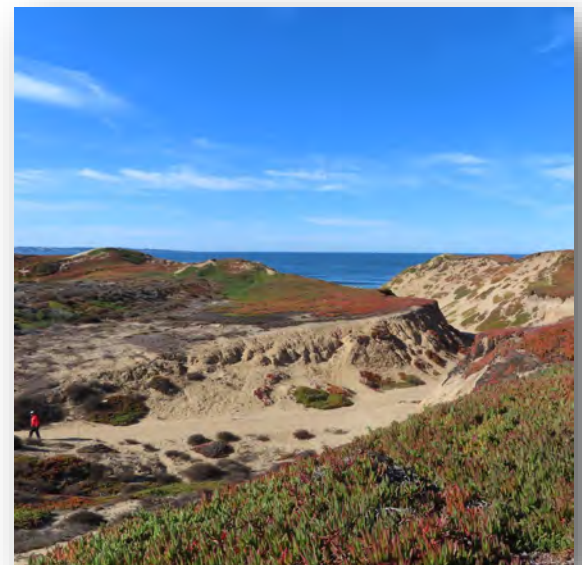
**Highlights:** ♦ Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park offers a dramatic meeting of land and sea ♦ View McWay Falls as it drops in dramatic fashion from high above the crashing ocean waves onto the sandy beach below. ♦ Public Restrooms are available.



**Directions:** ♦ There is a parking fee to park at this state park. You may use a parking receipt from and California State Park you visited earlier on the same day. ♦ The main trail out of this park is the approximately ½ mile round trip **McWay Falls Trail**. ♦ From the parking lot walk back toward the ranger booth. Directly across from the public restroom is the trailhead for McWay Falls. Enter the trailhead and descend a few stairs then follow the level trail to a tunnel. This tunnel crosses under Highway 1. On the other side of the tunnel follow the trail to the right. From this location you may view McWay Falls and the beach below. ♦ **Direct access to the beach is no longer allowed.**

# 10. Ft Ord State Park

**Highlights:** ♦The serenity of this oceanfront park makes it hard to believe that between 1940 and 1975 an estimated 1.5 million soldiers trained on the rifle and artillery ranges situated along these sandy dunes. ♦Where once the sounds of gunfire dominated the air, now you will find only the tranquil sounds of the crashing surf, the call of the gulls, and rustle of the occasional hang glider flying high up above.



**Directions:** ♦There is no parking fee for this park. ♦From the parking lot hike to the top of the bluff to overlook the ocean and former location of Stilwell Hall. Next to the parking lot there are a number of informational



plaques that explain the history of this area. ♦ You may continue your walk south along the frontage road. ♦ In less than ¼ mile there will be a spur off to the right which leads down to the beach. ♦ Or continue straight along the frontage road less than ¼ mile to the former rifle range. Here you will find the watch tower and an informational plaque. If you continue your walk along the frontage road another ½ mile over the hill you will come to a number of old ammunition bunkers lining the dunes.



# 11. Moon Glow Dairy/Elkhorn Slough

**Highlights:** ♦ Moonglow Dairy is an amazing optional stop if you are adventurous or interested in farming or birding. ♦ The number and variety of migrating birds who call this home or visit is staggering. ♦ I'm not going to sugar coat it, this working ranch with numerous happy cows, smells like a farm and is quite dusty. ♦ Do not drive this road after a heavy rain as you risk getting your car stuck in the mud. ♦ Moonglow Dairy, which sits between Elkhorn Slough and a eucalyptus grove, was founded by Monterey County Supervisor Louis R. Calcagno in 1957, it is a working ranch and produces hundreds of gallons of milk daily. ♦ There are no formal tours here.

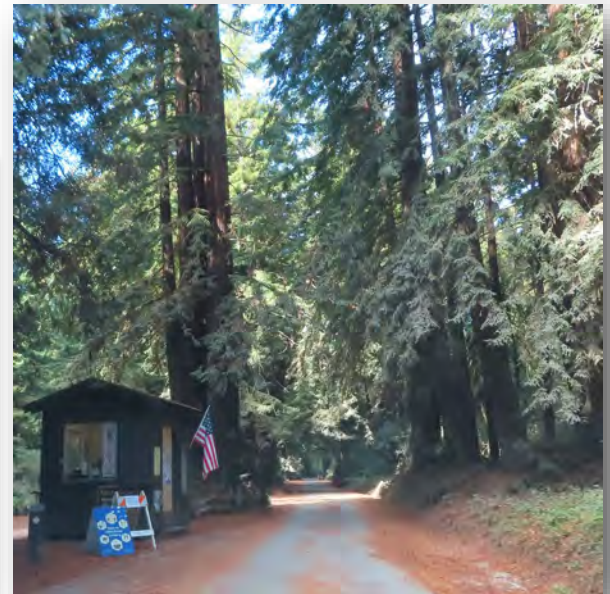
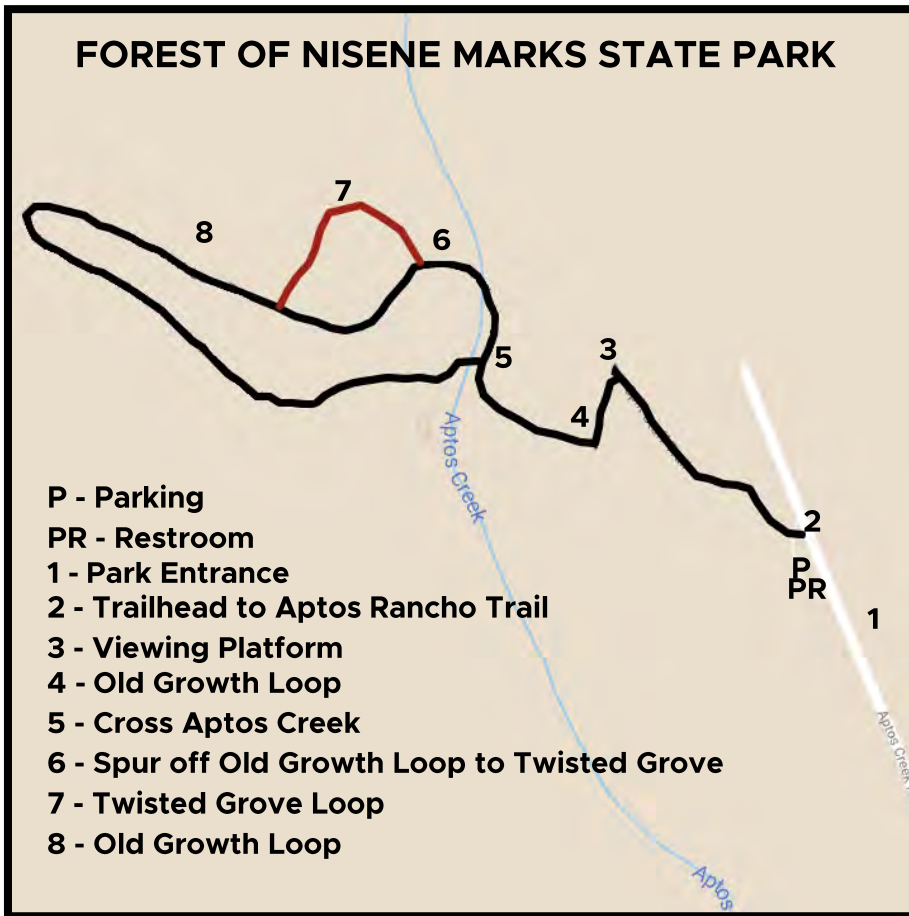


**Directions:** ♦At Moss Landing from Highway 1 take Dolan Road for approximately 1.2 mile. There you will see a white fence on your left and a sign for “**Moonglow Dairy**” in front of the entrance. If the gate is open, turn left, cross the railroad tracks and enter the dairy between the white wooden fence. Proceed slowly down the dirt road about 1/2 mile. ♦The working trucks have the right of way here so don't get in their way. ♦You will be turning left up ahead in between two white wooden fences. You will see a row of evenly spaced out trees behind a fence. ♦Just after those trees turn left in between the two white wooden fences and continue to the end of the dirt road. ♦On your right as you drive along the dirt road will be a white wooden fence. After the fence will be a line of small pens where young calves are kept until they are eight weeks old. Continue straight. ♦**The only place where you can park on this private property is at the eucalyptus grove.** Turn right at the end of the dirt road. The eucalyptus grove/parking area is about one hundred yards ahead. ♦The cattle pens will be on your right and eucalyptus grove will be to your left. The area will overlook a freshwater pond and Elkhorn Slough. ♦From the parking area, walk the levee that starts at the eucalyptus grove, goes around the big freshwater pond and heads to the edge of Elkhorn Slough. Keep an eye out for waterfowl. From here turn and look back toward the eucalyptus grove. ♦If you are here during the fall and spring take a look to the tops of the grove for the nesting Great Blue Heron and Great Egret. During the winter and summer the empty nests are still visible high in the branches of the eucalyptus trees.

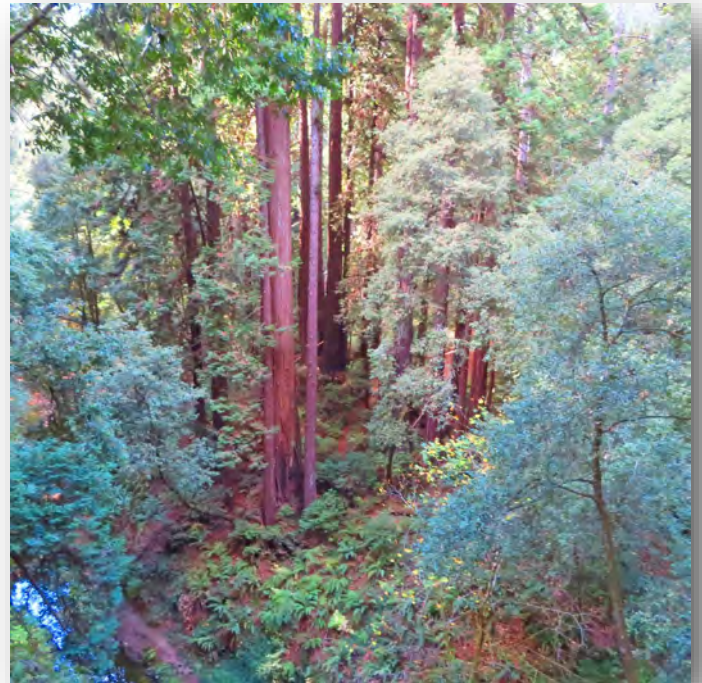


# 12. Forest of Nisene Marks

**Highlights:** ♦The serene trails within The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park give scant hint of the redwood forest’s turbulent natural and human history. Most of the original old growth redwood trees were cut down by the earlier settlers and loggers who inhabited the area; however a few remain and their grandeur can be viewed on several of the hikes. ♦Today the mostly second- and third-generation growth shades a recreational oasis with 30 miles of maintained trails and roads for hiking, biking, and running ♦Public restroom available near the parking area at the park entrance.

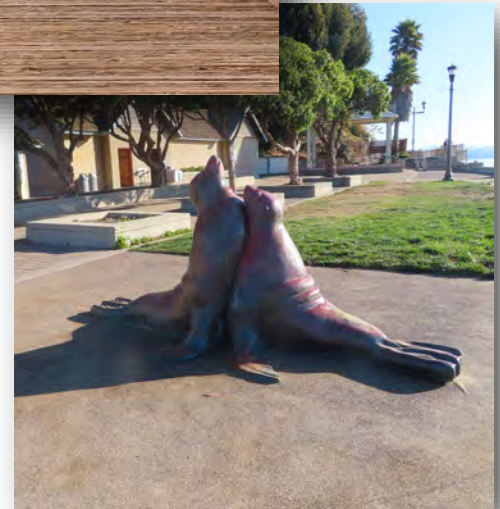
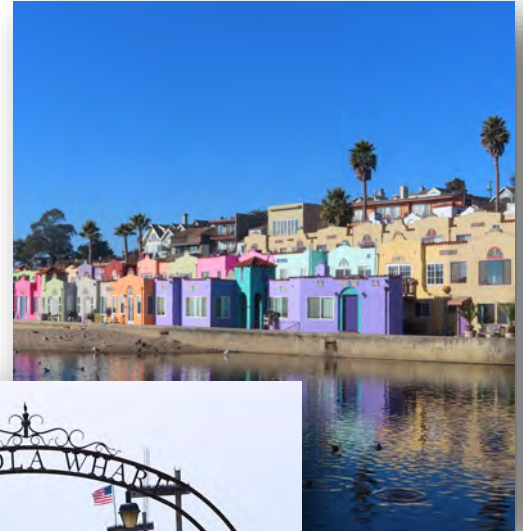
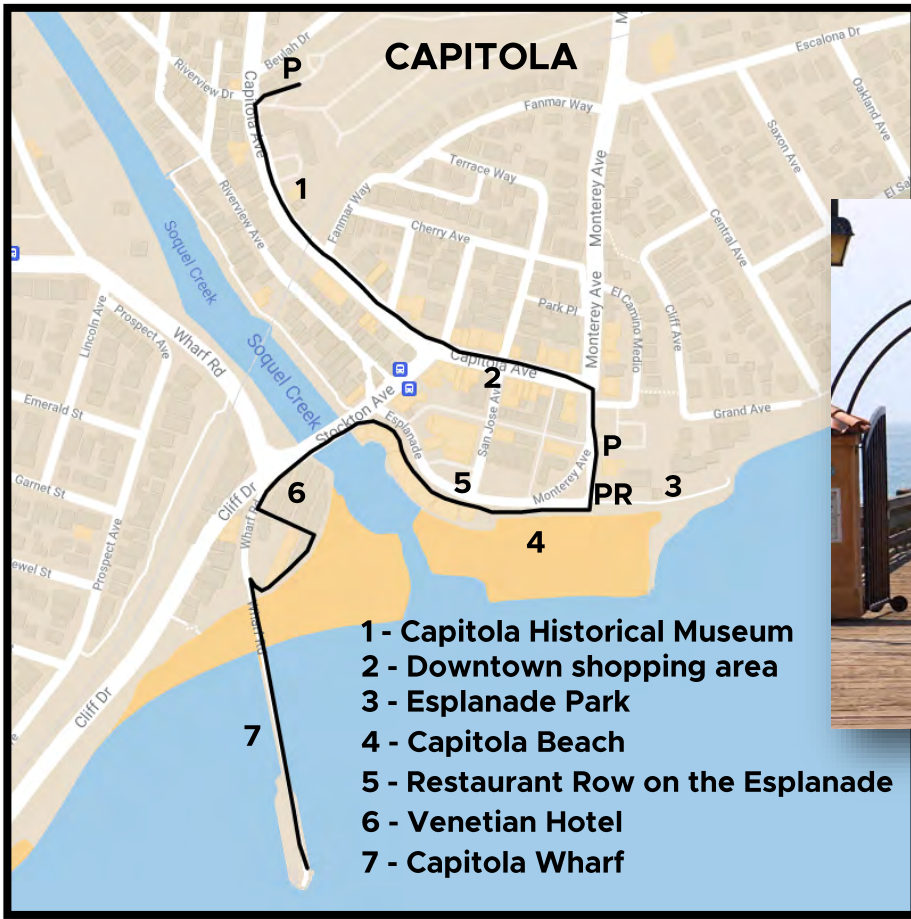


**Directions:** ♦In the parking area there is a public restroom. ♦From the parking area walk in the opposite direction of the public restroom toward the picnic tables. Here you will find a trail map for the **Lower Park Trails**. We suggest the 1 ¼ **Old Growth Loop**. You can easily add the short **Twisted Grove spur**. ♦After studying the map enter the trail and follow it to the spur for the **Waggoner Overlook Trail**. Follow this a very short distance to a view platform which overlooks Aptos Creek below. If this is as far as you want to go you will get a feeling for the majestic coast redwood from this location. ♦Follow this spur back to the main trail and follow this to Aptos Creek. ♦During the summer there is a bridge over this creek, the rest of the year, if you would like to cross this, carefully follow the stones that are strategically laid across the creek. On the other side continue to follow the trail signs for the Old Grown Loop and Twisted Grove Trail.



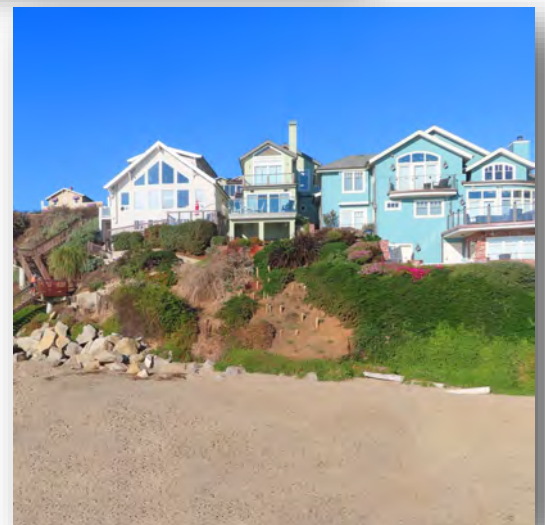
# 13. Capitola

**Highlights:** ♦ Stroll the charming beach community of Capitola-by-the-Sea, visit their funky shops, and dine beachside on the Esplanade or Capitola Wharf ♦ Catch a glimpse of the iconic Venetian Hotel and its vibrant multi-colored façade ♦ Public restrooms are available



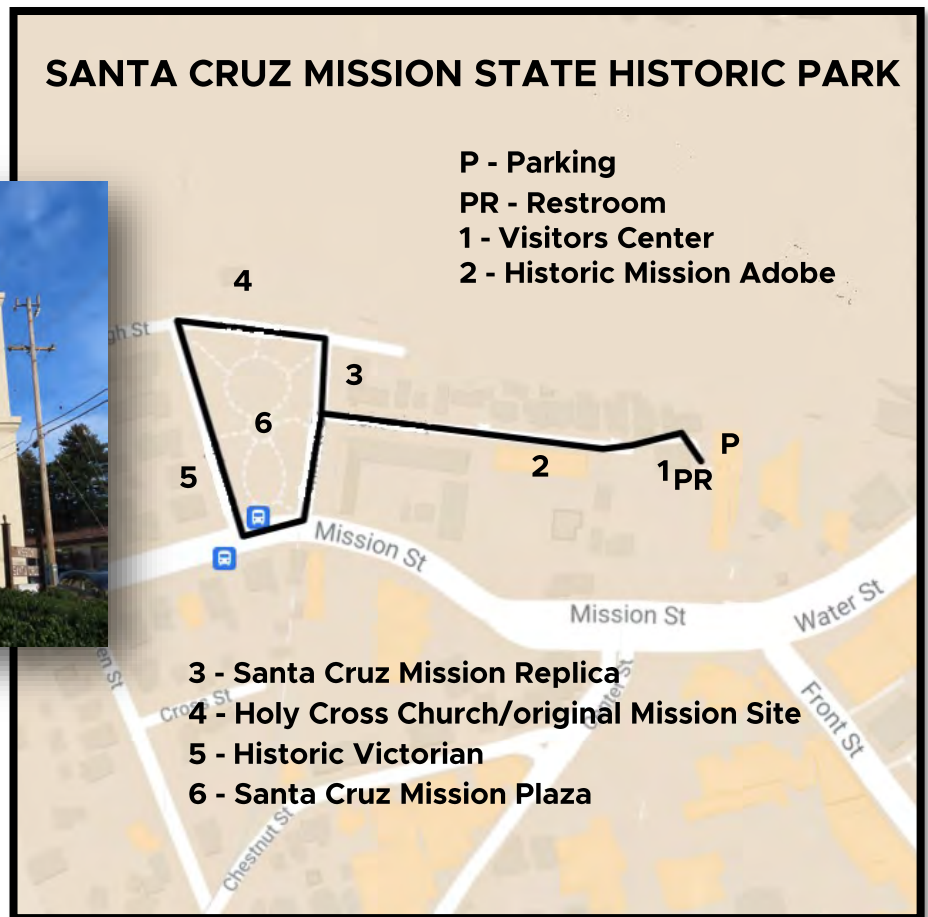
**Directions:** ♦ Parking in Capitola is all metered and is priced anywhere from \$.50 an hour to \$10 an hour. The rate for the Beach & Village Parking lot on Capitola Avenue is currently \$.50 an hour. ♦ From this parking lot head toward the beach on Capitola Avenue. You will pass the bright

red **Capitola Historical Museum**. It is usually open on the weekends from noon to 4:00pm but it depends on docent availability. You can however peek into what would have been a typical village beach cottage and adjacent “bathhouse” during the early 20th century. These are located next to the museum. ♦From here continue under the historic wooden trestle and continue along Capitola Avenue for three blocks. This section of town is filled with funky shops and galleries. Turn right on Monterey and head toward the beach where you will find many charming restaurants. ♦At the end of Monterey, you will find a public restroom and the entrance to Capitola Beach. Turn right onto Esplanade, Capitola’s main drag. Here you will find beachside cafes and restaurants. ♦At Stockton Avenue turn left and cross the bridge. To the left look for the very colorful **Capitola Venetian Hotel**. At the end of the hotel turn left to finish your walk with a stroll along the **Capitola Wharf**.



# 14. Santa Cruz Mission Park

**Highlights:** ♦Nestled against the coastal hills on the northern shore of picturesque Monterey Bay lies Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park. ♦ The Santa Cruz Mission was built twelfth in the chain of California missions ♦Today a complex of buildings stands on the site of the original Santa Cruz Mission, including a half-scale replica of the original church that contains some surviving mission relics. ♦The only remaining original mission building is the adobe that the Indian families built and lived in while they worked at the mission. Its seven rooms (out of an original 17) house a museum that shows the changes that occurred in the native people's lives when they came to the mission.

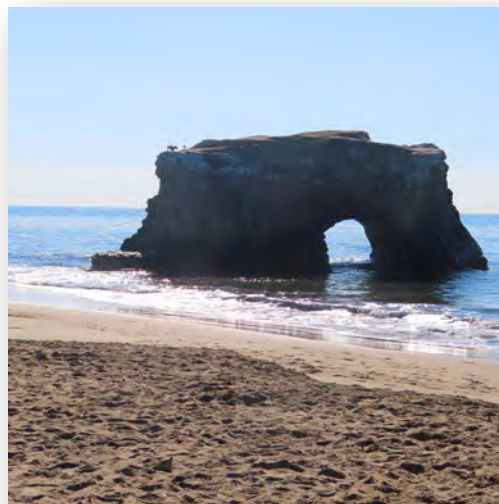
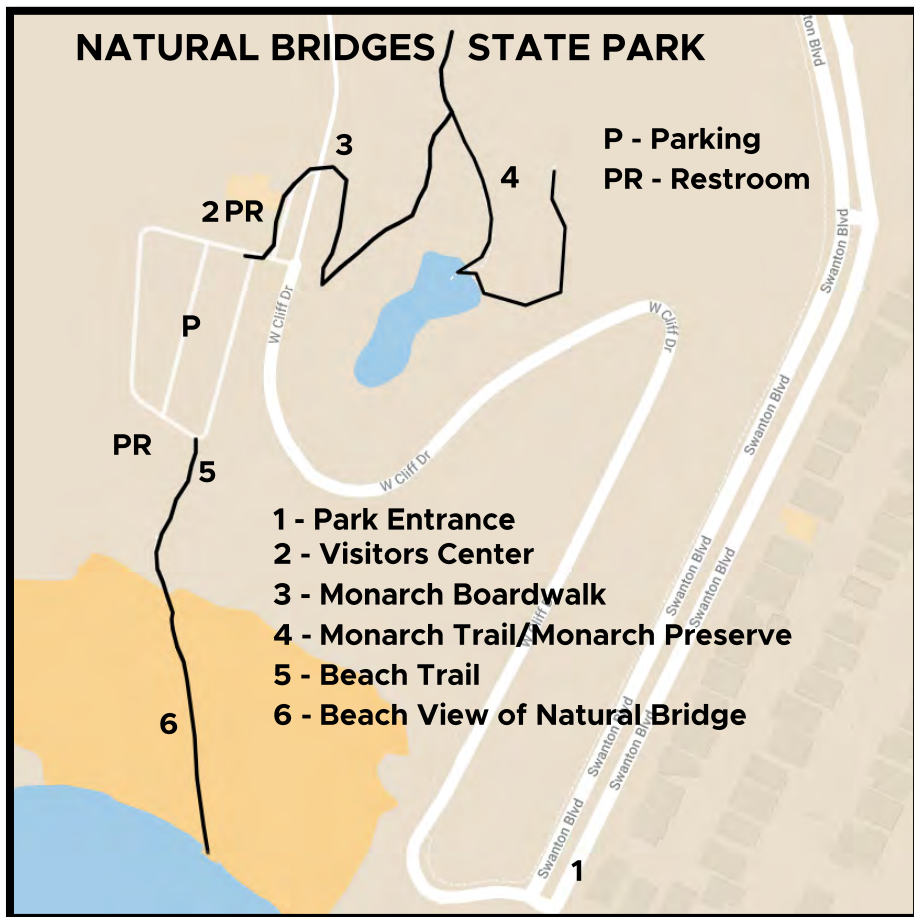


**Directions:** ♦Park along School Street or at the end of School Street in the small parking lot for the State Park. You will also find a Visitor Center, bookstore and public restroom. ♦Due to COVID 19, as of May 2021 all buildings are closed except the Mission replica which is open occasionally.



# 15. Natural Bridges State Park

**Highlights:** ♦ Three arches carved by nature out of a sandstone cliff inspired the naming of **Natural Bridges**. Reclaimed by the sea, the inner and outer arches have fallen, leaving only the central bridge ♦ Stroll along the **Monarch Boardwalk** to view thousands of delicate monarch butterflies (October to mid-February) stopping for awhile at the **Monarch Preserve** as they make their way up and down the Pacific Coast ♦ Public restrooms are available.



**Directions:** ♦ At the north end of the parking lot is a **Visitors Center** and Public Restroom. ♦ At the southern end of the parking lot follow the **Beach Trail** to **Natural Bridges State Beach** to view the remaining rock formation. ♦ From the north end of the parking lot look for the **Monarch Boardwalk** which overlooks the **Monarch Preserve**. This is home to one of the largest monarch butterfly over-wintering sites in California. Each fall, the migratory butterflies arrive on the coast from across the western United States to seek sanctuary from the winter's cold. They roost in the monarch preserve from October to mid-February, with the greatest numbers from November to mid-December.

## ***Check out some of our Tours!***

- **Driving Tours of Lake Tahoe: South Lake Tahoe to Tahoe City:** On this leg of your tour around the lake you will have a chance to experience the wide variety that Lake Tahoe has to offer - from the wild exuberance of the casinos at Stateline to the serene beauty of Emerald Bay, and several of the state parks lining the Western shore.
- **Driving Tours of Lake Tahoe: Tahoe City to Incline Village:** Continue your tour around Lake Tahoe as you visit quaint townships and explore lakeside and mountain trails found along its northern shores.
- **Driving Tours of Lake Tahoe: Incline Village to South Lake Tahoe:** Explore the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, taking in the natural beauty of its less developed shoreline including hikes along the incredibly blue waters of Emerald Cove, Sand Harbor and Zepher Cove, and the rugged trail to the base of the iconic Cave Rock.
- **Fairy Tale Houses of Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Take a delightful walking tour of beautiful Carmel-by-the-Sea's Historic Hill District and learn the history of 13 famous Fairy Tale Houses built by Master Craftsman Hugh Comstock.
- **Carmel One Hour Walking Tour.** Take in the best of Carmel on this fast paced walking tour that covers all the highlights of this lovely village by the sea in only one hour.
- **Monterey: Historic Cannery Row and Steinbeck Walking Tour.** Step back into the bygone era of John Steinbeck's fabled Cannery Row.
- **Monterey State Historic Park and Fisherman's Wharf Walking Tour.** Dive into Monterey's maritime history as you take in the beauty of Monterey's iconic Fisherman's Wharf.
- **Historic Downtown Folsom:** Step back in time as you stroll along the wooden sidewalks and learn a bit of the history of this Gold Rush town known as "the place where the West came and stayed."



# About the Author

Hi! My name is **Lynn Momboisse** and I am a native of California and have resided in Northern California for most of my life. For many years I lived in beautiful Carmel-by-the-Sea where I co-authored the book **Historic Homes and Inns of Carmel-by-the-Sea**. My love of history and passion for discovering the beauty of the Golden State has led me to create a fun little blog titled "**Adventures of a Home Town Tourist**" where I recount many of my walking and driving tours and hiking adventures throughout the world. I currently live in the majestic Sierra Foothills and will be exploring and writing about my adventures throughout this gorgeous country. And now I'll be able to further share my travels with you through the power of the new **VoiceMap** tour app. I can't wait for you to join me. Happy Adventures!

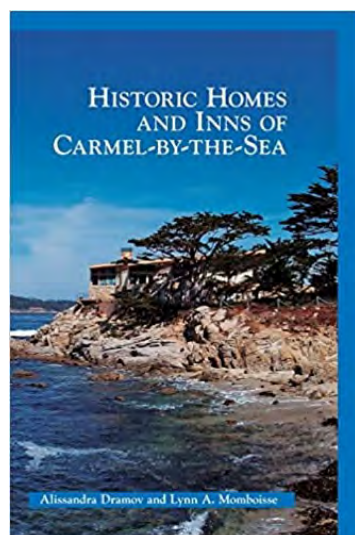
You can follow my continuing adventures at:

[www.carmelbytheseaca.blogspot.com](http://www.carmelbytheseaca.blogspot.com)

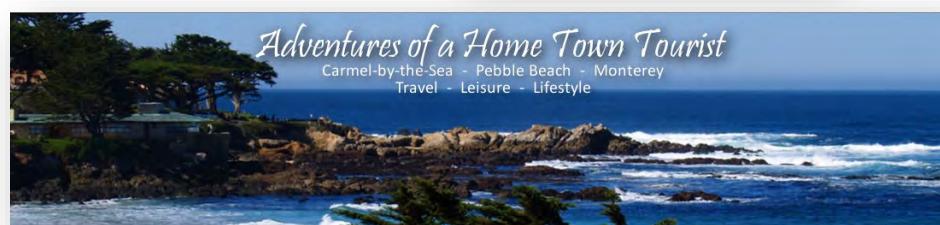
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