

Accessibility Guide: Non-Bluff Trails West of Highway One

Author: Bob Mulford. cdmulford@aol.com

2024 Trails Map inserts by Henry Band

Introduction

This guide looks at the accessibility of Sea Ranch trails west of Highway One (other than the Bluff Trail and its connectors) from three different perspectives – wheelchair-users, mobility scooter-users, and others with mobility problems. A few of these trails are usually accessible to many people who are using *manual wheelchairs* (especially in the dry season), all except the Salal Trail and the Monarch Glen Interpretive Trail are usually accessible to persons using *mobility scooters*, while many *others with mobility problems* should usually be able to access all these trails, with only a few exceptions.

“Non-bluff” Sea Ranch trails both east and west of Highway One are much less “disability-friendly” than the Bluff Trail. They tend to be much bumpier because their surfaces are usually dirt or grass, and are more subject to roots, holes (including those created by gophers and by horses’ hooves), mounds, and sideways tilts. They can have muddy spots, especially in the rainy season and even for many weeks thereafter. Since some of these trails are not highly used, anyone in a scooter that has become stuck or overturned or has run out of power could be without rescue for a long time.

All parts of any Sea Ranch trail that this guide describes as “accessible” have been traversed by at least one person on a mobility scooter. However, such scooters vary widely in terms of stability, clearance, and power. Thus, some scooter models are relatively light in weight and designed to be folded up for transport. These models are less stable than most.

Thus, each user of a wheelchair or mobility scooter is strongly urged (1) to go with a companion who can help negotiate any potentially dangerous spots, and (2) have a smartphone or other device that can be used to call Sea Ranch Security (707-785-2701) or 9-1-1 in case of a mishap such as a stuck or overturned scooter. Indeed, this is good advice for any hiker, even one with no mobility issues.

The Sea Ranch Association does NOT warrant that any specific trail or trail segment is safe.

Trails are listed in this guide in geographical order, south to north, west of the highway, except that the Bluff Trail and any connectors from that trail to paved roads are covered in the *Accessibility Guide – Bluff Trail*. Trails east of the highway will be covered in the *Accessibility Guide – Trails East of Highway One* (this guide is still being edited).

NOTE TO USERS: You can make this Accessibility Guide more useful by telling us of any problems you have encountered but that were not described – or any described problems that have been cured. Or any other comments or suggestions you may have. You can email us at TRAILS@tsra.org.

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Accessibility Overview

According to the Accessibility Guide -- Bluff Trail, “more than 90 % of the Bluff Trail should be regarded as accessible by just about anyone.” This is almost as true, even for those using mobility scooters -- at least during the dry season -- for the more than seven miles of non-Bluff Sea Ranch trails west of Highway One and for many of the trails through Sea Ranch Lodge lands.

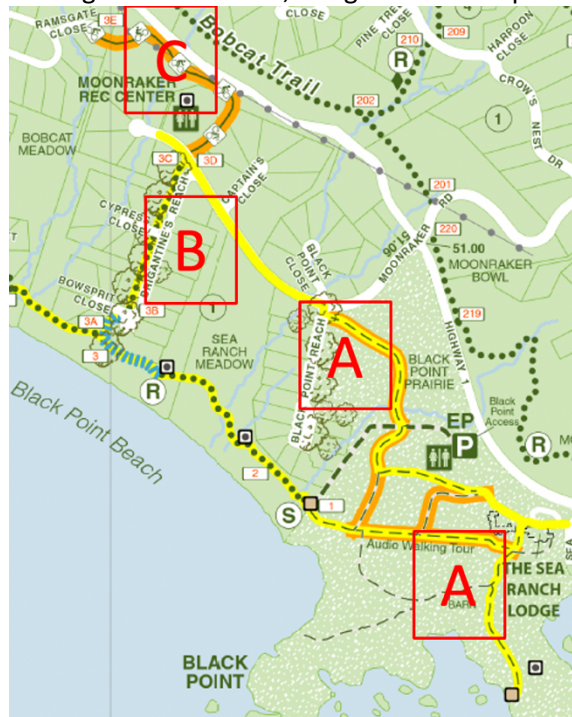
For users of wheelchairs, the possibilities are much more limited. Manual wheelchairs have small front wheels and large rear wheels with thin, solid rubber tires, the better for maneuvering on floors and other flat and smooth surfaces. But since Sea Ranch trails are entirely unpaved, their surfaces are *anything but* flat and smooth. The result is that riders in manual wheelchairs must endure bumpy rides. Sometimes very bumpy. The thin tires mean that manual wheelchairs can get stuck in terrain that is at all soft or wet and squishy. And almost none of our trails are absolutely flat; most have ups and downs that may seem gentle but might prove impossibly steep if the rider is not very light.

Manual wheelchairs may be able to access some of the trails through Sea Ranch Lodge lands, most of the various Bicycle-Pedestrian Links, and a few other non-Bluff trails segments. *Powered wheelchairs* are

treated in this guide like mobility scooters, although such wheelchairs may well be less maneuverable. *Strollers* can usually access any trail described as OK for manual wheelchairs

Detailed Descriptions of Non-Bluff Trails West of Highway One

This guide covers trails starting from the south. Each description is followed by a value with a number from one to ten. This value is only a subjective assessment of the desirability of the trail for all hikers, not just to users of wheelchairs and scooters and to others with mobility problems. It is based on the length of the trail and the views (ocean, hedgerow, forest, meadow, etc.) that can be seen from the trail. The higher the number, the greater the experience.



A. Trails through Sea Ranch Lodge Lands

Most of the land from Black Point Reach south to Sea Walk Meadow is not part of The Sea Ranch at all. Instead, it is owned by The Sea Ranch Lodge, a separate entity. A reciprocal agreement between TSRA and the Lodge allows TSR members and guests to use Lodge trails, and Lodge guests to use TSR trails.

Most Sea Ranchers who have mobility issues that do not require wheelchairs or mobility scooters can get to Lodge property simply by walking south on the Bluff Trail to Trail Post [TP] 1, then continuing farther south. Just north of TP 1 are 12 steps down, then seven steps up (when proceeding south). But since all but one of these steps are rather shallow, they should not be a problem for most hikers with mobility concerns.

For hikers who cannot negotiate those stairs or who must use wheelchairs or mobility scooters, there is an

alternative access -- park at the Moonraker Road and Black Point Reach intersection, then go around the vehicle gate on a gravel road that wends its way through Black Point Prairie (attractive meadow views) towards the bluff. This road is less likely to become impassible in wet weather.

At about 250 yards you come to a cross trail; to the left (east) it goes 110 yards to the Black Point Access Public Parking; this trail is narrow and bumpy, but perhaps OK for scooters (although not for wheelchairs), at least in the dry season.

To the right (west) this cross trail goes 220 yards to Historical Marker 1-24, *Kenko Maru Grounding*, and another few yards to great views of Black Point Beach (sometimes a surfing site), then to a long staircase (almost 100 steps!) down to the beach itself. This cross trail is also possibly passable for scooters, except of course for the stairs. However, it is quite bumpy and narrow in places, and perhaps too soft in the rainy season.

So scooters should keep on the main road through the meadow (*for more on wheelchairs, see below*). Eighty yards farther is another trail to the right (west); this one much more user-friendly. Take it 165-

170 yards to the Historical Marker noted above. (You can also keep on the main road all the way to a north-south fence, 90-95 yards, but this would not afford any Black Point Beach views).

The road from the Historical Marker south to the Lodge is unpaved and somewhat uphill but quite smooth and hard surfaced. To the right (west) of this road is a fence. The first gap in this fence leads to trails that are too narrow or otherwise problematic for scooters, although most of them should be OK for others with mobility issues. The second gap (between a “No Trespassing for Fishing or Diving” sign and a CAUTION sign) is wider, and leads to various trails, some generally accessible to scooters.

We’ll cover those trails just below. For now, let’s keep to the road to the Lodge. Just before the Lodge itself is a path to the left (east), very slightly uphill and covered with chips, that leads to the parking area in front of the Lodge. However, **a six-inch curb at the end of this path prevents all scooter and wheelchair access.**

Thus, scooters should keep on the main road until you get to the back of the Lodge. There you will find a cross trail whose eastern leg leads up a rather substantial slope to two large steps – inaccessible to scooters. If you want to get into the Lodge itself by scooter, you need to continue south to Sea Walk Drive, where two left turns (east, then north) will get you to the front of the Lodge, and where you will find a ramp that allows scooters and wheelchairs to get inside the Lodge.

If you are interested in exploring more trails and in getting closer to magnificent ocean and surf vistas, go right (downhill) on the western leg of the cross trail for 75 yards to another trail intersection, one with a sign prohibiting trespassing for diving or fishing. Continue west for another 110 yards towards Bihler Point but be careful to stop just before the downslope that is short but quite rocky and uneven. **A scooter can probably get down this slope but might not be able to get back up.** So best to turn around here if you are on a scooter.

Others with mobility concerns can go further and see an Architectural Marker (2026, *Condominium One*), 25-30 yards farther on, and a Historical Marker (1-25, *Bihler Point Settlement 1875-1917*) beyond that.

Now retrace your steps to the intersection and sign that you passed on the way down. Turn left toward the barnlike structure that was the livery stables for an old hotel that many years ago was nearby. Proceed to the right (east) of that structure and continue north on a path back to the second gap in the fence. This trail is wide and mostly flat, but with a soft and very bumpy surface, about 330 yards. It is probably OK for scooters except perhaps in the rainy season. When you get back to the fence, retrace your steps back to Moonraker Road.

Manual wheelchairs might be able to access many of these trails – the main road across Black Point Prairie for 250 plus 80 equals 330 yards, the 165-170 yards-long “user-friendly” trail to Historical Marker 1-24, the road paralleling the fence to the back of the Lodge and farther on to Sea Walk Drive, and *perhaps* the trail towards Bihler Point as far as the rocky downslope (although retracing your steps from that point would be very difficult, perhaps impossible). However, some of these trails have uphill slopes and others are on soft ground that could be a problem even in the dry season. And all are rather bumpy. So, you might want to give it a try, but *do be ready to turn around whenever things start to get too difficult*. If you have problems, try calling the Lodge at 1-707-202-4684.

Value -- 9

B. Brigantine's Reach Hedgerow (Trail Post [TP] 3B to TP 3C) (0.19 miles)

Since this route is through a hedgerow, the surface is flat but with many roots. Although the roots are generally negotiable in a scooter, there are difficult transitions from trail to pavement at Cypress Close and at Moonraker Road (TP 3C). Probably best for both scooters and wheelchairs to travel on the pavement along Brigantine's Reach, just a few yards to the south, instead. Others with mobility concerns – except perhaps those with sore ankles, knees, or hips -- should have no problem with the roots.

Value – 2

C. Moonraker Center Bicycle/Pedestrian Link (TP 3D to TP 3E) (0.26 miles)

As a bicycle-pedestrian link, the surface is much harder than those on most non-Bluff Trails. The slope up from TP 3D is probably too steep for manual wheelchairs but should be OK for most powered wheelchairs and for mobility scooters. The rest of the link to TP 3E is flatter and should be OK for at least some manual wheelchairs. Relatively smooth. Attractive views over the Moonraker Recreation Center and Bobcat Meadow to the ocean, as well as Architecture/Landscape Marker 1-30, *Moonraker Recreational Center*.

Value -- 6



D. Sea Meadow Trail (TP 7-Bluff Trail just north of Galleon's Reach to TP 8 on Bluff Trail) (0.67 miles)

The trail provides nice views over Sea Meadow and Rock Meadow, as well as “back of the house” views of Sea Ranch houses. The surface is too rough for manual wheelchairs but should accommodate most mobility scooters (except perhaps in the rainy season). But expect bumps, especially in the first hundred yards or so east of TP 7.

Value – 5

E. Bicycle/Pedestrian Link from Seagate Road to Sculpture Pt. Drive TP 9A to TP 9B) (0.09 miles)

This very short link is completely flat and smooth enough for both wheelchairs (manual and powered) and mobility scooters, but so narrow that two wheels would have to be on grass. The transition from pavement to connector at TP 9A is so uneven that there is a **danger of scooter tipping**. The transition from connector to pavement at TP 9B is smoother but still could cause problems. Others with mobility concerns should have no problems here.

Value – 1



F. Highway One Trail (TP 10B-Navigators Reach to Ohlson Rec Center) (1.54 miles)

This trail parallels the highway as it runs from TP 10B (Navigator's Reach) through TP 14B and TP 14C (Headlands Reach), TP 17A and 17B (Whitesurf Road), and TP 19A to the road into the Ohlson Recreation Center. It involves a pleasant sojourn through woods (and near its south end, a nice meadow), but is subject to traffic noise.

This entire trail presents no problems for hikers with mobility concerns who do not have to use mobility scooters or wheelchairs, except that the areas with side-to-side tilts could be problematic for hikers with ankle, knee, or hip problems.

The entire trail – even the Bicycle-Pedestrian Links -- is too rough for most manual wheelchairs. These links run from TP 10B (Navigator's Reach) to TP 13B (Mariner's Drive) and from TP 14C (Headlands Reach) to TP 15C and down to TP 15B (Albatross Reach). The rest of the trail can be quite bumpy and get rather soft in the rainy season – potential for scooters to get stuck -- and can have significant sideways tilt in a few places, especially north of TP 19A. These tilts can be negotiated by mobility scooters, if approached with great care.

The connector from TP 19A to the Bluff Trail at TP 19 and TP 20 is very bumpy, soft in winter, and downhill. The uphill direction (west to east) could be beyond the capabilities of some scooters, particularly when the surface is soft.

Value -- 4



G. Ohlson Rec Center to Breaker Reach Bicycle/Pedestrian Link (TP 21 to TP 24A or TP 25C) (0.32 miles)

The trail should present no problems for hikers with mobility issues who do not have to use wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

The bicycle-pedestrian link between TP 21 and TP 22B (Wild Iris) has a hardened surface but is still somewhat bumpy in places and has one substantial sideways tilt area. The southern part of the link (about 160 yards) has a relatively gentle slope – probably accessible to some manual wheelchairs (perhaps with a push) – with beautiful meadow and ocean views. Then comes a significant hill (especially when approached from the north), likely too much for any manual wheelchair.

The bicycle-pedestrian link continues north from TP 22B to the unmarked trail post (120 yards) and from there to TP 24A, where the trail splits, a left turn putting you on the Bluff Trail, while a right turn takes you on the southern end of the Breaker Meadow Trail behind several houses, through TP 25D to TP 25C on Breaker Reach. The entire segment north of TP 22B should be OK even for most manual wheelchairs.

Value -- 6

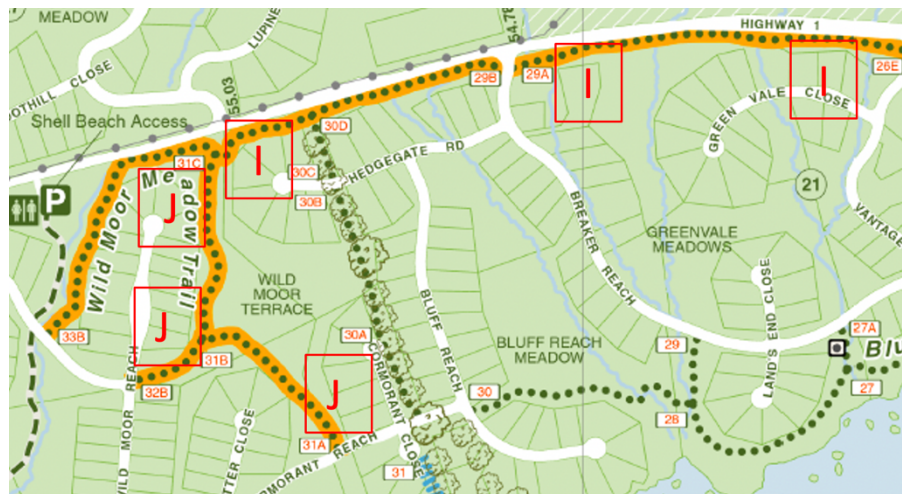
H. Breaker Meadow Trail (TP 25D to TP 26D-Vantage Road) (0.42 miles)

The entire trail should be OK for most people with mobility concerns who do not use wheelchairs or mobility scooters, but is too rough for manual wheelchairs

From TP 25D to TP 26C, the trail, no longer a Bicycle/Pedestrian Link, is too rough for most manual wheelchairs and likely to be soft in the rainy season. There are also significant sideways tilts in some places – *scooterers should negotiate with great care*, and preferably with a companion walking along the downward side. The connector from TP 26C west to Breaker Reach at TP 26B is flat but bumpy, and likely to be soft in rainy season.

From TP 26C to TP 26D (Vantage Road) the trail is again bumpy and climbs a substantial hill that might be too steep for some mobility scooters and *perhaps some others with mobility concerns*. At TP 26 (Vantage Road) is a 4-inch curb that could be a real barrier for many scooters.

Value -- 4



I. Highway One Trail (TP 26E-Vantage Road to TP 31C-Wild Moor Meadow Trail) (.86 miles)

The trail parallels the highway and provides a pleasant through-the-woods experience but with traffic noise. This trail is not suitable for wheelchairs, and parts can

be problematic for mobility scooters, but all should be OK for almost all others with mobility concerns – except that walking on sideways tilts can be painful for bikers with sore ankles, knees, or hips.

Between TP 26E (Vantage Road) and TP 29A (Breaker Reach) is one short but substantial slope that could be a problem for scooters travelling south, and many segments with significant sideways tilts. *Best for mobility scooters to avoid this stretch, or at least only go with a companion who can walk on the downhill (west) side to guard against tip-overs*. Also, there is a 2-inch curb – perhaps enough to stop some scooters -- on Breakers Reach at TP 29A.

Between TP 29B and TP 31C the trail tends to be flatter and goes uphill a little. There is also a sideways tilt that could be a problem for some scooters.

The short segment from TP 30D west to TP 30C (Hedgegate Road) is quite smooth and accessible for scooters and most manual wheelchairs. From TP 30B down to TP 30A (Cormorant Close), the trail is too rough for most manual wheelchairs as it proceeds on wood chips through the stumps of a former hedgerow. After a relatively flat 70 yards or so, the trail comes to a short but steep downhill that could be a problem for some scooters, then flattens out again the rest of the way down (rather bumpily) to either TP 34A on Cormorant Close or all the way down to Cormorant Reach; *the slope could be a real problem for scooters going east (uphill), and possibly a challenge for some other hikers with mobility issues*. The two logs where this trail segment terminates at Cormorant Reach are so close to each other that they also prevent access by scooters; they do, however, provide good resting spots for the weary hiker.

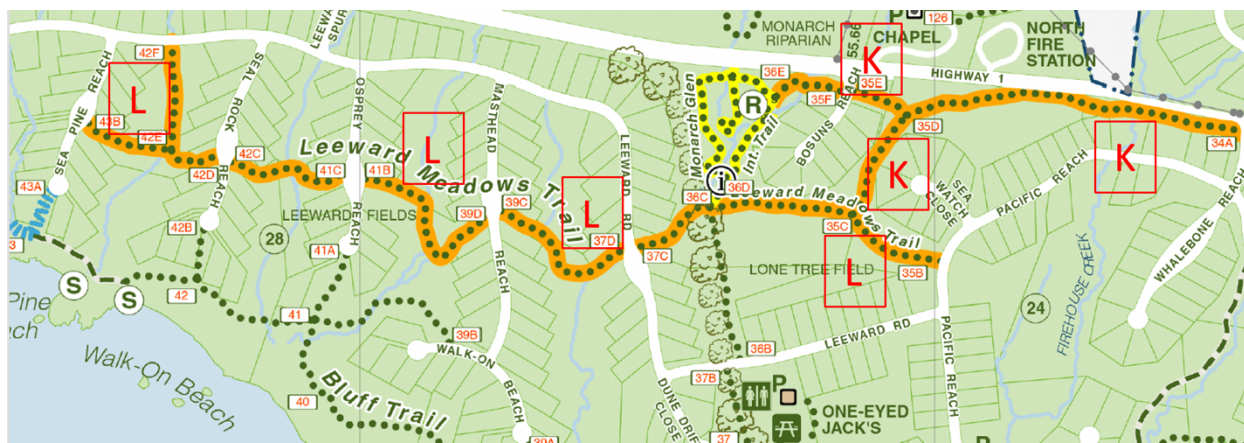
Value -- 4

J. Wild Moor Meadow Trail (TP 31A-Cormorant Reach to TP 33B; TP 32B to TP 31C) (0.66 miles)

This trail is too rough for most manual wheelchairs but should present no problems for any hiker with mobility concerns who does not need a wheelchair or mobility scooter.

The trail is somewhat bumpy and slightly uphill from TP 31A through TP 31B to TP 31C, then slightly downhill (and again somewhat bumpy) to TP 33B on Pacific Reach. The uphill sections could be a problem for underpowered scooters, particularly if the surface is wet. The trail from TP 31B to TP 32B (Wild Moor Reach) is relatively flat and smooth.

Value – 5



K. Highway One Trail (TP 34A- Whalebone Reach to TP 35C or to TP 36-MGIT) (0.58 miles)

This trail parallels the highway and is rough in some spots, smooth in others, with occasional sideways tilts. Too rough for most manual wheelchairs. It should be scooter-accessible until 60 yards north of Bosun's Reach, where a short bridge is too narrow (24 inches, no side barriers) for safe scooter passage. The bridge also has 2-inch and 3-inch drop-offs at each end, another problem. And a second bridge, 25 yards farther north, is also too narrow – 23.5 inches, no side barriers.

The trail continues beside the highway to the Monarch Glen Interpretive Trail, but *most of the MGIT is inaccessible to wheelchairs and scooters, and perhaps challenging for some others with mobility concerns because of its steps*. However, MGIT signposts 27 through 34 can be seen from the trail that heads east from TP 36C on the Leeward Meadows Trail, described just below.

The connector from TP 35D to TP 35C on the Leeward Meadows Trail is slightly downhill but can be sloppy (and thus a challenge when going west to east) during the rainy season.

Value -- 4

L. Leeward Meadows Trail (TP 35B-Pacific Reach to TP 43B or TP 42F-Leeward Road) (1.16 miles)

This long trail runs from Pacific Reach through Leeward Road, Masthead Reach, Osprey Reach, and Seal Rock Reach to Sea Pine Reach, going through a hedgerow and offering pleasant meadow views (Lone Tree Field and Leeward Fields), with many "back of the house" views and occasional ocean views.

The surface is generally too rough for most manual wheelchairs (except for the cross trail discussed just below), but most of this trail should be accessible to most scooterers and to most other hikers with

disability concerns, but there are several spots that can get quite wet and sloppy during the rainy season, *a real challenge – perhaps even for “normal” hikers.*

At TP 36C is a cross trail that runs east and west.

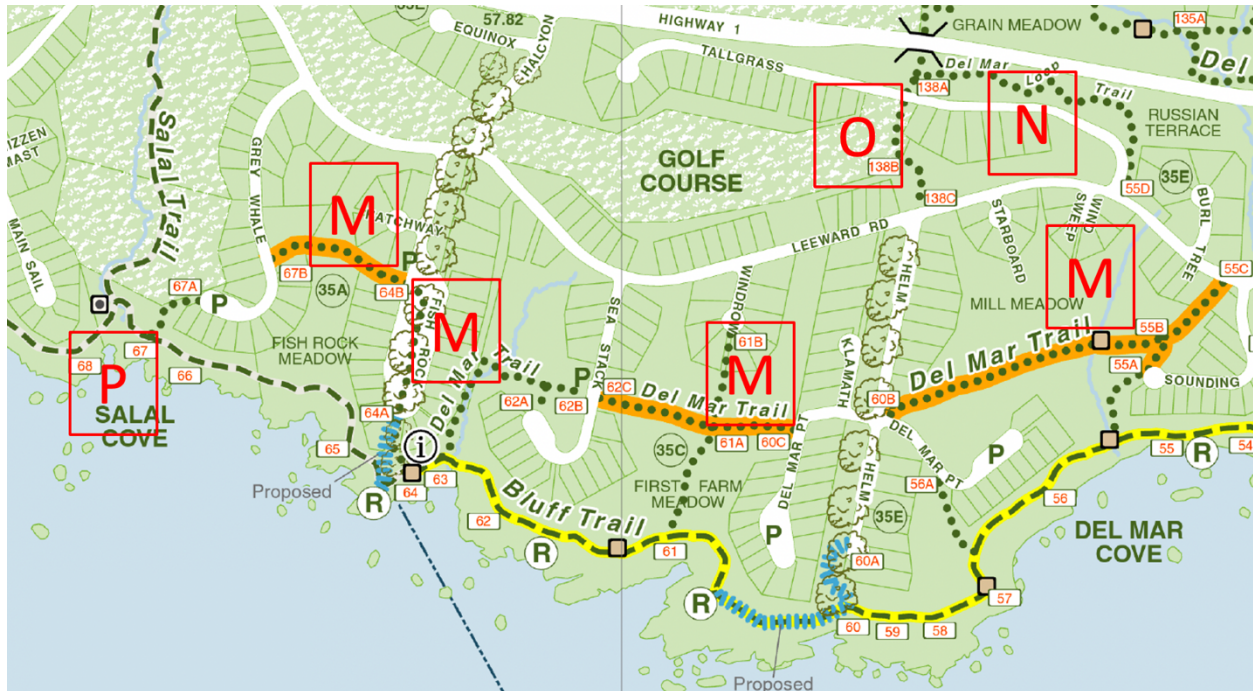
To the east the cross trail goes 55-60 yards to the Monarch Glen Interpretive Trail (MGIT) at TP 36D, where a box has printed trail guides (also available by scanning a QR code posted there). One branch of the cross trail then goes north, down rather steeply 15 yards to a narrow bridge – impassable for wheelchairs or scooters – but the other branch continues east along the MGIT’s southern edge through a very pleasant, woodsy area and up to the Highway One Trail (see K, above). The cross trail from TP 36C up to the Highway One Trail is smooth and only slightly uphill, likely accessible to both manual wheelchairs (perhaps with a push) and mobility scooters for about 90-95 yards (enough to access MGIT signposts 27-34), before it becomes too narrow for wheelchairs and scooters and then comes to stairs and a bridge that prevent further such access.

To the west the cross trail goes flat or gently downhill for 0.15 miles (about 250 yards) to TP 36B on Leeward Road – so gently that manual wheelchairs should be able to travel on it west to east from Leeward Road (possibly with a push), although the last few yards to Leeward Road can be quite soft, even in the dry season. The cross trail crosses Leeward Road and continues west 70 yards to an unmarked trail post, where a left (south) turn leads to the One-Eyed Jack’s picnic and play areas. The cross trail itself continues towards the Bluff Trail, but over a large, steep sand dune with multiple large roots, *inaccessible for scooters and wheelchairs, and likely impassable for most if not all people with any type of mobility issues.*

Also, there is a small hill just west of Leeward Road (at TP 37B) that would be too much for most manual wheelchairs (but OK for scooters). A better access to One-Eyed Jack’s for both wheelchairs and scooters would be via the driveway only 30 yards south to the parking area. However, a three-step stile at the far (western) edge of the play area prevents further access to points west for both wheelchairs and scooters and could be a problem with others who have difficulty with stairs.

The trail north from TC 36C is, like all of the Leeward Trail, too rough for most manual wheelchairs but generally passible for scooters, at least in the dry season – and *quite bumpy in many places*, especially the 40-50 yards just south of TP 42C (Seal Rock Reach) and the stretch between TP 42E and TP 43B (Sea Pine Reach). There is a short but steep downhill (when travelling north) and a small curb at TP 37C (Leeward Road); both slope and curb should be negotiable by scooters heading north, but likely a barrier for scooters heading south. The 50 yards or so south of TP 39C (Masthead Reach) have a significant sideways tilt that could be a real problem. **At least one scooter-user has taken a tumble here** —fortunately without injury.

Value -- 7



M. Del Mar Meadow Trail (TP 55C-Leeward Road to TP 67B-Grey Whale) (0.91 miles)

This long trail runs from Leeward Road just north of the Del Mar Center through Helm, Del Mar Point, Sea Stack, and Fish Rock, all the way to Grey Whale. It provides attractive meadow views (Mill Meadow, First Farm Meadow, and Fish Rock Meadow), two hedgerows, “back of the house” views of Sea Ranch architecture, distant ocean views, and even one close-up ocean view where the trail joins the Bluff Trail for a few yards. It can be combined with the Bluff Trail for loops of varying lengths. (See the *Accessibility Guide – Bluff Trail*.)

The trail is almost completely flat but varies from quite bumpy to extremely bumpy, except that the stretch between TP 64B (Fish Rock) and TP 67B (Grey Whale) is relatively smooth. This entire trail is too rough for most wheelchairs but should be OK for almost all other people with mobility issues.

Historical Marker 35-E7 (*Mill Railroad and Worker Housing*) sits atop a small ridge that runs east/west a few yards north of TP 55B. The ridge might be too steep for a scooter that is really underpowered or is carrying a heavy load.

The short connector from TP 55B to TP 55A (Sounding) is flat but quite bumpy. The curb at TP 55A can be avoided by proceeding about 10 yards to the west. Further north, the short trail leading to the end of Sea Stack at TP 62A has a short but steep slope along with a 4-inch curb, but these problems can be avoided by leaving (or entering) the Del Mar Meadow Trail where it crosses Sea Stack at TP 62B-62C.

The trail inland from TP 64 on the Bluff Trail to TP 64A (Fish Rock) is part of an *Easy Access Trail* despite some largish roots just west of TP 64A (Fish Rock). A 4-inch curb at Fish Rock can be a problem if you are travelling alone.

The trail on the other side of Fish Rock from TP 64A to 64B goes through a former hedgerow whose roots make for some bumps that can be negotiated on a mobility scooter, but it would be easier simply

to travel east along Fish Rock, which is paved. At TP 64B is a high curb that probably presents a barrier for scooters traveling north and might even be a problem for scooters going south.

Many of the trail segments described above are shared with bicyclists—marked in orange on the map.

Value -- 7

N. Del Mar Loop Trail – Western Section (TP 55D-Tallgrass to TP 138A-Tallgrass) (0.20 miles)

This trail goes through the Russian Terrace and features distant but pleasant ocean views. It is somewhat bumpy -- too rough for most manual wheelchairs – but should be passable by scooterers and by other hikers with mobility concerns.

Scooterers should approach this trail from the north (TP 138A), because of a 4-inch curb at TP 55D.

From TP 138A the trail goes east, through the pedestrian tunnel under Highway 1, and continues as part of the Saloon Trail Loop (see that entry, and *Del Mar Loop Trail – Eastern Section* in the *Accessibility Guide – Trails East of Highway One*, still in the editing stage).

Value -- 2

O. Tallgrass-Leeward Road Connector (TP 138A to TP 138C) (0.10 miles)

TP 138A to TP 138B is a paved golf cart path, so entirely accessible for mobility scooters but likely too steep for most manual wheelchairs. Be prepared to share with golf carts. The trail from TP 138B west to TP 138C is quite narrow, and becomes **completely inaccessible to wheelchairs and scooters, and rather challenging for some other hikers with mobility concerns**, just before it reaches Leeward Road because of the steps down to that road.

Value -- 1

P. Salal Trail (Gualala Point Regional Park to Bluff Trail between TP 67 and TP 68) (0.65 miles)

The trail is not accessible to wheelchairs or scooters, and quite challenging for many hikers with mobility problems, because of narrowness, rocks, roots, occasional sideways tilts, and some stairs. This is unfortunate, since the trail follows an all-year creek and is one of the most interesting in the Ranch. But hikers who can follow the Salal Trail to the Bluff Trail can sometimes get views of Salal Cove by turning right (north) to cross the bridge, then left for a few steps. But don't try this if Salal Creek is running high or if the ocean is at high tide.

Value -- 10