

# Trail Guide: Redwoods to River Roundabout

## At A Glance

**Length:** 4 miles

**Time:** 2.5 hrs

**Elevation:** 395 ft – 60 ft

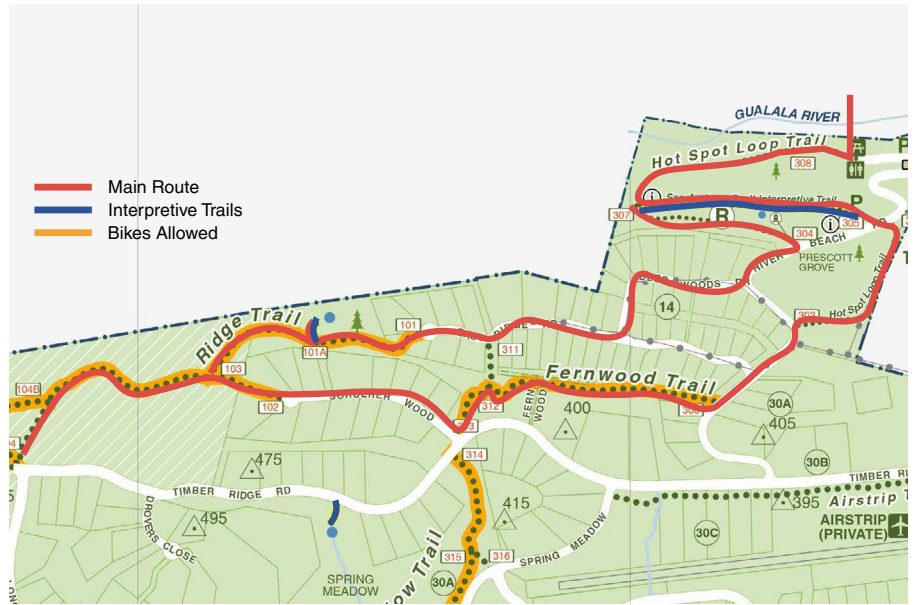
**Parking:** Timber Ridge and Longmeadow Rd., Seasonal: SAFIT Parking and The Hot Spot

**Restrooms:** Port-a-potty (seasonal) at The Hot Spot

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Accessibility:** Some sections are not suitable for mobility-impaired visitors.

**Features:** Redwood forest, wildflowers in spring, Gualala River, Hot Spot picnic area, sag ponds, SAFIT



## Redwoods to River Roundabout

Ours is a landscape sculpted by seismic forces, carved by a river and forested by some of the most serene and majestic trees on the planet. This suggested “roundabout” links together some of the many trails and connectors within our Redwood forested area near the Hot Spot on the Gualala River. This is a 2.5-hour hike or longer depending on time spent at the river or on the San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail (SAFIT).

Beginning at the corner of Longmeadow & Timber Ridge Roads (Parking available here), hike east from Trail Post 104 to 104B. Keeping to your right, hike the Ridge Trail to T/P 103. Keep to the right again and hike to T/P 102 and onto Sorcerer Wood Rd. Continue on the road to the end (where it meets Timber Ridge Road) and turn left at T/P 313 and onto the Fernwood Trail. Passing by T/P 312, continue south until the trail ends at River Beach Rd at T/P 306. Here, turn left (east) onto River Beach Rd and walk down to T/P 303.

From here, you will pick up the Hot Spot Loop Trail, continuing south to the utility pole and a large Redwood Tree. (Note the large storage tank up the hill to your right). Here begins the long descent (hiking poles come in handy here) following the utility power lines, through a forested area rich with winter and springtime wildflowers, down to the Hot Spot Service Road and T/P 302.

At this point, turn left onto the service road for just a few yards to T/P 305 where you begin the interpretive trail. There is a box with printed guides inside, as well as a QR code on the outside pointing to the same guide on the



*From left: Calypso Orchid; Trillium. Photos by Barbara Gomes.*



*SAFIT Guide Box. Photo by Barbara Gomes.*

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web. Scan the code on your mobile device or take a paper guide with you as you go. In the summer, signed parking is available just below this point.

Hike north on the SAFIT to experience what was a very active fault line as you'll see by the rolling effect of the terrain left there. Scan your eyes from east to west and note the curvatures in the land swooping along and down to the river below. There are 21 points of interests with numbered marker posts to stop and reflect upon, such as earthquake remnants, forest ecology and logging activity from the 1890's. Near interpretive trail marker #7 you will find a bench to take a break overlooking one of the many Sag Ponds on Sea Ranch created with earthquake movement on the San Andreas fault line which is 1/2 mile wide here. This is our longest Sag Pond and will retain water year-round.

Continue to follow the SAFIT, passing the last point of interest marker #21 and to the north guide box at T/P 307. If you took a paper guide, you may return it here or



*Gualala River at The Hot Spot. Photo by Barbara Gomes.*



*From left: Sag Pond; Redwood Stump. Photos by Barbara Gomes.*



*Trail to the river. Photo by Barbara Gomes.*

else keep it for future reference. Turning right here will bring you down a steep and winding trail lined by ferns and then to the banks of the South Fork of the Gualala River. Walking parallel to the river you may notice signs of erosion and subsidence of the riverbank – another sign of the natural forces at work here. You will soon come to T/P 308 and to The Hot Spot picnic area.

Be mindful that, during winter months with heavy rains, this lower area is prone to flooding. One can see the high-water silt lines left on Redwoods at the picnic grounds. Just on the east side of the Hot Spot is the TSRA pumping & water treatment station. The water wells are just across the river from here. Walk out onto the riverbed from this point if you wish. I've heard that the name Hot Spot was derived from the fact that here one could enjoy a warm comfort away from the chilly winds off the Pacific along our TSR bluffs.

Now it's time to reverse the hike back to T/P 308 and uphill to T/P 307, but this time keep straight, hiking the Upper Hot Spot Trail above the SAFIT until you come to T/P 304 and the service road. Turn right onto the service road and follow it up to Deep Woods Dr., continuing north & northeast to East Ridge Rd. Turn right onto East Ridge and follow it North to the end. Here, at T/P 101 you'll begin the Ridge Trail. Be sure to stop at T/P 101A and follow a short trail to another Sag Pond. This pond will dry out during the summer just from evaporation.

Back up to T/P 101A, continue north, passing by T/P 103 until you come to T/P 104B where you'll keep to the left and back up to the parking area where your car awaits.

Barbara Gomes  
Trails Committee 