

The Hammond Coastal Trail
An Introduction
by Carol Ralph
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The Hammond Coastal Trail in McKinleyville goes all the way from Clam Beach County Park in the north to Mad River Rd. at the south end of the old bridge over the Mad River, 5.5 miles. We should thank a wide variety of agencies and non-profits for its existence and maintenance.

Elaine Allison recommends what she calls the Hammond Loop Trail. Start at the west end of Murray Rd. and walk north on the trail traversing the bluff above Mad River. After this trail zigs up the hill away from the river and goes along a pine forest (both Bishop and Shore Pines), it veers left down to a bridge crossing Widow White Creek. Then it heads uphill to join the frontage road, Leitz Ave.. Follow this south to Murray Rd. and turn west to return to the start.

Elaine's plant list, posted nearby this document, shows the good diversity of plants found along this route, including 7 species of conifers and 7 of ferns. One of the notable species is one Maple-leaf Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malachroides*), a listed rare plant, which Elaine tries to protect from the weed-eaters each year. It is in the Widow White Creek gully. Elaine is not afraid of grasses, so you will find them identified in this list also.

Another way to enjoy this trail is to use a shuttle procedure to be able to walk the length one way from Hiller Park to the parking area on Leitz Ave. near the Vista Point, or even to Clam Beach. .