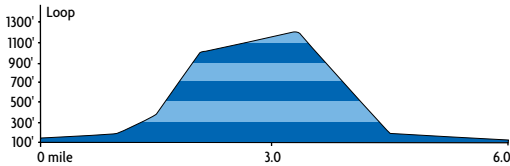


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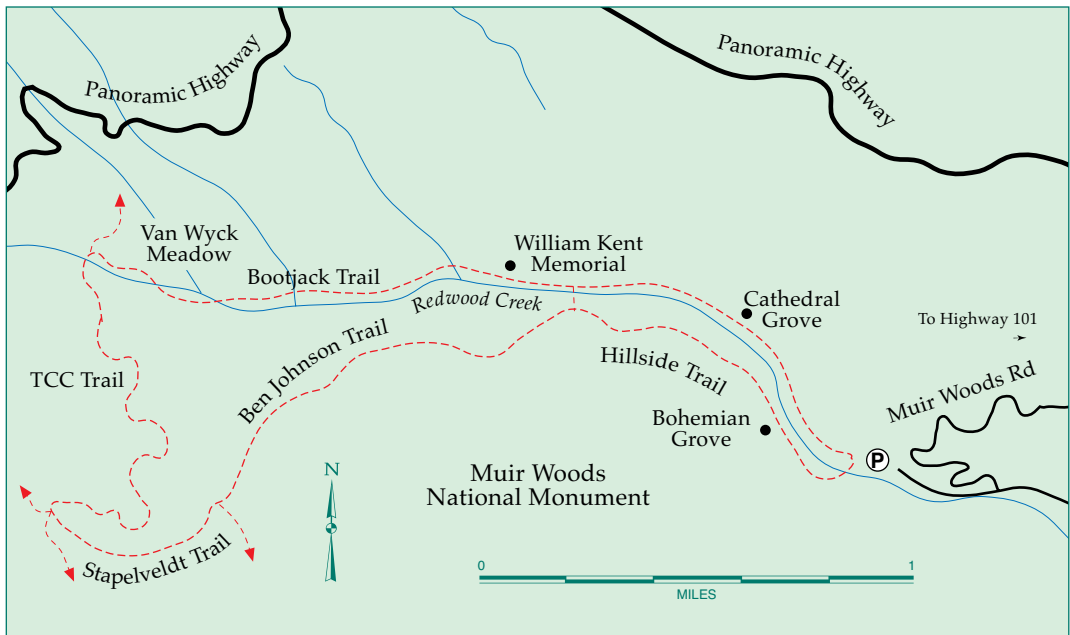
MUIR WOODS

Length: 6-mile loop**Hiking time:** 3 hours**High point:** 1,240 feet**Total elevation gain:** 1,200 feet**Difficulty:** easy to moderate**Season:** year-round**Water:** available from faucets at the visitor center and along trails**Maps:** USGS 7.5' San Rafael, park brochure (available at the visitor center)**Information:** Muir Woods National Monument

This hike in Muir Woods begins with an informative self-guided interpretive nature trail displaying spectacular redwood trees, followed by quiet creekside walking, climaxed by bird's-eye views of some of the tallest redwoods in California.

Five miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge on Highway 101, go west on Highway 1 at the Stinson Beach exit. After 3.3 miles turn right on Muir Woods Road and go 2.5 miles to the visitor center parking lot (follow signs).

The paved, populated path (starting as the self-guided interpretive nature trail) begins through a level old-growth redwood forest. In this high-usage first 0.5 mile, posted signs provide interesting information about redwoods. Cross any of the four wooden bridges over Red-





Stillness in the redwoods

wood Creek that lead to several redwood groves (all paths shortly rejoin the main trail). Wander into Cathedral Grove, highlighted by tall redwoods, and then make a side trip up Fern Creek to visit the William Kent Memorial beside a fallen Douglas fir.

Refreshing seclusion awaits at 0.9 mile as you take your first steps onto the Bootjack Trail and leave the crowds behind. The quiet solitude is comforting: The steady splash of tumbling Redwood Creek is virtually the only sound you hear.

Leave the crowds behind as you journey down serene and shady Bootjack Trail.

The path climbs past bigleaf maple and bracken, sword, and lady ferns to reach a large wooden bridge across Redwood Creek, which originates near the top of Mount Tamalpais's west peak. The trail cuts a steep course up the hillside, reuniting with a bouldery section of Redwood Creek at 1.9 miles.

The climb persists 0.4 mile to small Van Wyck Meadow and its surrounding Douglas fir, coast live oak, and California laurel. From the meadow, bear left onto the TCC Trail. It provides a 1.4-mile level excursion across a series of canyon sides in tranquil, shady woods. Teasing glimpses of Mount Tamalpais appear intermittently beyond the low-hanging limbs of majestic Douglas fir.

At 3.6 miles, reach a wooden bridge and bench, where you make two successive left turns on the Stapelveldt Trail. This trail descends past two huge redwoods that form an archway at 4.1 miles. Reach a signed trail intersection 0.1 mile farther, and bear left onto the Ben Johnson Trail.

Depart this gradually descending trail at 5.2 miles with a right turn onto the signed Hillside Trail. This scenic, level trail offers several vistas of Redwood Creek and its surrounding massive redwoods before reaching the parking lot.

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