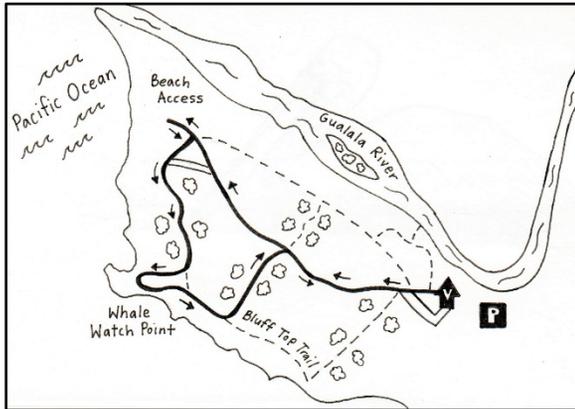




Gualala Regional Park Quest

A 1.5 mile adventure... It **WHALE** be great!



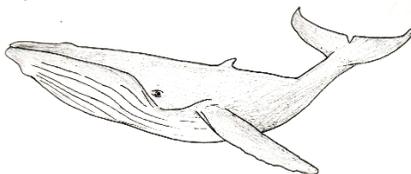
Start your quest at the Visitors Center.

1. *Whale, oh whale, let's start this quest. You will learn a lot, I must confess. Start off by the blue whale tail, and follow down the paved trail.*

As you walk down the path, notice the different whale drawings. The distance from the whale tail to the drawing of each whale is the length of that species.

The last whale drawing is the blue whale, which can reach up to 100 feet! How many of you would it take to make a blue whale?

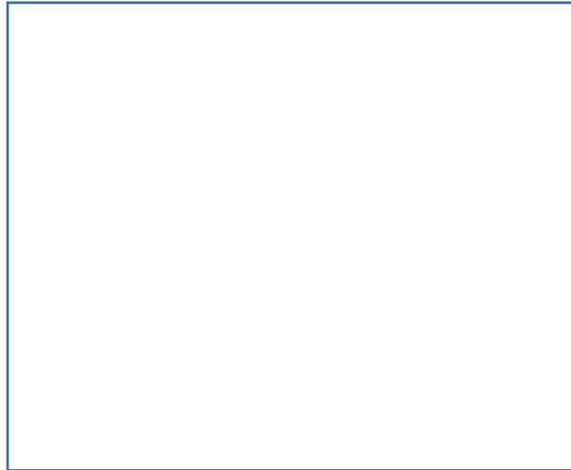
Gualala Regional Park has great views for whale watching. Before you continue down the trail, check out the interpretative sign about whales. Which whale would you want to be? Why?



2. *Continue along the paved path and take note of the trees, they are big and tall- a sight to see! Do they sway in the breeze? Can you hear their leaves?*

Take a moment to observe the trees around you. Are there many different kinds? Or just a couple? How tall do you think they are? What does their bark look like? Feel like?

Take a moment to draw your favorite tree that you see. Later, use that drawing to see if you can figure out what it is.



3. *There are three forks ahead. Stay right, right, and right! Always make sure that the river is in sight!*

The river to the right of you is the Gualala River. Where the river meets the ocean is a body of water called an "estuary." Does the river connect to the ocean right now? It usually connects in the spring after the rainy season. When it does, salmon are able to swim upstream and reproduce.

Be creative and pretend to be a fish!

4. *Keep heading toward the beach, it is almost in reach! Don't let the wind blow you away, especially on a cloudy day.*

The weather at beaches in Northern California can vary a lot day to day. What is the weather like today? Is the sun out or is it cloudy? Is there wind today? How fast do you think it is going? Do you see any trees that have been affected by the wind? Can you tell which way the wind usually blows?



Describe the weather of your perfect beach day.

5. *As you walk along the sand, pick it up and feel it in your hand. Walk to the left around the bend, look for a big slice of Swiss cheese to befriend!*

Does this cliffside look silly to you? Why do you think it has those holes on the side of it? Does it feel different from other rocks you've felt? This is because the ocean water hits the side of the cliff and erodes the rocks over a very long time.

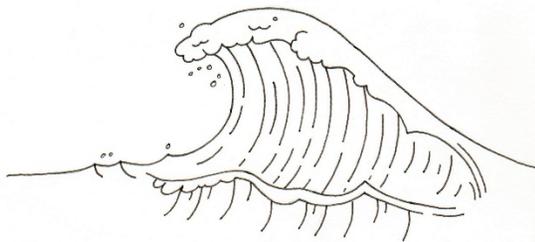
Take five minutes to draw the cliffside and be very detailed. Enjoy the beach before starting the next clue!



6. Head back to where you entered the sand, this may be tricky but I'll give you a hand. Turn right at the fork and head for the edge of the land, check out the map if you don't understand.

Once you get to the edge of the Cliffside, look out at the water. Do you know what tides are? Tides are the rise and fall of the level of the ocean. They are caused by the gravitational pull of the sun and moon. There are two low tides and two high tides every day.

Do you think it is high or low tide right now? Why do you think so?



7. Take a seat on the bench fifty yards south, it is here you will be as quiet as a mouse. Listen and feel the earth around you, it is good for your brain and body too.

As you sit out looking at the ocean, follow this guide:

Take 5 deep breathes in and out.

Listen to the sound of the waves.

Smell the ocean air, is it salty?

Feel the wind or sun on your face.

Close your eyes, can you hear anything besides the ocean?

Stand up and touch your toes. Feel free to do more stretches if you feel like it.

Finish with 5 more deep breathes in and out.

8. Continue along the trail until you reach the loop, you can see whales hang out in groups! Do you see any out past the waves in the water? If it looks too small it could be an otter.

You made it to the whale watching point- nice job! This spot is great for whale watching because you are on a peninsula and have ocean views in front of you and to your right and left. Check out the interpretative sign about whales as you pass it!

Take a few moments and wait to see if you can spot a whale. While you wait, think of what ocean animal you could be and why. What ocean animal that captures your personality?

Example: "I am a dolphin because I like to play and make people laugh!"

9. Take a left at the fork, wave goodbye to the ocean. Laugh as the ocean waves back with commotion.

As you re-enter the coastal forest, and the sound of the ocean slowly subsides, listen for all the other sounds this ecosystem has to offer. Cup your hands with fingers closed. Put your hands behind your ears and push your ears forward to make them stick out. These are your "deer ears," your ears act as sound catchers.



With your deer ears, listen for one minute and count on your fingers how many sounds you hear?

10. Turn right onto the paved trail that will take you back, we hope you had fun and want to come back! As you look at all the wildlife, take a moment to appreciate all the good in your life!

Have you ever practiced gratitude? Thinking about the positive things in our life can help us feel happier, and is a great tool when we feel down.

List five things that you are grateful for.

Thank you for completing your quest! You did a great job! How do you feel? Did you learn anything new?



If you had a good time there are more quests to be found at SonomaCountyParks.org. Thank you for participating!