

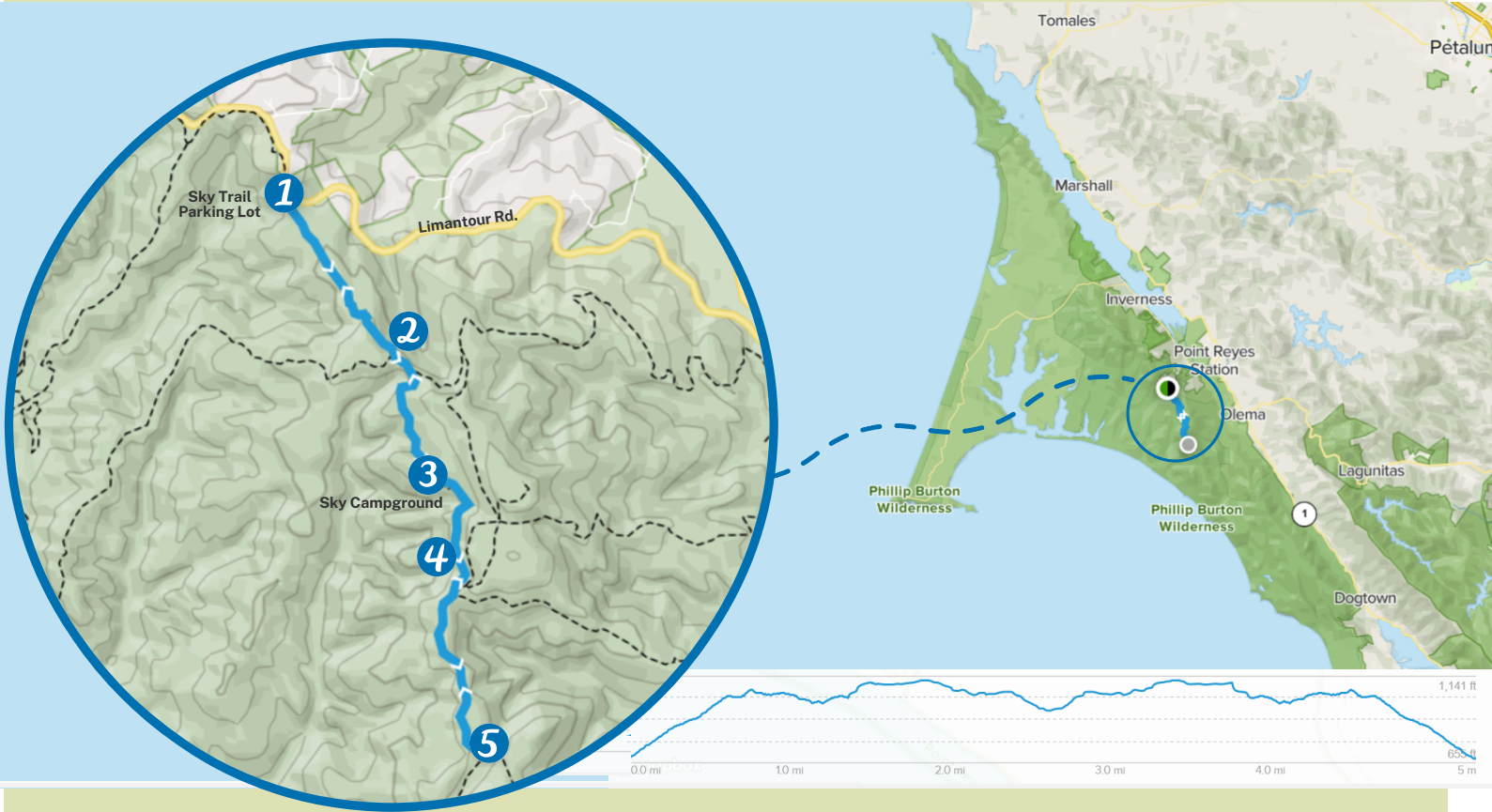


Sky Trail

Self Guided Hike

5.3 miles

755 feet of elevation



This self guided hike takes you down Sky Trail, a dramatic, moderately trafficked trail that runs along the crest of Inverness ridge, and through the central area of the Woodward Fire perimeter.

HISTORY

On August 17, 2020, the Woodward Fire was sparked by lightning near the Coast Trail, and went on to burn 5,000 acres of Point Reyes National Seashore. Twenty years prior the Vision Fire burned across more than 12,000 acres of the park; approximately 2,000 of those burned again in the Woodward Fire. On Sky Trail you'll see evidence of fire management strategies, impacts to flora, and burn severity on grassland, scrub, and forest habitats.



Photo By: Anela Kopshever, NPS

STOPS & THOUGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

1 Vegetation Regrowth

0.0 mi, Sky Trail Parking Lot

The Woodward Fire burned across a variety of habitats that had not burned in recent decades but are largely fire tolerant. The inland Bishop Pine are fire propogenic. For these trees, fire is beneficial in allowing their seedlings to sprout and grow. Similarly, vegetation across the park has regrown quickly. Using the April 2020 image to the right as a reference, what indicators can you find on your hike to determine where fire did or did not occur?



Sky Trail, April 4, 2020

2 Fire Management Strategies

0.8 mi, Horse Trail intersection

This is the north western fire perimeter! Here, suppression and mechanical tactics were used to manage the Woodward Fire as it burned. To suppress the spread of fire, firefighters used retardant and built containment (dozer) lines by clearing soil and vegetation with bulldozers. Looking closely at this spot, can you see the remains of any dozer lines?

3 Sky Campground Pit Stop

1.3 mi, Sky Campground

This is the only restroom along the trail, stop if needed! This is also the only open shrubland on this hike. Many species rely on this and other habitats for food and shelter. When these habitats burn, species must relocate and often do not survive. Park Biologists continue to monitor the long-term and indirect effects of the fire on flora and fauna. One species, coyote brush is heavily prevalent at the campground and burns easily. An image of burned brush is pictured to the right. Can you spot remnants of burned Coyote brush and regrowth?

4 Recovery & Repair

1.9 mi, Mt. Wittenberg Trail intersection

Post-Woodward Fire management includes vegetation management to prevent the spread of invasive plants and trail maintenance to prevent landslides and flooding. Other concerns after a wildfire include hazardous trees and the loss of critical species and habitat. The Northern Spotted Owl and the Point Reyes Mountain Beaver (pictured right) are species of concern that park staff are monitoring for impacts of fire on available habitat. Alternatively, certain species of butterfly and song bird have done well after the fire. What species do you see on your hike?

5 Turnaround Point

2.6 mi, Meadow Trail intersection

The preservation of this trail, and fire recovery efforts throughout Point Reyes would not be possible without the dedicated park staff who have worked tirelessly to protect our park, and without donors like you who support PRNSA's partnership with the National Park Service. PRNSA and our park partner are currently finalizing a photo monitoring project that will track regrowth for years to come. Keep an eye out for how to get involved in the next couple of months!

Douglas Fir
(*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)



Huckleberry
(*Vaccinium ovatum*)



FLORA



Coyote Brush
(*Baccharis pilularis*)



Lupine
(*Lupinus spp.*)

Northern Spotted Owl
(*Strix occidentalis caurina*)



Mountain Beaver
(*Aplodontia rufa phaea*)



FAUNA



Satyr Comma
(*Polygonia satyrus*)



Lazuli Bunting
(*Passerina amoena*)