

Trail Map of Mt. Sutro Open Space Reserve

University of California San Francisco



- Notes:
- Parking lots on campus are by permit only. Use UC's parking garage or public transit. Adjacent neighborhoods have short-term parking (residential permit parking).
 - Please stay on established trails to protect sensitive habitat. Leave the trails in better condition than you find them. All plants, animals, and natural features are protected.
 - Dogs must be on a leash.
 - Be alert when crossing roads—look and listen for cars.
 - Stay out of the woods during storms and high winds. Be alert for falling branches and other hazards.
 - Poison oak grows in some areas. Avoid its shiny "leaves of three."
 - Motorcycles, motor vehicles, camping, fires, and fireworks are prohibited.
- UCSF Police: (415) 476-1414

North	Major Trails	Street	UCSF Open Space Reserve
Farnsworth	Stairways	Improvements	UCSF Medical Campus & Housing
	Minor Paths	Caution!	City Parks & Open Space Preserves
	Sidewalks	Rock Outcrop	Native Plant Habitat
	Temporary Road Closure	Steep (arrows point up)	Best Views
	Projects	Major Junctions	
		Mileage between points	

Note: All information on this map is subject to change. Trails may become unsafe or impassable due to overgrowth, storms, windfalls, and other circumstances. Use your best judgement. Obey posted closures and respect private property. Mapmaker assumes no liability for the condition of trails, roads, or features on this map.

Join Mount Sutro Stewards on the first Saturday of every month to maintain trails and restore native plant habitat on Mt. Sutro. We meet at Woods Lot, 9AM-1PM. More info online at www.natureinthecity.org. Call Craig (415) 665-1077, or Ben (415) 387-1437.

Mt. Sutro Open Space Reserve

Lands of University of California San Francisco



Some Suggested Hikes

Letters in parentheses refer to junctions on the map. As of 2008, trails are still unsigned.

1. Parnassus to Clarendon via Fairy Gates Trail

Although the Fairy Gates Trail is a mere 900 feet long, it feels a world apart from the city. A well-travelled route between the Medical Center and Aldea Housing, it was one of the few parts of the historic trail system to remain continually in use. This route bypasses the summit of Mt. Sutro and stays mostly along roads, but it connects to three trails to the summit. It is also a woody through-route from Golden Gate Park to Twin Peaks and beyond (described in trip 2).

Length: 0.73 mile or 3800 feet from Parnassus (A) up to Clarendon (E) (one way).
0.36 mile or 1900 feet from Parnassus (A) up to Woods Lot (B).
0.37 mile or 1950 feet from Woods Lot (B) via Fairy Gates Trail and Johnstone to Clarendon (E)
Elevation Gain/Loss: +425'/-50'.

From the east edge of the Medical Center on Parnassus Ave., (A) start up the narrow sidewalk along **Medical Center Way**. Just past the loading docks, turn left, cross the road and ascend a sturdy **stairway** to Surge Parking Lot. Now on the lower North Ridge of Mt. Sutro, turn right and ascend the parking lot and driveway, being alert for cars. You can stay on the driveway to the T-intersection, then turn left, or you may head left up a set of gray, wooden stairs which wrap around the Woods Building. Either way, you arrive back on **Medical Center Way**. Turn left, past the **Woods Lot bus shelter** (B) at 100 Medical Center Way. (Mt. Sutro Stewards meets in the adjacent parking lot).

Continue uphill along the path behind the guardrail of Upper Medical Center Way. Around the first corner there's a driveway on the right side of the road, where the Historic Trail (Trip 3) starts west; the lower Historic Trail also descends left into Woodland Canyon. About 600 feet past the bus shelter, Medical Center Way bends left. (C). Across the road to your right is the start of the North Ridge Trail (Trip 4). Leave the roadside trail and turn left down the **Fairy Gates Trail**. A few steps ahead, stay right at as the Woodland Canyon Trail descends steeply left.

The **Fairy Gates Trail** traverses a wooded hillside overlooking Woodland Canyon. Scattered amidst the towering eucalyptus trees are numerous cherry trees whose white blossoms float across the hillside in spring. The trail finds a level path between several big Franciscan chert outcrops, then bends into a shady side canyon. All too soon the trail emerges into a gravel **driveway**; turn right to the lower **intersection of Johnstone and Behr Drives** (D). To exit Aldea Housing, turn left on **Johnstone**, which descends steeply about 150 yards to the summit of **Clarendon Ave.** (E). From here you can go right to La Avanzada and Twin Peaks (trip 6) or left down Clarendon to Tank Hill Open Space, Mt. Olympus, and Eureka Valley.

Variation: Ascending via Farnsworth Stairs

An alternate start from Cole Valley – the Craftsman era homes, brick paving, and plum trees on Edgewood Street are a special treat. They are best visited as a side trip (the Woodland Canyon Trail from the end of Edgewood is too rough and steep to recommend at this time).

From Cole Valley or UCSF, make your way to the corner of Parnassus and Willard. A few steps up **Willard**, turn right up **Farnsworth Stairs** (pause as you ascend to enjoy the city views). Emerging at the tip of Edgewood Street, proceed straight on tiny **Farnsworth Street** and enter UCSF land at a chain gate. (AA) Turn left and follow the wooded **path** up the ridge behind the houses. Arriving at the **Surge Parking Lot**, continue straight and follow the route to Woods Lot (B) described above.

2. Clarendon to Sutro Tower and Twin Peaks

The enormous Sutro Tower broadcast tower, visible from all over the city, was built in 1972. You start out through eucalyptus habitat similar to Mt. Sutro's, but as you near Twin Peaks and leave Sutro's land, you emerge onto coastal scrub and grassland, one of the city's finest areas of native habitat.

From **Clarendon and Johnstone** (E), follow the sidewalk on the north side of Clarendon right, over the crest, and cross Clarendon near Christopher Drive to **La Avanzada**. Or cross Clarendon at Johnstone and walk carefully west along the parked cars (no sidewalk) to La Avanzada. (Whichever place you cross, look and listen for cars, and walk defensively – Clarendon is a wide, fast road and the summit is a blind curve!)

On the right side of La Avanzada, start up an asphalt sidewalk through the woods. Shortly you come to the corner of La Avanzada and Dellbrook. Turn left on one-lane **La Avanzada** (be alert for Sutro Tower vehicles) and ascend through unkempt eucalyptus forest. The land on the left side of the road is Interior Greenbelt; the land on the right is private. Soon the road curves south toward Sutro Tower. You pass the end of **Palo Alto Street** on the left, after which La Avanzada is private but hikers and cyclists are allowed up to the gate for the broadcast facility. Just before the gate and guard house, turn left to **Twin Peaks Reservoir**, and follow the asphalt path around the fenced, covered reservoir. Halfway around, an asphalt driveway descends to Marview Drive.

Cross **Marview** and head right a few steps to find a **path** leading on the south side of Summit Reservoir, through a dense patch of briars and poison oak (usually passable) and steeply up to an old, remnant paved road. A few steps left takes you to the guardrail of **Twin Peaks Blvd**. You can follow the guardrail south to Twin Peaks, but well before you come to the summit loop the trail is overgrown and you must walk on the road side of the guardrail (watch/listen for cars). An alternative is to cross Twin Peaks Blvd. and ascend a steep footpath through the grassland, emerging at the west end of the Christmas Tree Point overlook. Follow the sidewalk east and enjoy the view. At the east end, the sidewalk continues as an informal footpath back to Twin Peaks Blvd. Cross carefully to the base of the peaks and follow the stairs up over the peaks.

3. Nike Road from Aldea Housing to Summit

The Nike Road is nearly all that remains of the Nike radar site on the summit of Mt. Sutro, which controlled missiles based at the Presidio from the 1950s to mid '60s. Today it's the shortest route to the summit garden, which was planted in 2001 by Rotary Club volunteers.

Length: 0.49 mile or 3800 feet from Clarendon (E) to summit (H) (one way).
0.13 mile or 700 feet just from bottom of Nike Road (F) to South Ridge Trail (G)
Elevation Gain/Loss: +250'/-0'.

From the top of Clarendon (E), enter Aldea San Miguel Housing on **Johnstone Drive**; ascend steeply 1 block to **Behr Drive**. (D) Turn left on Behr and ascend moderately past more apartment buildings. At a second intersection with Johnstone (F), stay straight on **Nike Road**, a one-lane, paved road through dense forest. Step around a chain gate and begin climbing west. A couple hundred yards ahead the road curves right. You'll pass the South Ridge Trail (G) on your left, then arrive at a fork in the road at the edge of a clearing. Ignore the right-hand service road and angle left (now heading east). The pavement ends a few steps ahead at a second chain gate, from which you amble up gravel path through the **Rotary Native Plant Garden** to the summit, now in open meadow and coastal scrub habitat.

More Suggested Hikes



4. Historic & South Ridge Trails from Medical Center Way to Summit

The Historic Trail circles the west flank of Mt. Sutro with dramatic rock outcrops and glimpses of views. We believe it was built before 1900, and may have been abandoned in the 1940s. Mt. Sutro Stewards discovered it in 2003 and restored it in 2005. The South Ridge Trail was built in the 1990s and loosely follows older logging roads. The stately eucalyptus forest includes an impressive variety of native plants, including ferns, elderberry, osoberry, wild rose, and California blackberry (and a bit of poison oak). The starting point is midway along Medical Center Way (off Trip 1). It's a great loop paired with the North Ridge Trail (Trip 5).

Length:* 0.60 mile or 3100 feet on Historic Trail from Woods Lot (B) to junction with South Ridge Trail (I).
0.12 mile or 1000 feet on South Ridge Trail from Historic Trail junction (I) to summit (H)
0.72 mile or 410 feet total length (both trails) to summit (one-way)

Elevation Gain/Loss: +310'/-10'.

The **Historic Trail** starts alongside a paved driveway about 100 feet uphill from the **Woods Lot** and the brown wooden bus shelter at 100 Medical Center Way (B). Cross Medical Center Way when it's safe, and head right on the single-track trail, which traverses gently across a steep hillside overlooking the Medical Center. In several places, the trail builders used stone walls to make a level route through rough terrain. After about 0.2 mile the trail curves south and begins a long, gradual ascent through a remote area of forest. About 0.4 mile from the start, the forest thins and you may glimpse Golden Gate Park and the Marin Headlands to the north. As we round the next corner, the old West Ridge Trail ascends steeply across our route. Continue south past several craggy chert outcrops as we ascend to the South Ridge and a four-way junction (I).

Turn left on the **South Ridge Trail**. In a few steps you pass a T-junction with the Gardener's Trail (keep right). In about 400 feet you arrive at the paved **Nike Road** (G). To reach the summit, turn left up this road 100 feet to the start of the **Rotary Native Plant Garden**, and follow the gravel trail another 500 feet east to the summit. Or, to return directly to Aldea Housing, turn right down the **Nike Road** (Trip 2 in reverse).

5. North Ridge Trail to Summit

The North Ridge Trail used to head straight up the ridgeline, but it's been mostly rebuilt on a gentler grade so it's safer and more enjoyable even when the ground is wet from fog drip. The summit garden rewards your climb. Starting point is midway along Medical Center Way (off Trip 1).

Length:* 0.4 mile/2000 feet from Medical Center Way/Fairy Gates Trail junction (C) to summit (H).

Elevation Gain/Loss: +210'/-10'.

Start from upper **Medical Center Way** opposite the Fairy Gates Trail (C) Cross the road when it's safe and start up the **North Ridge Trail**, which switchbacks gradually across a wooded slope beneath chert outcrops. Another switchback brings you to the ridgeline, where you turn left and ascend on a rolling grade. About 1500 feet from the start, angle right as the Mystery Trail (J) branches left. The North Ridge Trail now climbs via a series of looping turns, emerging at a reed grass meadow and rock outcrop just below the summit. Head up the gravel path into the **Rotary Native Plant Garden** to a Y, where you turn left and join the main gravel path to the **summit** (H) or turn right and descend to the **Nike Road** (Trip 2 in reverse).

6. Summit Loop using North Ridge, Mystery, and East Ridge Trails

The Mystery Trail is a welcome, level interlude across the lushly-wooded north-facing slope between the North and East Ridge Trails. It was started in the 1980s but remained unfinished until 2001. The East Ridge Trail climbs through drier, south-facing forest. Three pairs of switchbacks replace the old, steep trail that went straight up the ridgeline. The suggested route is the best way to visit the East Ridge (the lower East Ridge Trail is steeper than we like, and may someday be rebuilt). Starting point is midway along Medical Center Way (off Trip 1). The upper trails also makes a scenic bonus loop if you arrive at the summit hike via other trails (such as Trips 3 or 4).

Length:* 0.75 mile or 3850 feet from Medical Center Way (C) to summit (H) via Mystery and East Ridge Trails (one way; compare to trip 5)

1.05 mile or 5850 feet as a round-trip, ascending the long way to the summit (H) and returning on North Ridge Trail to start (C)

Elevation Gain/Loss: +250'/-250'

From upper **Medical Center Way** opposite the Fairy Gates Trail (C), cross the road when it's safe and start up the **North Ridge Trail**, which switchbacks gradually across a wooded slope beneath chert outcrops before gaining the ridgeline. Turn left up the rolling ridgeline.

Turn left at a prominent T-junction (J) onto the **Mystery Trail**, a short, mostly level route across the north face of Mt. Sutro. An understory of plum trees and ferns lend a fine-scale, well-tended feel to this part of the forest.

In about 500 feet the trail swings right onto south-facing slope and becomes the **East Ridge Trail**. You may notice an informal junction (K) with the lower East Ridge Trail, which descends steeply left (not recommended). The **East Ridge Trail** begins a gradual ascent through dry, somewhat unkempt eucalyptus and accacia forest. Several switchbacks bring the trail back to the ridgeline. Zig-zag up to the **summit**, which commands a fine view west down the length of the Rotary Native Garden, but hardly any view beyond the thick scrim of trees that surround the summit.

When you are rested, amble west through the **Rotary Native Plant Garden**. Well before the main gravel path descends to the chain gate (at the garden's Nike Road entrance), turn right on a gravel side path, then right again, to start down the **North Ridge Trail**. The trail circles around the right side of a reed grass meadow and rock outcrop. (A spur trail left of the the rock outcrop no longer goes anywhere). Now you turn sharp left and descend into the forest via a series of tight turns. A short distance ahead, your trail levels and meets the Mystery Trail (J). Stay straight on the North Ridge Trail and retrace your steps back down to Medical Center Way.

Notes:

*Assuming you start from Clarendon (E) or Parnassus (A), remember to add the distance to the trailheads (B) or (C) – about 0.75 round trip. For example, starting and ending off-campus, a round-trip via the North Ridge Trail (Trip 4) is roughly **1.75 miles**. A loop using the North Ridge (Trip 4) then descending the South Ridge and Historic Trails (Trip 5) the full distance is about **1.9 miles (almost 2 miles)**. **Good exercise!**

You can figure additional mileages using the accompanying trail map (page 1 of this PDF) which is posted at www.peasepress.com/sutromap.pdf.

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• Please leave the trails in better condition than you find them. Stay on established trails to protect sensitive habitat. All plants, animals, and natural features are protected.

• Dogs must be on a leash.

• Bikes are allowed on trails. Please ride at a reasonably slow speed and be able to stop within sight distance at all times. Don't skid. Hikers have right of way. Avoid riding in heavy fog or immediately after rain to minimize trail erosion.

• Always be alert when crossing roads—look and listen for cars.

• For your safety, stay out of the woods during storms and high winds, to avoid falling branches and other hazards. Be alert and use your best judgement.

• Poison oak grows in some areas. Avoid its shiny "leaves of three."

• Motorcycles, motor vehicles, camping, fires, and fireworks are prohibited.

Emergency: 911. UCSF Police: (415) 476-1414