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	Major Trails		UCSF Open Space Reserve
	Stairways		UCSF Medical Campus & Housing
	Minor Paths		City Parks & Open Space
	Unrestored Historic Trail		Native Plant Habitat
	Steep (arrows point up)		Great Views
	Junctions (see descriptions)		Caution!
	Mileage between points		
	Trail/Habitat Improvements		
	Rock Outcrops		

**Parking** on the UCSF campus requires a valid parking permit. Many adjacent neighborhoods have short term-parking (plus permit parking for residents). Use UC's parking garage or public transit.

**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 kept on leash at all times. Bring bags and remove all dog waste.

**Beware of falling branches** during storms and high winds. Stay out of the woods until wind abates and be alert for fresh hazards.

**Poison oak** grows in several areas. Learn to recognize and avoid its shiny "leaves of three"

**Motorcycles, motor vehicles, camping, and fires are prohibited.**

**Be alert crossing roads.** Look and listen for cars. Use mirrors when available.

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 shown (or not shown) on this map.

**UCSF Police: (415) 476-1414**

# Mt. Sutro Open Space Reserve

Lands of University of California San Francisco



## Some Suggested Hikes and Rides

### 1. From the Medical Center to Aldea Housing via Fairy Gates Trail (Parnassus to Clarendon)

Although the Fairy Gates Trail is a mere 900 feet long, it feels a world apart from the city. This well-travelled route between the Medical Center and Aldea Housing was one of the few historic trails to remain continually in use (or at least since the 1950s). Our route bypasses the summit of Mt. Sutro and stays mostly along roads, but three trails to the summit branch off of it. Fairy Gates 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).

North half: 0.36 mile or 1900 feet from Parnassus (A) up to Woods Lot (B).

South half: 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 permit-only 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 descends left into the canyon.

About 600 feet past the bus shelter, Medical Center Way bends left (C). Across the road to your right you see 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 as the Edgewood Trail descends 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 there 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.



### 1a. Farnsworth Stairs Alternate:

*This is a scenic, alternate access from Cole Valley – Edgewood Street's Craftsman era homes, brick paving, and plum trees on Edgewood Street are a special treat, best visited as a side trip (the Woodland Canyon Trail from the end of Edgewood is very rough and steep).*

Make your way to the corner of Parnassus and Willard. A few steps up **Willard**, turn right up **Farnsworth Stairs** (pause partway up for 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**, follow the above route to Woods Lot (B).



### 1b. Lower Historic/Edgewood Trails Alternate:

Between (B) and (C), the Lower Historic Trail and Edgewood Trails are a woody alternative to the sidewalk along Medical Center Way. The trails were upgraded in 2009 with easy switchbacks which climb through dense forest in Woodland Canyon. Midway along the trails is a junction with the steep footpath down to Edgewood Ave.



### 2. South from Aldea Housing via Sutro Tower to Twin Peaks

*This is a continuation of trip 1. 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 Adolph Sutro's forested land, you emerge onto coastal scrub and grassland, one of the finest areas of native habitat in the city.*

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 to La Avanzada (visibility is better but there's no sidewalk). **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** and ascend through unkempt eucalyptus forest. The land on the north side of the road is Interior Greenbelt. The private property to the south is traversed by an unofficial path known as the Tower Trail. **La Avanzada is a narrow, one-lane road. Be alert for cars and delivery trucks headed to and from Sutro Tower!**

Soon La Avanzada curves south toward Sutro Tower and you pass the end of **Palo Alto Street**. Now La Avanzada is private, but hikers and cyclists are allowed. Just before the gate and broadcast facility 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 could 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). A better route 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, or stay on the east side of Twin Peaks Blvd. where a level footpath follows the guardrail.



### 3. From Aldea Housing to Summit via Nike Road

*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 which climbs through dense eucalyptus 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 alive with birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.





# More Suggested Hikes and Rides



## 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).*

Length:\*

0.60 mile/3100 feet on Historic Trail from Woods Lot (B) to junction with South Ridge Trail (I).

0.12 mile/1000 feet on South Ridge Trail from Historic Trail junction (I) to summit (H)

0.72 mile/410 feet total length (using both trails) to summit (one-way)

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

The **Historic Trail** starts at the foot of the paved water tank 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 from Medical Center Way to Summit

*This is another of the mountain's historic trails; though it's been mostly rebuilt with well-graded switchbacks to ease the climb. The trail starts opposite Fairy Gates Trail, midway along Medical Center Way (off Trip 1), and climbs through the forest to the flowery Summit Garden.*

Length:\*

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

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

From **Medical Center Way** opposite the Fairy Gates Trail (C), start up the **North Ridge Trail**, which switchbacks gradually across a wooded slope beneath Franciscan chert outcrops. Eventually you arrive at a saddle on the North Ridge, where you the historic route enters from the right; you turn left and ascend the ridgeline 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**. Near the stone bench, you can turn left and join the main gravel path to the **summit** (H) or turn right and descend to the **Nike Road** (which is Trip 2 in reverse)



## 6. East Ridge Trail from Aldea Housing to Summit

*The East Ridge Trail is a direct route from Aldea Housing and the planned Community Center to the Summit. The south-facing vegetation is drier than on other sides of the mountain, though just as tangled. The old trail used to go straight up the ridge, with grades as steep as 25%. The Stewards rebuilt the upper trail in 2006 and roughed out a new lower trail in April, 2009. The lower trail may be rough underfoot until summer 2009, but it's already better and safer than the steep path it replaces.*

Length:\*

0.33 mile or 1742 feet from Johnstone Drive to Summit (one way)

Lower East Ridge Trail: 0.10 mile or 528 feet from Johnstone Drive to Mystery Trail

Elevation Gain/Loss: +200'

The East Ridge Trail starts on the north side of Johnstone Drive, about 100 feet west of Medical Center Way. It switchbacksthrough dense eucalyptus, with occasional views of Aldea Housing and the City. The trail stays low at first

to protect rock outcrops and sensitive native plant habitat along the ridge. There is some poison oak along this section of trail.

A tight left turn puts you on the ridgeline at a junction with the Mystery Trail (K) which curves off to the right (Trip 6a). The **East Ridge Trail** continues left, making a gradual ascent through dry, somewhat unkempt eucalyptus and accacia forest. Several switchbacks bring the trail back to the ridgeline and soon you arrive at the **summit**, which commands a fine view west down the length of the Rotary Native Garden. Retrace your steps or continue along the path through the garden to connect with the North Ridge, South Ridge, and Nike Road trails.



## 5a/6a. Mystery Trail

*The Mystery Trail makes a fine semi-loop with the North or East Ridge Trails; the loop can be done ascending either trail or descending from the summit. The Mystery Trail makes a delightful, nearly level traverse across a delightful stretch of north-facing eucalyptus forest with a lush understory of ferns and flowering plum trees. Apparently this path was started but abandoned in the 1980s by unknown trail builders; Mt. Sutro Stewards thought it would make a nice little connector, and we opened it in 2003.*

Length:\*

0.1 mile for just the Mystery Trail (J-K)

0.43 mile or 2270 feet for the loop (H-J-K)

Elevation Gain/Loss for Mystery Trail: +25'/-25'

The **Mystery Trail** starts midway up the North Ridge Trail, just north of the summit. It and traverses east about 500 feet along the mountainside, then swings right and ends at a junction with the East Ridge Trail (K). The lower trail descends left toward Aldea Housing and the upper trail curves right on its way to the Summit.

To make a loop, you can turn right, up the upper East Ridge Trail (trip 6) to the summit. Descend west through the garden and turn right at the first junction onto the North Ridge Trail (the top of trip 5). Descending past the reed grass meadow, keep the rock outcrop on your left, and in a few tight switchback turns you'll be back in the woods at the Mystery Trail junction. Go straight to continue down the North Ridge to Medical Center Way; the Mystery Trail goes sharp right if you're looping back to the East Ridge Trail or the summit.



### 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**. If you make a loop starting up the North Ridge (Trip 4) then descending the South Ridge and Historic Trails (Trip 5) the full distance from Clarendon or Parnassus 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). The map is posted at [www.peasepress.com/sutromap.pdf](http://www.peasepress.com/sutromap.pdf).

• Parking lots on campus are by permit only. Use UC's parking garage or public transit. Sometimes you can find short-term parking in adjacent neighborhoods (most of which have residential permit parking and a 2-hour limit).

• 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 and under owner's voice control.

• 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. Avoid riding in heavy fog or immediately after rain to minimize trail erosion. Hikers have right of way.

• 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.

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