

# River Access Trails



## Smith River National Recreation Area Six Rivers National Forest

Discover and enjoy the extraordinary beauty of the lucid jade-green waters of the Smith River as you walk the numerous trails to its banks. A short walk will take you to great fishing holes, inviting swimming and sunbathing beaches, awesome rock canyons, or “put-in” points for rafters and kayakers. Explore ten spots along South Fork Road, eleven off Highway 199, and one off County Road 305 on the Middle, South, and North Forks of the Wild and Scenic Smith River in the **Smith River National Recreation Area**.

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### South Fork Road River Access Trails

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**Forks Boat Ramp/Middle Fork/Second Bridge/Forks**  
Mile post .25, parking for 12 boat trailers and 10 vehicles; 6 additional spaces available in summer at top of boat ramp. Vault toilets at boat-trailer lot. Launch your boat or enjoy the fishing, swimming, and sunbathing opportunities at these river access points:

**Middle Fork:** A 220-foot trail starts at parking area at top of the boat ramp leads to a small beach on the Middle Fork opposite Myrtle Beach.

**Second Bridge:** A 668-foot trail leads southeast from the restroom/parking area taking you to a great beach on the South Fork and swimming, sunbathing, fishing, and rafting/tubing opportunities.

**Forks:** A 994-foot trail leads southwest from the restroom/parking area to the picturesque confluence of the Middle and South Forks of the Smith River. Stretch out on the rock cliffs and admire the scenery.

#### **Craig’s Beach**

Mile post 2.1; 400’ trail; parking for 20 vehicles; vault toilet. Enjoy sunbathing and swimming at this turn on the South Fork and views from the upper banks of a beautiful rock canyon. Downstream from this point is a challenging kayaking route (Class 5 rapids), recommended only for the most experienced kayakers. Fishing is not allowed between Craig’s Creek and Tryon Bridge (Second Bridge).

#### **Sand Camp**

Mile post 7.3; 460’ trail; parking for 20 vehicles; vault toilet. Sand/cobble beach, large pool, primitive camp.

#### **Gordon Gorge**

Mile post 10.1; 0.5-mile trail, steep; parking for 2 vehicles. Rock walls, pool, small gravel beach. Creek crossing on trail may be difficult in rainy season.

#### **Old South Kelsey Trail Low Water Crossing**

Mile post 10.5, parking at 10.6; 1-mile trail; parking for 10 vehicles. Rocky river bottom, no beach. Large pool downstream reached by rock-hopping along opposite bank. Crossing possible only during low water levels (summertime) which can still be 2.5 feet deep.

#### **Redwood Flat**

Mile post 12.3; 530’ trail; parking for 5 vehicles. This very steep trail leads you to a spectacular place on the South Fork where fishing, swimming, sunbathing, tubing, and rafting opportunities await.

#### **Steven Bridge**

Mile post 13.0; 700’ trail; parking for 15 vehicles; vault toilet. Follow the wood-chipped path at the northwest end of parking lot to fishing holes and sunbathing spots as well as tubing and rafting opportunities.

#### **Goose Creek**

Mile post 13.6; 400’ trail; parking for 6 vehicles. Gorgeous pools of crystal green water beckon swimmers, fishermen, and rafters while sunbathers may admire the scene from the rocks above.

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**Welcome to the Smith River National Recreation Area**, located within the Six Rivers National Forest and managed by the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture. This 305,337 acre National Recreation Area (NRA) was designated by Congress in November 1990 to protect the area’s special scenic value, natural diversity, cultural and historical attributes, wilderness, wildlife, fisheries, and the Smith River watershed’s clean waters. The Forest Service has been designated as the steward of the NRA to provide recreational opportunities and to manage this diverse area for all of its valuable resources.

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## Highway 199 River Access Trails

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### Myrtle Beach

Mile post 7.2; 55' trail; parking for 20 vehicles; vault toilet. Swimmers and sunbathers will enjoy this wide, sandy beach at the Myrtle Creek/Middle Fork confluence. Opportunities for fishing and tubing as well.

### Middle Fork Gorge

Mile post 9.1; 55' trail; parking for 7 vehicles. A rocky gorge and Class 5 rapids downstream from this beach make this a takeout point for kayakers. Fish, swim, sunbathe, and look at the sights along this lovely stretch of river.

### Hardscrabble Creek

Mile post 11.1 on Hwy 199; 135' trail; parking for 10 vehicles. With only a short walk you'll find a place to fish, swim, or sunbathe or float downstream in a tube or raft. Second trail 330 feet west leads to the top of a rock outcrop; scramble down to reach small beaches.

### Mary Adams

Mile post 11.9 on west side of bridge; 280' trail; parking for 20 vehicles; vault toilet. Visit the sandy beaches near Mary Adams Peacock Bridge to fish, swim, and sunbathe, or float downstream in a tube or raft.

### Margie's (Sims Camp, Shady Bend)

Mile post 12.86; 370' trail; parking for 10 vehicles; vault toilet; screened clothes-changing area. Gentle trail slope affords easy access for rafts and kayaks. Small mud/sand beach. Deep pool. Adjacent to and in view of highway.

### Panther Flat Picnic Area

Mile post 16.75; 90' trail; parking for 21 vehicles; vault toilets. Picnickers will appreciate the tables just above Middle Fork Smith River and the many water spigots available close by. An impressive wall of rock provides a backdrop to a beautiful beach and spots to swim, fish, or sunbathe. Visitors may also camp in the Panther Flat Campground and explore the river via kayak, raft, or inner tube.

### Madrona

Mile post 19.2; parking for 10 vehicles; vault toilet. Visitors may drive right to this river access point on the Middle Fork Smith. Grassy Flat Campground is across the river. Try fishing from the shore or float down stream in a kayak, raft, or inner tube. Camping at Madrona is limited to 7 days and campers must be in one of three designated sites.

### Sandy Beach

Mile post 20.9; 255' trail; parking for 10 vehicles; vault toilet. A very nice sandy beach invites sunbathers and swimmers and the Middle Fork Smith River provides a water trail for kayak, raft, or inner tube.

### Patrick Creek Picnic Area

Mile post 22.0; 350' trail; parking for 7 vehicles; flush toilets. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps created walls, walkways, fire pits, and buildings from rocks and mortar in creative design on the banks of the Middle Fork where the river is joined by Patrick Creek. Much of the original rock work remains, making this river access and picnic spot especially wonderful. Many sandy beach niches provide perfect spots for enjoying the sun and water. A barrier-free trail under the bridge connects the campground and lodge and also leads to a universal-access fishing platform.

### Eagle Eye Mine

Mile post 23.1; 170' trail; parking for 6 vehicles. The rocky canyon walls along this stretch of the Middle Fork make this a beautiful setting for swimming and sunbathing. Fishing is allowed only in certain seasons, but the views are terrific year round.

### Cedar Rustic

Mile post 23.5; 290' trail; parking for 3 vehicles. One more gorgeous spot to experience the beautiful Smith River! Bask in the sun and swim the waters of the Middle Fork. Check California fishing regulations for the fishing season at this spot.

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## County Road 305 River Access

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### North Fork Day Use

#### (Brown's Flat, Major Moore's, Rockland)

Mile post 24.1 on County Road 305 (Wimer Road); parking for 10 vehicles; vault toilet; screened clothes-changing area. Launching point for rafts and kayaks running the North Fork of the Smith River. Small sandy beach on upstream end, cobbles elsewhere. Dramatic open, rocky setting. Camping is not permitted at this day-use site but the North Fork Campground is just across the river. Site is in the North Fork Smith Botanical Area. Location is remote, reached by a two-hour drive on rough gravel roads. Directions from Gasquet: Go 2.6 miles west on Highway 199, 7.7 miles north on Road 17N49, 15 miles north on County Road 305 (Wimer Road), and .1 mile north on Road 18N27 (river access road on left just before bridge).

US Highway 199 Access	Mile Post	Trail Length	Fish*	Swim	Boat Access	Rest-room
Myrtle Beach	7.2	586'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Middle Forge Gorge	9.1	55'	yes	yes	yes	no
Hardscrabble Creek	11.1	135'	yes	yes	yes	no
Mary Adams	11.9	280'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Margie's	12.86	370'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Panther Flat Picnic Area	16.75	90'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Madrona	19.2	40'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sandy Beach	20.9	255'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Patrick Creek Picnic Area	22.0	350'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Eagle Eye Mine	23.1	170'	June-Oct.*	yes	no	no
Cedar Rustic	23.5	290'	June-Oct.*	yes	no	no

South Fork Road Access	Mile Post	Trail Length	Fish*	Swim	Boat Access	Rest-room
Forks Boat Ramp	.25	220'	yes	yes		yes
Second Bridge	.25	668'	yes	yes	no	yes
Forks	.25	994'	yes	yes	no	yes
Craig's Beach	2.1	400'	no	yes	yes	yes
Sand Camp	7.4	460'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Gordon Gorge	10.1	.5 mile	yes	yes	no	no
Redwood Flat	12.3	530'	yes	yes	no	no
Old South Kelsey Trail	10.5 10.6	1 mile	yes	yes	no	no
Steven Bridge	13.0	700'	yes	yes	yes	yes
Goose Creek	13.6	400'	yes	yes	yes	no

County Road 305 Access	Mile Post	Trail Length	Fish*	Swim	Boat Access	Rest-room
North Fork	24.1	70' to 250'	yes	yes	yes	yes

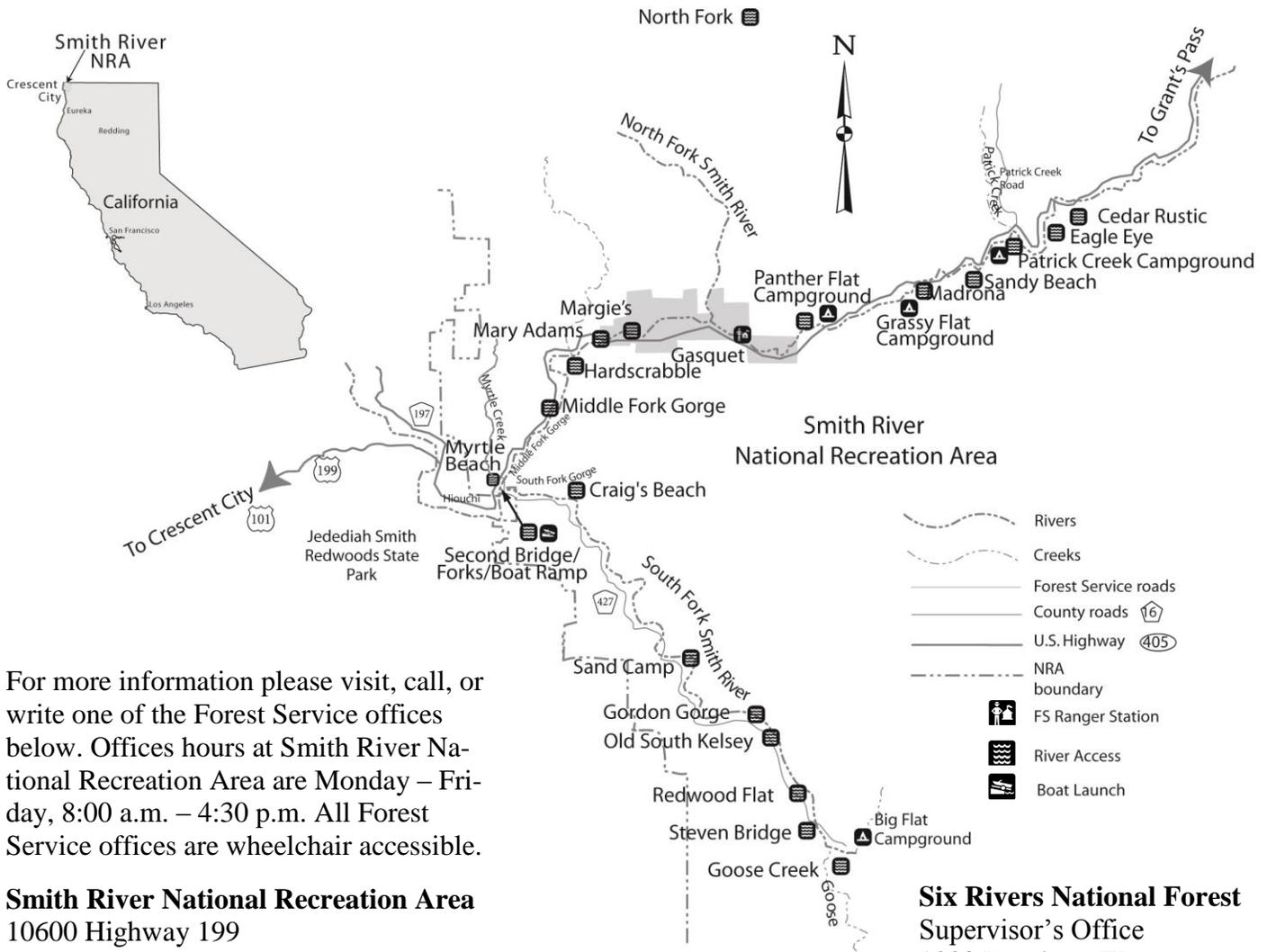
### Protect Yourself:

- Always swim with a buddy, never alone. There are no lifeguards on the river.
- **Be especially watchful of children.** Fast currents can quickly overwhelm a child and carry them downstream.
- Rocks may be extremely slippery when wet. Be careful!
- Never dive without verifying water depth. River levels can change dramatically in a short time.
- Drink lots of water. Water from the river must be boiled five minutes before drinking. **Avoid alcoholic drinks**—they alter your judgment, your reaction time, and dehydrate you.
- Wear a hat; use sunscreen often and insect repellent as needed.
- Learn to recognize and avoid poison oak. It is common along river banks.
- Follow federal and state laws requiring canoes, kayaks, and inflatable rafts to carry a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.
- Wear footgear to protect you from fish hooks or glass which could hide on the banks or bottom of the river.
- Overexposure to cold, especially cold water causes hypothermia—the lowering of body temperature levels. Symptoms are loss of coordination, uncontrollable shivering, and listlessness. If any of these symptoms occur, get out of the water, dry off, and get medical attention.
- Water depth and swiftness can increase quickly to dangerous levels. Always exercise caution and good sense.
- Kayakers and rafters: contact the Smith River NRA Visitor Center for complete information on river classifications, water levels, and put-in/takeout points on the Smith River.

\* Consult California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the most current regulations, 707-445-6493, <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/>.

## Protect Your River Environment:

- Pick up and pack out all trash, including gum, orange and banana peels, cans, bottles, cigarette butts, and foil to preserve the beauty of the Smith River.
- Where no toilet facilities exist, select a spot at least 200' away from the river, dig a 6-8" hole, and cover waste with soil or rocks. Keep our river clean!
- Permits are required for campfires, camp stoves, lanterns, and barbecue grills. Campfire permits are free and available at any Forest Service office or online at [www.PreventWildfireCA.org](http://www.PreventWildfireCA.org).
- Tread lightly on river trails and access areas, leaving no permanent imprint of your visit. Please stay on trails.



For more information please visit, call, or write one of the Forest Service offices below. Offices hours at Smith River National Recreation Area are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. All Forest Service offices are wheelchair accessible.

**Smith River National Recreation Area**  
 10600 Highway 199  
 P.O. Box 228  
 Gasquet CA 95543  
 707-457-3131 (also TTY#)

**Six Rivers National Forest**  
 Supervisor's Office  
 1330 Bayshore Way  
 Eureka CA 95501  
 707-442-1721 (also TTY#)  
[www.fs.usda.gov/srnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/srnf)

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