

Discover POINT PINOS HERITAGE

One of the most historically significant and beautiful areas in the state, this rocky coast with rolling dunes at the southern entrance to Monterey Bay has long been a source for scientific and artistic expression.

We acknowledge the special character of this land and the presence of Indigenous peoples for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Spanish, Mexican, and American colonizers.

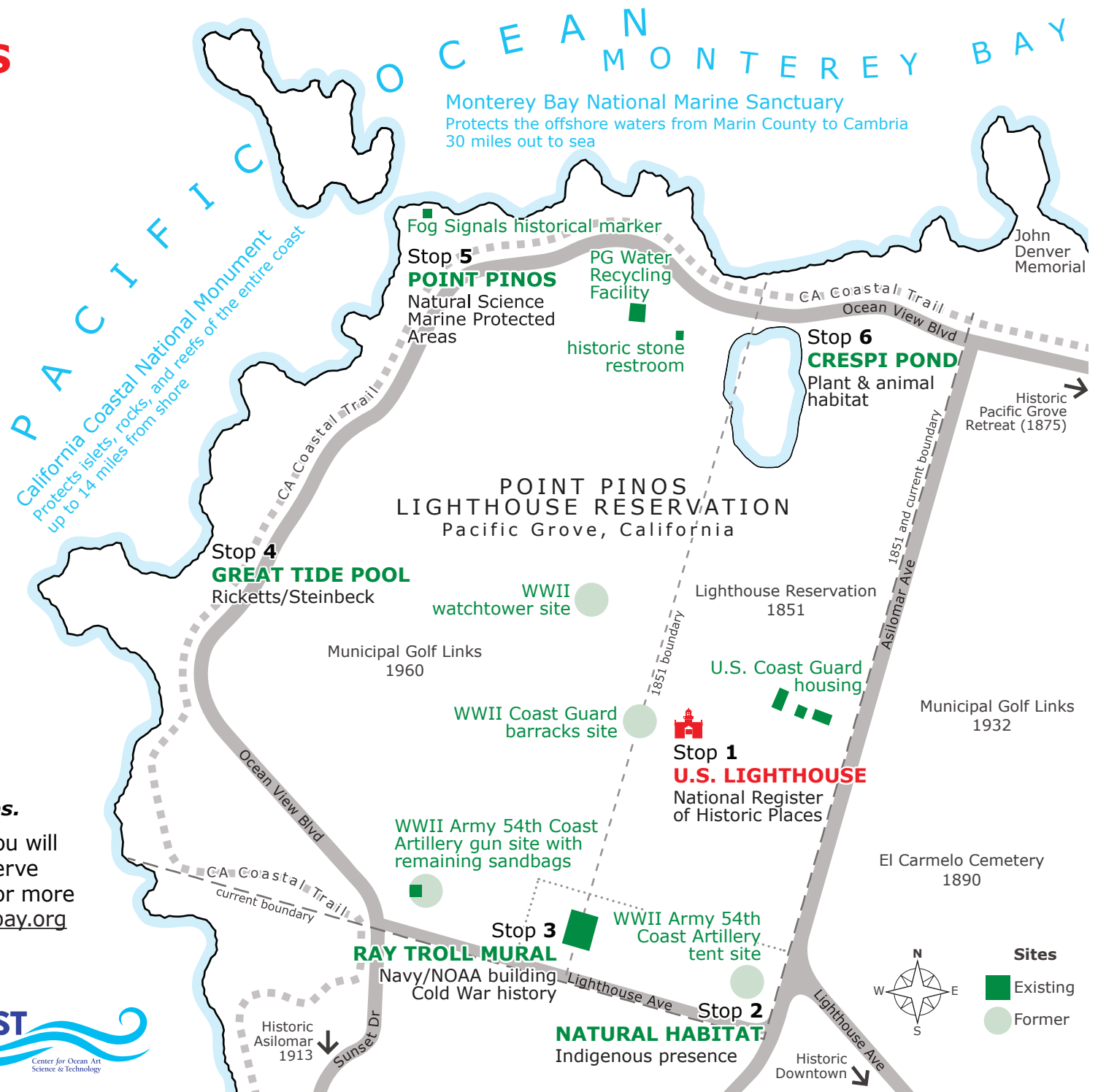
In 1851, the U.S. Federal Government set aside land as the Point Pinos Lighthouse Reservation to be forever protected and reserved from sale. In 1901, the Reservation's footprint was expanded from 25 acres to 92 acres.

Discover more about Point Pinos on this self-guided tour, which starts at the Lighthouse.

Reverse side describes the stops.

Thank you for visiting. We hope you will want to learn more and help preserve our natural and cultural history. For more information: ken@coastmontereybay.org

2025 COAST (Center for Ocean Art, Science & Technology) with Pacific Grove Lighthouse Docents, The Heritage Society, Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History



1. Point Pinos Lighthouse

pointpinoslighthouse.org for hours

■ **The Lighthouse** radiates history. A beacon since 1855, it is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the West Coast. First operated under a U.S. Navy-led Lighthouse Board, later under the Coast Guard, it was designated in 1977 on the National Register of Historic Places. Lighthouse keepers and their families lived in the Lighthouse and in the nearby houses built by the Coast Guard (1939, 1959).

■ **WWII** military defense at Point Pinos involved the Navy, Coast Guard, and Army, with a 40-ft watchtower.

■ A nine-hole municipal **golf course** was built in 1932 across Asilomar Avenue. In 1960, the “Neville Nine” was added on the Reservation itself by Jack Neville, an original golf course architect of Pebble Beach Golf Links. Today, even non-golfers enjoy the restaurant at the Golf Links.

Leaving the Lighthouse grounds, turn right onto Asilomar Avenue, then right again onto Lighthouse Avenue.

2. Natural Habitat

■ Here we acknowledge the presence of **Indigenous peoples** at Point Pinos for thousands of years. Archeologists have documented multiple sites on the Reservation.

■ During WWII, the U.S. Army all-Black **54th Coast Artillery Regiment** camped at this corner of the Reservation. Assigned to protect the coast and bay, they built gun emplacements using sandbags to support their huge guns. (The sandbag remains can be seen at Stop 4.)

■ This southeast corner includes **natural habitat** undisturbed since 1945. Most of the pines, cypresses, and other trees were cut down in the 1800s to clear the view of the Light for ships at sea. The regrowth of trees on the Reservation

dunes is a precious natural refuge. In 2012, Western Bluebirds nested here, their first local nesting observed in 96 years.

Continue along Lighthouse Avenue toward the ocean.

3. Ocean-Inspired Art, Science, and Technology

■ After WWII, during the Cold War, the **U.S. Navy** continued operations at Point Pinos with a massive building, finished in 1952, to house successive **activities** (Navy Air Intercept Training Facility, 1954–1961, with pilot training and radar surveillance; Fleet Numerical Weather Center, 1962–1974, working with NOAA to pioneer computer communication and weather prediction for the military and allies worldwide; Navy Recruit Command Center, 1974–1994).

■ **The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, 1996–2016, continued working with the Navy to understand climate impacts on fisheries locally and throughout the Pacific. They conducted research on the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, the irregularly alternating periods of warm and cold water. In Monterey Bay, warm, nutrient-poor, blue water favors sardines; cold, rich, green water favors anchovies. You see this research reflected in Ray Troll’s mural.

■ **The iconic mural *Green Seas Blue Seas*** encircles the top of the Navy/NOAA building and vividly depicts this science and history. NOAA commissioned the renowned Alaskan artist Ray Troll, a Guggenheim Fellow, to create the mural. It is part of the Pacific Grove Historical Mural Project and of Preserve America, a federal grant program that encourages communities to protect and enjoy their priceless natural and cultural heritage.

Continue west on Lighthouse Avenue toward the ocean. You are overlooking the federally protected California Coastal National Monument and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. At the corner, turn right.

4. Coast and Great Tide Pool

■ After walking a few feet, look back toward the land. See the remaining **WWII sandbag emplacements**, built by the soldiers of the 54th Coast Artillery, to hold their “Long Tom” 155 mm tractor-towed guns installed to protect the coast.

■ Across the street, find an entry to the narrow California Coastal Trail, which leads to the **Great Tide Pool**. Ed Ricketts, arriving in 1923, studied and collected intertidal shore life here.

Scientists have been exploring this incredible resource since the 19th century. In his 1945 novel *Cannery Row*, Steinbeck describes it as “a fabulous place: when the tide is in, a wave-churned basin, creamy with foam.... But when the tide goes out the little water world becomes quiet and lovely.”

■ Signed into law in 2000, the **California Coastal National Monument** protects rocks, reefs, and islets along the entire coastline of California out to 14 miles from shore. You’re looking at our precious piece of this protected Pacific coastal area.

Continue along our local section of the 1,200-mile California Coastal Trail.

5. Point Pinos and the Foghorn, only an echo now

■ A large rocky peninsula, **Point Pinos** marks the southern entrance to Monterey Bay and the border between two State Marine Protected Areas (MPA) that safeguard and enrich our sea life. Asilomar MPA is on the ocean side and Pacific Grove Marine Gardens MPA is on the bay side.

■ Monterey Audubon Society (MAS) has identified Point Pinos as among the most important land-based posts in America to observe migratory and other seabirds. Point Pinos Seawatch (MAS) is based here, as well as the Black Oystercatcher (BLOY) Monitoring Project and LiMPETS (Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History) community science programs.

■ A few steps east is a plaque with the history of the **Fog Signals**, 1925–1993, mounted on a boulder by the trail. Many will remember its haunting sound. It provided an audible warning of dangers to shipping during the frequently foggy conditions. Two blasts sounding every 30 seconds indicated Point Pinos on nautical charts.

Continuing on the water side of the road, look across the street.

■ The former wastewater treatment plant, now the **Pacific Grove Water Recycling Facility**, provides water for the Lighthouse landscaping, Golf Links, and El Carmelo Cemetery on Asilomar Avenue. Thanks to this PG City water project, no drinking water is diverted to irrigation in these areas.

Heading toward Asilomar Avenue, look for the historic stone public restroom that uses recycled water and is available for your convenience.

6. Crespi Pond

■ Named for Juan Crespi, an early Franciscan missionary and explorer with Gaspar de Portolá and Junipero Serra, the pond is noted on maps as early as the 1700s.

■ Crespi Pond was a source of fresh water for local Indigenous peoples, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans. It continues to provide habitat for 160 resident and migratory bird species.