



The sun rises in the longleaf pine savanna in Holly Shelter Game Land  
Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

## The Onslow Bight and Jacksonville—MST Segment 15

### HOLLY SHELTER GAME LAND TO STELLA

By **Kate Dixon** and **Jim Grode**

This 90-mile segment takes MST travelers through the Onslow Bight, formed where the coast makes a shallow bend or “bight” between Cape Lookout and Cape Fear. With its barrier islands, marshes, riverine wetlands, pocosins, and longleaf pine savannas, the Onslow Bight is considered one of the most ecologically diverse areas in the United States. These natural communities provide habitat for rare plants and animals, including several species that are found nowhere else in the world. The pocosins and longleaf pine forests are critical habitat for nesting and foraging Red-

cockaded Woodpeckers, while the delicate barrier islands are essential habitat for sea turtle and waterbird nesting.

Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base and the city of Jacksonville lie in the center of this segment. Much of the MST route from Sneads Ferry through Jacksonville follows roads and a greenway trail that skirt the massive base. Hikers will see plenty of signs of the military presence—from people in uniform, to military vehicles, to signs along the highway.

The area is one of the primary conservation priorities for groups like The Nature Conservancy, North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), and many other government and nonprofit agencies. Camp Lejeune provides major support for these efforts by funding conservation and by managing land on the base to enhance native habitat.

## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Nineteen miles of forest road through the 64,743-acre Holly Shelter Game Land, where hikers will see vast expanses of pocosin recovering from a major peat fire in 2011, as well as savannas of lush grasses and native plants flourishing under towering longleaf pines
- The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, ½ mile off the MST in Surf City
- An eight-mile beach walk on Topsail Island that passes:
  - Two of seven concrete observation towers built by the US Navy in World War II for Operation Bumblebee, a secret guided-missile testing program that operated on Topsail Island from 1946-8
  - The Ocean City community in North Topsail Beach, founded in 1949 as one of the first family-oriented beaches for African Americans who at the time could not usually purchase beachfront property
- The “Discover Onslow” exhibit at the new Onslow County Environmental Education Center on NC 210 just south of Old Folkstone Rd., which is a great way to learn about the ecology, flora, and fauna of the Onslow Bight

- Stones Creek Game Land, nestled in Camp Lejeune, which provides a scenic walk past lakes and pine woods
- Jacksonville's Lejeune Greenway, which takes hikers through the heart of downtown and over Northeast Creek to Camp Lejeune's Holcomb Gate
- The Lejeune Memorial Gardens, with moving tributes to our nation's servicemen and women.
- Crossing the White Oak River to enter the little community of Stella on the outskirts of the Croatan National Forest



Dawn over the White Oak River outside Stella  
Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

Thanks to Duke Energy Foundation for a generous grant that allowed Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (Friends) to develop this and other trail guides for MST Segments 12 to 15 in Johnston, Sampson, Cumberland, Bladen, Pender, and Onslow Counties.

Thanks also to PJ Wetzel, who helped develop the MST route in this area and was the first person to hike it in March and April 2014.

**Total distance: 90.6 miles (3.5 miles of trail; 9.1 miles of beach; 5.7 miles of multi-use path or greenway; 19.0 miles of forest roads; and 53.3 miles of paved road)**

**Difficulty: Mostly easy, moderate in game-land sections**

### Trail Updates

When planning your trip using this guide, take a moment to see whether Friends has posted any updates about the trail route by visiting Friends' "Trail Updates" page at [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/updates](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/updates).

### Trail Angels

The MST is fortunate to have many Trail Angels: friendly people who have volunteered to provide assistance to long-distance hikers ranging from local information to lodging and food. We greatly appreciate our Trail Angels' willingness to give back to the hiking community and the MST. For information about Trail Angels in Segment 15 and the services they can provide, see [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels).

### Camping/Lodging

*Note:* All prices listed in this guide are for comparison only and are subject to change at any time.

Near Eastbound (EB) Mile 27.3; Westbound (WB) Mile 63.3

Lanier's Campground, 1161 Spot Ln., Holly Ridge/Surf City, 28460, 877-665-5347; [www.laniercampground.com](http://www.laniercampground.com). About 1.0 mile off the trail on the mainland near Surf City. Approximately \$35 to \$45 for campsite depending on season/site location. Call for reservation a couple of days in advance. From the roundabout on the inland side of the Surf City Bridge, turn right (EB) or left (WB) on Little Kinston Rd. After 0.6 mile, make a 90° right turn (the road changes name to Spot Rd.) and continue straight until you reach the campground entrance.

Near EB Mile 28.3; WB Mile 62.3

Loggerhead Inn, 622 N. New River Dr., Surf City, 28460, 910-328-3691; [www.loggerheadinn.com](http://www.loggerheadinn.com). Rates range from approximately \$79-\$179 for a room with 1 or 2 queen beds; there may be a minimum 2- or 3-night stay.

EB Mile 39.4; WB Mile 51.1

Quality Inn & Suites Sneads Ferry-North Topsail Beach, 1565 NC 210, Sneads Ferry, 28460, 910-327-8282; [www.choicehotels.com/north-carolina/sneads-ferry/quality-inn-hotels/nc794](http://www.choicehotels.com/north-carolina/sneads-ferry/quality-inn-hotels/nc794). Rooms begin at about \$100, depending on season.

EB Mile 40.5; WB Mile 50.0

Topsail Shores Inn, 1325 NC 210, Sneads Ferry, 28460, 910-685-0969; [www.topsailshoresinn.com](http://www.topsailshoresinn.com). Rooms from \$79-\$115, depending on season.

EB Mile 40.9; WB Mile 49.7

Hampton Inn Sneads Ferry/North Topsail Beach, 1248 NC 210, Sneads Ferry, 28460, 910-327-5555; [hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/north-carolina/hampton-inn-sneads-ferry-north-topsail-beach-OAJSFHX/index.html](http://hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/north-carolina/hampton-inn-sneads-ferry-north-topsail-beach-OAJSFHX/index.html). Rooms range from \$84-\$200, depending on season

Near EB Mile 43.2; WB Mile 47.4

The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust allows long-distance MST hikers to camp on its Everett Creek Preserve. Water and restrooms are available; no fires (other than camping stoves) are permitted. Please call or text Friends volunteer Tim Supple at 813-317-1410 at least a week in advance to make arrangements for access to the preserve.

EB Mile 70.3; WB Mile 20.3

Several hotels are located along N. Marine Blvd. (US 17 Business) near here. Look for hotels with addresses between 500 and 1700 N. Marine Blvd. at [www.onlyinonslow.com/lodging/jacksonville](http://www.onlyinonslow.com/lodging/jacksonville).

## Seasonal Camping/Lodging

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 90.6

Holly Shelter Game Land. This campsite, on Lodge Rd. at the Shaw Hwy. entrance to the game land, may be used only by people with hunting licenses during specified periods in the fall and spring hunting seasons. Information about the dates of the hunting seasons is available at [www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx); please do not call the Wildlife Resources Commission for information, as the phones at the local office are not staffed.

EB Mile 19.0; WB Mile 71.6

Holly Shelter Game Land. This campsite, on Lodge Rd. at the US 17 entrance to the game land, may be used only by people with hunting licenses

during specified periods in the fall and spring hunting seasons. Information about the dates of the hunting seasons is available at [www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx); please do not call the Wildlife Resources Commission for information, as the phones at the local office are not staffed.

Near EB Mile 28.6; WB Mile 62.3

Island Inn, 202 Goldsboro Ave., Surf City, 28460, 910-328-2341; [www.topsailislandinn.com](http://www.topsailislandinn.com). Open mid-April through early November. Rates are approximately \$75 to \$195 for a room with 1 or 2 queen beds; there may be a minimum 2- or 3-night stay.

EB Mile 31.3; WB Mile 59.2

Surf City Family Campground, 2460 Island Drive North, North Topsail Beach, 28460, 910-328-4281; [www.visitnc.com/listing/surf-city-family-campground](http://www.visitnc.com/listing/surf-city-family-campground). This campground is on the island very close to the Operation Bumblebee concrete observation tower. Closed mid-November to mid-March. Approximately \$40 per campsite, but negotiable if only one tent camper. Call for reservations for summer weekends.

Also check Friends' "Trail Angels" page at [MountaintoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels](http://MountaintoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels) for additional camping and lodging options.

## Food/Supplies

EB Miles 23-43;

WB Miles 47-67

Numerous stores and restaurants are located in this area of Surf City, North Topsail Beach, and Sneads Ferry.

EB Mile 48.6; WB Mile 41.9

Convenience store

EB Mile 59.0; WB Mile 31.6

Convenience store

EB Mile 59.4; WB Mile 31.2

Convenience store

EB Mile 63.0; WB Mile 27.5

Convenience store, Family Dollar

EB Mile 65.9; WB Mile 24.7

Two convenience stores

EB Miles 70.3-70.8;

WB Miles 19.7-20.3

Numerous stores and restaurants are located in this area of Jacksonville.

EB Mile 77.7; WB 12.9

Piney Green Shopping Center with numerous stores and restaurants

EB Mile 88.7; WB Mile 1.9 Hunter's Crossing Country Store on Stella Rd.

### Post Office/Public Library

EB Mile 40.5; WB Mile 50.1 Onslow County Public Library has computers for public use.



EB Mile 42.3; WB Mile 48.2 Sneads Ferry post office is one block off the route.

EB Mile 70.8; WB Mile 19.7 Jacksonville post office


EB Mile 90.6; WB Mile 0.0 Stella post office is the eastern terminus of this segment.



### Water/Restrooms



The best sources of water in this section are water fountains, well water from spigots, and bottled water from stores (see "Food/Supplies" above). Avoid drinking surface water, including in the Holly Shelter Game Land.



EB Mile 20.9; WB Mile 69.6 Pender Pines Garden Center  

EB Mile 28.3; WB Mile 62.3 Surf City Welcome Center and Visitor Information Center  

EB Mile 30.2; WB Mile 60.4 N. Shore Dr. beach public access 

EB Mile 32.5; WB Mile 58.0 Onslow County Public Park  

EB Mile 37.3; WB Mile 53.2 North Topsail Beach Town Park  

EB Mile 40.5; WB Mile 50.1 Onslow County Environmental Education Center and Public Library  

### Hunting

Hunting is permitted in the Stones Creek and Holly Shelter Game Lands during hunting season, generally September through April, Monday through Saturday. There are gates at the entrances to both of the game lands; if they are open, it is hunting season. We encourage you to wear blaze orange whenever you hike during hunting season. Note that it is not necessary to inform the Wildlife Resources Commission that you will be hiking in the game lands. Learn about hunting seasons and regulations before your trip at [www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting.aspx).

## Signs/Blazing

The trails through Holly Shelter (EB Miles 0.0-19.0; WB Miles 71.6-90.6) and Stones Creek (EB Miles 43.2-46.7; WB Miles 43.9-47.4) Game Lands are marked with the MST blaze, a 3-inch white circular marker. There are also signs at certain places in Stones Creek Game Land.

Road portions of this segment are marked with blazes and signs. Blazes are on the left shoulder of the road in the direction of travel, and signs are on the right side. Note that signs are often a target of theft and vandalism, and should not be relied upon exclusively for wayfinding.

## Special Considerations

The longest stretch of trail without access to water is in the Holly Shelter Game Land. Hikers are encouraged to bring adequate water with them into this section. Surface water in Holly Shelter can be scarce and much of it is highly tannic and may be unpalatable. In general, hikers should avoid drinking surface water throughout this segment.

On road sections, watch for traffic and narrow shoulders.

Dogs are allowed on this segment, but should be on a leash at all times.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Friends office: 919-825-0297 or [info@MountainstoSeaTrail.org](mailto:info@MountainstoSeaTrail.org)

Pender County Tourism: [www.visitpender.com](http://www.visitpender.com)

Onslow County Tourism: [www.onlyinonslow.com](http://www.onlyinonslow.com)

## Trail Maps

Google map of the entire MST: [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/map](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/map)

Holly Shelter Game Land Map: [www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Holly-Shelter.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Holly-Shelter.pdf)

Stones Creek Game Land Map: [www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Stones-Creek.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Stones-Creek.pdf)

Jacksonville Rails-to-Trails Greenway:  
[jacksonvillenc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/199](http://jacksonvillenc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/199)

## More about Sites Along the Route

Onslow Bight Conservation Forum: [www.longleafalliance.org/ncobcf](http://www.longleafalliance.org/ncobcf)

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center:  
[www.seaturtlehospital.org](http://www.seaturtlehospital.org)

Operation Bumblebee: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Bumblebee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Bumblebee)

Ocean City community: [www.oceancitync.com](http://www.oceancitync.com)

Onslow County Environmental Education Center:  
[http://www.onslowcountync.gov/860/  
Environmental-Education-Center-Branch-Li](http://www.onslowcountync.gov/860/Environmental-Education-Center-Branch-Li)

Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base: [www.lejeune.marines.mil](http://www.lejeune.marines.mil)

## Primary Parking Locations

### Entrance to Holly Shelter Game Land at Shaw Hwy.

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 90.6



N34.55186, W77.81135

### Entrance to Holly Shelter Game Land at US 17

EB Mile 19.0; WB Mile 71.6



N34.41010, W77.65682

### Surf City Welcome Center

EB Mile 28.3; WB Mile 62.3



N34.42563, W77.54482

### Public Beach Access, 1603 N. Shore Dr.

EB Mile 30.2; WB Mile 60.4



N34.44128, W77.51915

### Onslow County Public Park Beach Access

EB Mile 32.5; WB Mile 58.0



N34.46086, W77.48504

### Beach Access Point 31, New River Inlet Rd.

EB Mile 36.7; WB Mile 53.8



N34.49160, W77.42096

### Beach Access Parking, New River Inlet Rd.

EB Mile 36.8; WB Mile 53.6



N34.49339, W77.41826

### North Topsail Beach Town Park Beach Access Parking

EB Mile 37.3; WB Mile 53.2



N34.4960, W77.41241

### Stones Creek Rd. Entrance to Stones Creek Game Land, at Intersection of NC 210 and Bradshaw Rd.

EB Mile 43.2; WB Mile 47.4



N34.55779, W77.44667

### US 17 Entrance to Stones Creek Game Land

Limited parking is available just outside the entrance gate.

EB Mile 46.7; WB Mile 43.9



N34.56368, W77.49173

### Stella Post Office







*Note:* Parking here costs \$5.00.

EB Mile 90.6; WB Mile 0.0



N34.77494, W77.15182

## Hiking Directions, Eastbound

- 0.0 From Shaw Hwy., turn left on Lodge Rd. into Holly Shelter Game Land at a prominent NCWRC entrance sign to begin Segment 15. *Note:* Do not enter the 64,743-acre game land without a map and compass and without checking hunting seasons and regulations. Roads in the game land are only open for vehicle traffic during hunting season; therefore, if the gate here is open, it is hunting season. During other times of the year, park outside the gates and walk into the game land. Find links for a map with the MST route marked on it and more information about hunting seasons and regulations in the “Hunting” section for this segment. Parking is available on Lodge Rd. See the “Seasonal Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for information about camping here during hunting season. To reach the Lodge Rd. entrance by car, drive northeast from Burgaw on Jacksonville Hwy. (NC 53) about 8.5 miles, then turn right on Shaw Hwy. The entrance is 5.2 miles ahead on the left.  
- 2.9 Cross under power line.
- 3.0 Turn right on New Rd.
- 5.2 At T-intersection, turn left to continue on New Rd.
- 6.0 At sharp curve, turn right to continue on New Rd.
- 8.4 At sharp curve, turn left to continue on New Rd.
- 10.1 At crossroads, turn right onto Military Rd.
- 11.9 At T-intersection, turn left onto Tram Rd.
- 13.5 Turn right onto Lodge Rd. (a much-less-used track continues straight here).
- 14.8 At T-intersection, turn left to continue on Lodge Rd.
- 15.7 Continue straight past lesser-used road coming in from right.
- 16.2 Turn right to stay on Lodge Rd. where it meets power-line cut.
- 19.0 Turn left on US 17. See the “Seasonal Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for information about camping here during hunting season.  
- 20.9 Pass Pender Pines Garden Center on left. *Note:* The garden center provides MST hikers free water and a place to rest and relax.  
- 22.4 Continue straight past Barlow-Vista Baptist Church on right.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies









Water



Picnic



A grand old oak on Dawson Cabin Road  
Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 23.1 Turn right in front of Lowes and cross the parking lot toward Harris Teeter grocery store parking lot.   
- 23.6 From Harris Teeter parking lot, turn right on NC 210 and continue south/east toward Surf City.
- 25.9 At shopping center, continue straight on sidewalk. *Note:* You are entering an area with substantial commercial development including restaurants and stores of all kinds.  
- 26.1 At traffic light, turn right as NC 50 comes in from left.
- 26.5 Continue straight past Charlie Medlin Rd. on right. *Note:* The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (open Thursdays and Saturdays, 1-3 PM) is approximately 0.5 mile down this road, which changes its name to Tortuga Ln. The Surf City community center is near, and accessible from, the Sea Turtle center.
- 27.3 At the roundabout, turn left and cross NC 50, then continue clockwise around the roundabout. *Note:* Lanier's Campground is approximately 1.0 mile from the trail route here. See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information. 



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms




















Supplies




Water










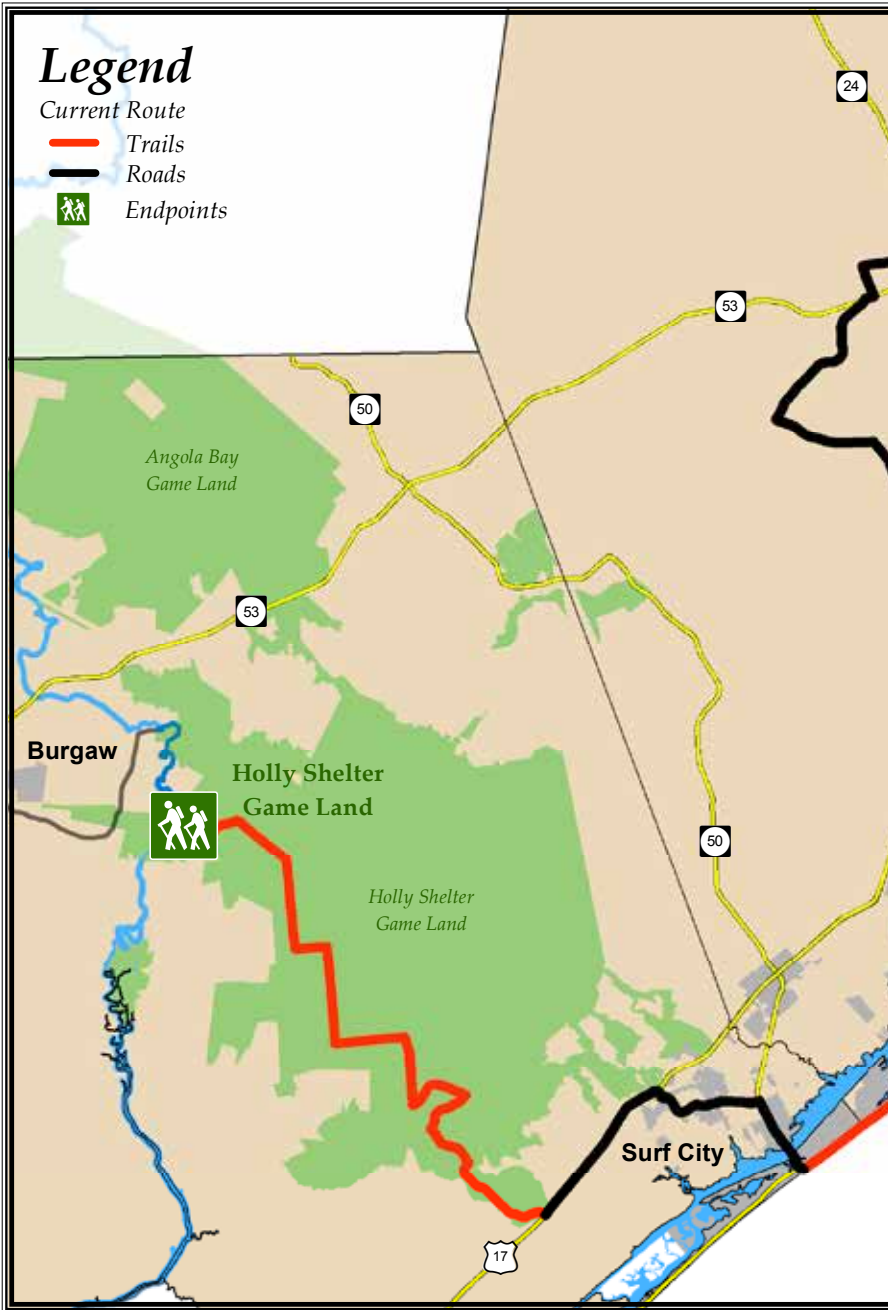
Picnic

- 27.4 Turn left onto the multi-use path over the Surf City bridge.
- 28.1 At the end of the bridge, turn left on the sidewalk paralleling S. New River Dr.
- 28.2 Take the first right on Roland Ave., then cross Topsail Dr. at the IGA grocery store. 
- 28.3 Cross the dunes at a gazebo-like public access structure beside the Surf City Welcome Center and Visitor Information Center, then turn left onto beach. *Note:* The Loggerhead Inn and Island Inn are near this location. See the “Camping/Lodging” and “Seasonal Camping/Lodging” sections for this segment for more information.    
- 30.2 Continue north on beach at public access, 1603 N. Shore Dr. (blue sign on walkway over dunes is visible from beach), where there is a park with restrooms and playground. The Friendly Mart (open 24/7) is across the street, then right one block.   
- 31.3 Seasonal camping is available at Surf City Family Campground just off the beach. See the “Seasonal Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 31.7 Continue straight past old, white concrete 1940s rocket observation tower from Navy project “Operation Bumblebee” on the dune. There are pilings of old fishing pier in surf.
- 32.5 Continue straight past Onslow County Public Park with restrooms in gray pavilion building on the beach, water fountain, seasonal concession, and sound access.    
- 35.0 Continue straight past beach access boardwalk leading to parking area. *Note:* Beach Bum’s Grill & Bar is directly across the street from the parking area.  
- 36.7 Continue straight past emergency vehicle access point (labeled “BA 31” on small blue sign on post visible from beach at gap in dune) and parking area. 
- 36.8 Continue straight past stairs and boardwalk to parking area. 
- 37.0 Continue straight past second set of stairs and boardwalk to parking area.
- 37.3 Just past a line of houses, you will see a large pole commemorating the MST. Cross stairs and boardwalk over dunes here, and enter parking area. Turn left on paved multi-use path paralleling New

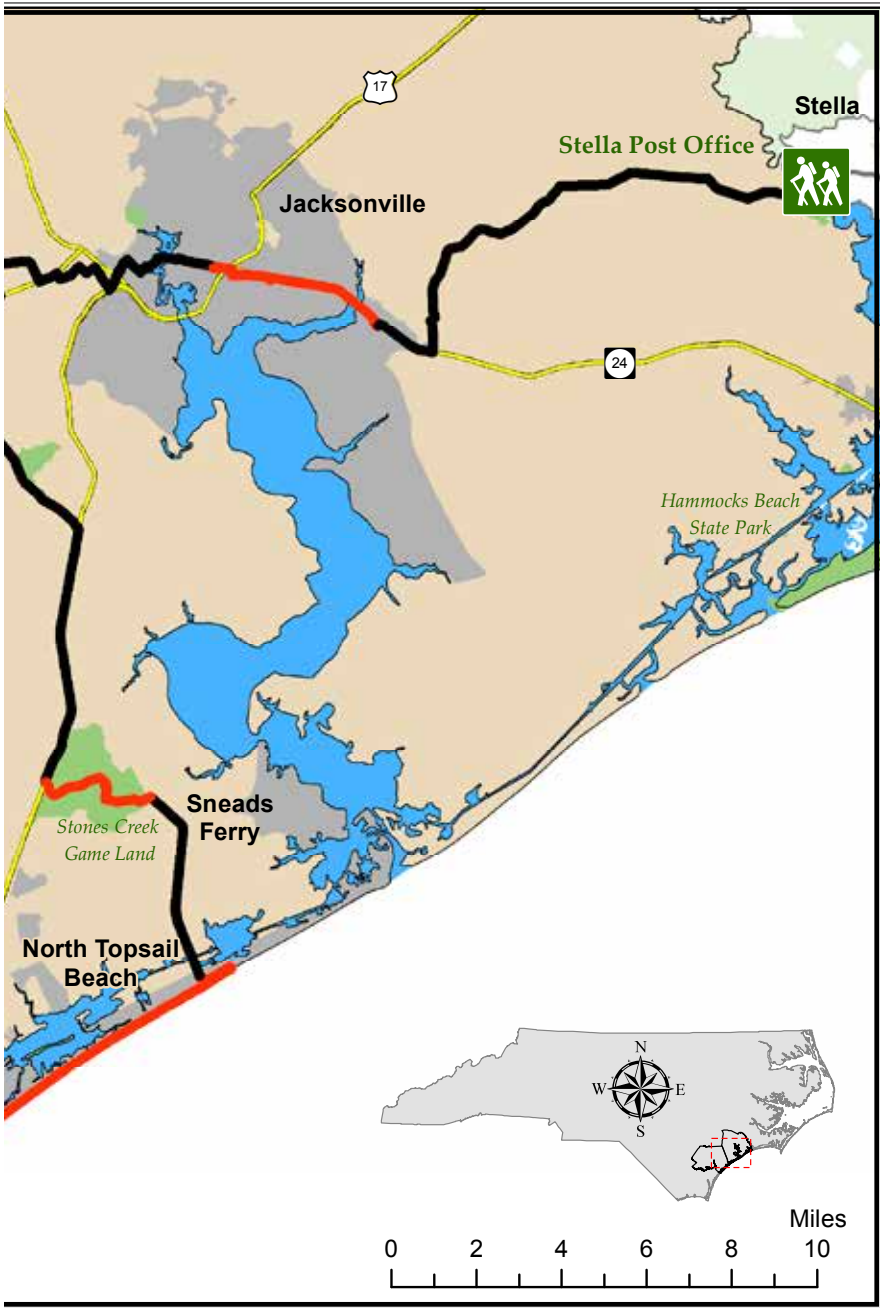
River Inlet Rd. Across the street is the North Topsail Beach Town Park. *Note:* Both the parking area and park have seasonal restrooms, outdoor showers, drinking water, and concessions. Bada Bing Italian Ice shop in the park offers free ice cream to hikers in season. 



- 37.8 Cross New River Inlet Rd. and continue on multi-use path.
- 38.3 Where multi-use path ends in front of North Topsail Beach town hall, continue straight on NC 210.
- 38.8 Cross 0.5-mile-long High Bridge over Intracoastal Waterway to enter a long stretch of commercial development with many services and lodging options. 
- 39.4 Pass Quality Inn and Suites Sneads Ferry-North Topsail Beach on right. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 40.5 Pass Onslow County Environmental Education Center and Public Library. The library has about two dozen computers with internet access for public use. Continue past Topsail Shores Inn on right. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 40.7 Continue straight across Old Folkstone Rd. *Note:* CVS Pharmacy is on right; Food Lion shopping center, restaurants, convenience store beyond light on left. 
- 40.9 Pass Hampton Inn on left. 
- 42.3 Continue straight across NC 172. *Note:* Sneads Ferry post office is one block to your right.
- 43.2 Turn left on Stones Creek Rd. at the large NCWRC sign to enter Stones Creek Game Land. This is a seasonally gated gravel road just beyond Sneads Ferry Presbyterian Church and directly across from intersection with Bradshaw Rd., which leads right to Dixon Elementary School. *Note:* Do not enter the game land without checking hunting seasons and regulations. If the gate here is open, it is hunting season. Find links for more information about hunting seasons and regulations in the “Hunting” section for this segment. Camping is prohibited at all times in the game land. However, primitive camping is available at a nature preserve near here; see the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information.  



Map produced for Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail by Curtis Belyea, 2018.
















- 43.5 Continue straight past grassy path on left.
- 43.8 Continue straight past prominent fire break on right.
- 44.4 Continue on road through a 90-degree right-hand curve.
- 44.7 At post, turn left into woods.
- 45.0 Just before reaching road, turn left into woods. Pass bench on right and turn left on road.
- 45.3 Cross Stones Creek on a long footbridge, then cross a bulldozed fire break. Continue on a crude jeep track, an extension of unmarked Deer Ln.
- 45.9 Bear slightly left where track joins more substantial road.
- 46.0 Pass gate at end of unmarked Deer Ln. Continue through open white-sand area, keeping left to remain on jeep track.
- 46.3 Reach T-intersection at lake. Turn right, remaining on unmarked Deer Ln. *Note:* To left is a gated jeep track that circumnavigates the perimeter of the lake always keeping close to its shore. This optional scenic loop is 1.3 miles. It returns to the shorter route at the next turn.



A glorious sunrise on Topsail Island  
 Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 46.5 Continue straight on unmarked Deer Ln. at intersection with circuit loop road around the lake.
- 46.6 Continue straight past a dirt track on right. *Note:* There may be a post at this intersection marking a potential future route for the MST.
- 46.7 Turn right on US 17 and walk the wide right shoulder between the highway and the game land. 
- 48.6 Continue past NC 210 on right at Dixon Middle School. There is also a gas station with convenience store. You will cross three bridges over dirt roads before the next significant intersection. 
- 49.0 Cross first bridge over dirt road.
- 50.4 Cross second bridge over dirt road.
- 51.9 Cross third bridge over dirt road.
- 53.2 Turn left on High Hill Rd. (SR 1119).
- 56.2 Turn left on Dawson Cabin Rd. at stop sign.
- 56.5 Pass New Bay Primitive Baptist Church on right.
- 57.0 Continue straight past intersection with Stillwood Rd. on left and Republic Ct. on right.
- 57.7 Continue straight past Old Timber Rd. on left.
- 58.6 Pass Haws Run Primitive Baptist Church on left.
- 58.7 Turn right on Haws Run Rd. at 4-way stop beside a tall communication tower.
- 59.0 Continue straight past convenience store on right. 
- 59.4 Continue straight past King Rd. on left, convenience store on right. 
- 60.1 Continue straight past Clayton James Rd. on right.
- 61.3 Cross bridge over Southwest Creek.
- 62.7 Pass New Dixon Family Worship Center on right.
- 62.8 At T-intersection, turn right on NC 53 (Burgaw Hwy.).
- 63.0 Turn left on Pony Farm Rd. at first right. *Note:* The cross-street changes name to Murrill Hill Rd. on the right. There are a convenience store and Family Dollar here.  
- 63.6 Pass Southwest Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) on right.
- 63.8 Turn right on Gould Rd.; Southwest Meadowview Community Building is on this corner.
- 65.4 Turn left on NC 53.

- 65.9 Turn right at light on Old Maplehurst Rd. *Note:* There are no street signs at this intersection. There are two convenience stores here.  
- 66.0 Turn left on Springdale Rd.
- 66.3 Turn left on Spring Villa Dr.
- 66.6 At T-intersection next to soccer complex, turn right on Blue Creek School Rd. *Note:* There is no street sign.
- 66.9 Turn left on Titus Ln. *Note:* The road is called Surrey Dr. on the other side of Blue Creek School Rd.
- 67.1 At sharp right-hand turn, road changes name to Canady Rd.
- 67.8 Where Canady Rd. makes a sharp right turn just before divided US 17 Business, continue on Canady Rd. Just before the metal guard rail, cross a trampled gap in the fence and turn left to follow the shoulder of the entrance ramp to US 17. (Be sure to take the left-most road at this point. If you cross the ramp here and take the other road, you will be on the US 17 freeway.)
- 68.2 Cross entrance ramps then continue under NC 24 bridges.
- 68.4 Cross US 17B (S. Marine Blvd.) at light and continue in the same direction along the sidewalk and frontage road.
- 68.7 Turn right at light on Broadhurst Rd.
- 69.0 Continue straight ahead as road changes name from Broadhurst Rd. to Georgetown Rd. when Georgetown Rd. intersects from the left.
- 69.2 Turn left on Dudley St.
- 69.4 At T-intersection, turn right on Sybil St.
- 69.5 Road makes a sharp left turn and changes name to Leonard St.
- 69.6 Continue straight past Collins St. on left.
- 69.8 Turn right on Old Bridge St., and follow the sidewalk on the right side of the street.
- 70.1 Cross bridge over New River.
- 70.3 Pass Onslow County courthouse on left, then turn left on Court St. and, after one short block, right on New Bridge St. *Note:* If you continue straight instead of turning right on New Bridge St., you will come to Marine Blvd., which has a number of food, supply, and lodging options. See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information.   
- 70.4 Continue straight across E. Railroad St.

- 70.8 Pass Jacksonville post office on left.
- 71.0 Pass Jacksonville city hall and Freedom Fountain on left, then Amtrak Thruway stop on right. Merge onto Lejeune Blvd.
- 71.2 Turn right on Montford Point Rd.
- 71.3 Turn left into Lejeune Memorial Gardens and begin walking on Lejeune Greenway. You will pass the Beirut, 9/11, Vietnam, and Montford Point Marines Memorials.
- 71.8 Pass under multiple bridges of the US 17/NC 24 interchange.
- 73.0 Turn left through the underpass. *Note:* Access on the path straight ahead is restricted to Military ID cardholders only.
- 73.1 At T-intersection, turn right onto the Jacksonville Rails-to-Trails Greenway.
- 75.2 Cross footbridge over Northeast Creek.
- 76.1 Cross parking lot, exiting on drive. Cross multilane roadway (Holcomb Blvd.). Use extreme caution! After crossing Holcomb Blvd., turn left and follow the curve of the road to the south shoulder of NC 24. *Note:* Access to the right on Holcomb Blvd. is restricted to Military ID cardholders only.
- 77.7 Turn left on Piney Green Rd. at light with shopping center on northwest corner. 🚫 🏪
- 78.0 Cross railroad tracks.
- 78.5 At first traffic light, turn right on Rocky Run Rd.







A 1946 rocket observation tower built for Operation Bumblebee  
 Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 80.2 Continue straight past Old Towne Point Blvd. on right and Cobblestone Trail on left.
- 83.2 Turn right on Old 30 Rd.
- 83.8 Turn right on Smith Rd. (marked with bike route sign).
- 85.4 Continue straight through intersection with Riggs Rd. *Note:* There is no sign here.
- 87.3 Pass Silverdale Elementary School on left.
- 87.6 At T-intersection, turn right on Belgrade-Swansboro Rd.
- 87.7 Continue straight past Saint Paul AME Zion Church on right.
- 88.7 Turn left on Stella Rd. *Note:* Hunter's Crossing Country Store is on right. 🏠
- 90.0 Continue straight past Midway United Methodist Church on right, then cross bridge over White Oak River to enter Carteret County.
- 90.6 Reach Stella post office and end of Segment 15. *Note:* To reach the Stella post office by automobile, head east from Jacksonville on NC 24 about 15 miles from the junction with US 17, then turn left on Belgrade-Swansboro Rd. Continue 4.6 miles, then turn right on Stella Rd. The post office will be on your left just after you cross the White Oak River in about 1.8 miles. Parking here costs \$5.00. 🅇



New River from Old Bridge St. crossing, Jacksonville  
 Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

## Hiking Directions, Westbound

- 0.0 From Stella post office, turn right (west) on Stella Rd. to begin Segment 15. Cross bridge over White Oak River and enter Onslow County. *Note:* To reach the Stella post office by automobile, head east from Jacksonville on NC 24 about 15 miles from the junction with US 17, then turn left on Belgrade-Swansboro Rd. Continue 4.6 miles, then turn right on Stella Rd. The post office will be on your left just after you cross the White Oak River in about 1.8 miles. Parking here costs \$5.00. 
- 0.6 Continue straight past Midway United Methodist Church on left.
- 1.9 At T-intersection, turn right on Belgrade-Swansboro Rd. *Note:* Hunter's Crossing Country Store is at intersection. 
- 2.9 Continue straight past Saint Paul AME Zion Church on left.
- 3.0 Turn left on Smith Rd.
- 3.2 Pass Silverdale Elementary School on right.
- 5.2 Continue straight through intersection with Riggs Rd. *Note:* There is no sign here.
- 6.7 At T-intersection, turn left on Old 30 Rd.
- 7.3 Turn left on Rocky Run Rd.
- 10.3 Continue straight past Old Towne Point Blvd. on left and Cobblestone Trail on right.
- 12.0 At T-intersection, turn left on Piney Green Rd. *Note:* You are entering Jacksonville, and services of all kinds, including lodging, restaurants, and stores, are abundant for the next several miles.
- 12.5 Cross railroad tracks.
- 12.9 Pass Piney Green Shopping Center and cross NC 24 at light, then turn right and continue on south shoulder of highway. *Note:* It is important to cross NC 24 here, as there is not another safe place to do so.  
- 14.5 Continue on the south shoulder of the exit ramp from NC 24, then cross multilane roadway (Holcomb Blvd.). Use extreme caution! Enter parking lot on driveway and continue onto Jacksonville Railsto-Trails Greenway. *Note:* Access to the left on Holcomb Blvd. is restricted to Military ID cardholders only.
- 15.3 Cross footbridge over Northeast Creek.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms




Supplies



Water





Picnic

- 17.4 Just before reaching a pedestrian bridge over NC 24, turn left on Lejeune Greenway.
- 17.6 Continue through underpass, then turn right at T-intersection. *Note:* Access on the path to the left is restricted to Military ID cardholders only.
- 18.7 After passing under multiple bridges of the US 17/NC 24 interchange, enter Lejeune Memorial Gardens. You will pass the Beirut, 9/11, Vietnam, and Montford Point Marines Memorials.
- 19.3 After passing the memorials, turn right on Montford Point Rd., then turn left on Lejeune Blvd.
- 19.6 Continue straight onto New Bridge St. and pass Amtrak Thruway stop on left, then Freedom Fountain and Jacksonville city hall on right.
- 19.7 Pass Jacksonville post office on right.
- 20.1 Continue straight across E. Railroad St.
- 20.3 At T-intersection, turn left on Court St., then, after one short block, right on Old Bridge St., passing the Onslow County courthouse on your right. *Note:* If you turn right on Court St. instead of left, you will come to Marine Blvd., which has a number of food, supply, and lodging options. See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 20.5 Cross bridge over New River.
- 20.8 Turn left on Leonard St. just before Old Bridge St. ends at merger with busy Marine Blvd.
- 21.0 At Y-intersection, take left fork to stay on Leonard St.
- 21.1 Follow right turn in road, no intersection, where Leonard St. becomes Sybil St.
- 21.2 Turn left on Dudley St.
- 21.4 At T-intersection, turn right on Georgetown Rd.
- 21.6 Continue straight where Georgetown Rd. turns right. Road changes name to Broadhurst Rd.
- 21.8 Reach intersection with divided Business US 17 (S. Marine Blvd.). Turn left onto sidewalk and frontage road before reaching the highway.
- 22.2 Cross US 17B at light just past intersection by NC Department of Transportation office.



Saltmarsh near Stella  
Photo by Mary Stewart

- 22.4 Cross under NC 24 bridges, then cross entrance ramps.
- 22.8 Just before the metal guard rail, cross a trampled gap in the fence and turn right on Canady Rd. Continue on Canady Rd. as it turns sharply left.
- 23.4 At a sharp left-hand turn, road changes name to Titus Ln.
- 23.7 At four-way intersection, turn right on Blue Creek School Rd. *Note:* Titus Ln. becomes Surrey Dr. on the other side of the intersection.
- 23.9 At large Southwest Soccer Club complex of fields, turn left on Spring Villa Dr. There is no street sign.
- 24.2 Turn right on Springdale Dr. at stop sign just past Shroyer Circle. *Note:* There is no street sign.
- 24.5 Turn right on Old Maplehurst Rd. *Note:* There is no sign for Old Maplehurst here.
- 24.7 At traffic light, turn left on NC 53 (Burgaw Hwy.). *Note:* There are no street signs at this intersection. There are two convenience stores here.  
- 25.2 Turn right on Gould Rd.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies



Water





Picnic



- 26.8 At T-intersection, turn left on Pony Farm Rd.; Southwest Meadowview Community Building is on this corner.
- 27.0 Pass Southwest VFD on left.
- 27.5 Turn right on NC 53. *Note:* There are a convenience store and Family Dollar here. 🏪 🍷
- 27.8 Turn left on Haws Run Rd.
- 27.9 Pass New Dixon Family Worship Center on left.
- 29.3 Cross bridge over Southwest Creek.
- 30.5 Continue straight past Clayton James Rd. on left.
- 31.2 Continue straight past King Rd. on right, convenience store on left. 🏪
- 31.6 Continue straight past convenience store on left. 🏪
- 31.8 Turn left on Dawson Cabin Rd. at 4-way stop next to tall communications tower. *Note:* Dawson Cabin Rd. is unsigned; sign on opposite side of road is for Harris Creek Rd.
- 32.0 Pass Haws Run Primitive Baptist Church on right.
- 32.9 Continue straight past Old Timber Rd. on right.
- 33.5 Continue straight past intersection with Stillwood Rd. on right and Republic Ct. on left.
- 34.0 Pass New Bay Primitive Baptist Church on left.
- 34.4 Turn right on High Hill Rd.



Lejeune Greenway crossing Northeast Creek  
Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 37.4 Turn right on US 17. You will cross three bridges over dirt roads before the next significant intersection.
- 38.6 Cross first bridge over dirt road.
- 40.2 Cross second bridge over dirt road.
- 41.5 Cross third bridge over dirt road.
- 41.9 Continue past NC 210 on left. Dixon Middle School and a gas station with convenience store are on the left at this intersection. 
- 43.9 At the fifth highway pass-through after NC 210, turn left on a fairly steep drop off the highway shoulder, onto an unmarked, seasonally gated gravel road into the Stones Creek Game Land. Continue straight past a dirt track on left. *Note:* Do not enter the game land without checking hunting seasons and regulations. If the gate here is open, it is hunting season. Find links for more information about hunting seasons and regulations in the “Hunting” section for this segment. Camping is prohibited at all times in the game land. There may be a post at the trail intersection marking a potential future route for the MST. 
- 44.1 Turn left at an intersection of gravel roads in front of a small lake. *Note:* The road to the right circumnavigates the perimeter of the lake always keeping close to its shore. This optional scenic loop is 1.3 miles. It returns to the shorter route at the next turn.
- 44.3 Turn left away from lake on unmarked Deer Ln., just before orange gate.
- 44.6 Pass gate and continue on jeep track.
- 44.7 Keep right at fork, following the less prominent track.
- 45.3 Just after crossing a bulldozed fire break, cross Stones Creek on a long footbridge.
- 45.5 Just before curve in road, turn right into woods and pass bench on left.
- 45.6 Emerge to open area and turn right at faint T-intersection.
- 45.9 At post, turn right onto gravel road.
- 46.2 Continue on road through a 90-degree left-hand curve.
- 46.8 Continue straight past prominent fire break on left.
- 47.1 Continue straight past grassy path on right.
- 47.4 Turn right on NC 210 at Sneads Ferry Presbyterian Church. *Note:* You are now entering a long stretch of commercial development with



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies



Water





































Picnic















US 17 through Camp Lejeune

Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- many services and lodging options. Primitive camping is available at a nature preserve near here; see the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information.     
- 48.2 Continue straight across NC 172. *Note:* Sneads Ferry post office is one block to your left.
- 49.7 Pass Hampton Inn on right. 
- 49.9 Continue straight to cross Old Folkstone Rd. *Note:* CVS Pharmacy is on left; Food Lion shopping center, restaurants, and convenience store are on right before light.   
- 50.0 Pass Topsail Shores Inn on left. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 50.1 Pass Onslow County Environmental Education Center and Public Library. The library has about two dozen computers with internet access for public use.  
- 51.1 Pass Quality Inn and Suites Sneads Ferry-North Topsail Beach on left. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 51.8 Cross 0.5-mile-long High Bridge over Intracoastal Waterway.
- 52.3 In front of North Topsail Beach town hall, continue straight on paved multi-use path, which will turn left to parallel New River Inlet Rd.
- 52.8 Cross New River Inlet Rd. and continue on multi-use path.

- 53.2 In front of North Topsail Beach Town Park, turn right into parking area with a large pole commemorating the MST. Continue on boardwalk and stairs across dunes and turn right on the beach. *Note:* Both the parking area and park have seasonal restrooms, outdoor showers, drinking water, and concessions. Bada Bing Italian Ice shop in the park offers free ice cream to hikers in season.    
- 53.6 Continue straight past stairs and boardwalk to parking area. 
- 53.7 Continue straight past second set of stairs and boardwalk to parking area.
- 53.8 Continue straight past emergency vehicle beach access point and parking area. 
- 55.5 Continue straight past beach access boardwalk leading to parking area. *Note:* Beach Bum's Grill & Bar is directly across the street from the parking area.  
- 58.0 Continue straight past Onslow County Public Park with restrooms in gray pavilion building on the beach, water fountain, seasonal concession, and sound access.    
- 58.8 Continue straight past old, white concrete 1940s rocket observation tower from Navy project "Operation Bumblebee" on the dune. There are pilings of old fishing pier in surf.
- 59.2 Seasonal camping is available at Surf City Family Campground just off the beach. See the "Seasonal Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information. 
- 60.4 Continue south on beach at public access, 1603 N. Shore Dr. (blue sign on walkway over dunes is visible from beach) where there is a park with restrooms and playground. The Friendly Mart (open 24/7) is across the street, then right one block.   
- 62.3 Turn inland just before the Surf City Fishing Pier and cross the dunes at a gazebo-like public access structure beside the Surf City Welcome Center and Visitor Information Center. Continue across Topsail Dr. at the IGA grocery store. *Note:* The Loggerhead Inn and Island Inn are near the trail route here. See the "Camping/Lodging" and "Seasonal Camping/Lodging" sections for this segment for more information.     
- 62.4 Take the next left at New River Dr. At the roundabout, turn right onto the multi-use path across the Surf City bridge.

- 63.2 At the end of the bridge, turn right to follow the sidewalk counter-clockwise around the roundabout.
- 63.3 After crossing NC 50, turn right on the sidewalk and continue onto a boardwalk paralleling Roland Ave. *Note:* You will soon enter an area with substantial commercial development including restaurants and stores of all kinds. Lanier's Campground is approximately 1.0 mile from the trail route here. See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information.   
- 64.0 Continue straight past Charlie Medlin Rd. on left. *Note:* The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (open Thursdays and Saturdays, 1-3 PM) is approximately 0.5 mile down this road, which changes its name to Tortuga Ln. The Surf City community center is near, and accessible from, the Sea Turtle center.
- 64.5 At traffic light, turn left to stay on NC 210. NC 50 continues straight ahead.
- 64.7 Continue straight on shoulder where sidewalk ends.
- 67.0 Turn left at traffic light into large shopping center anchored by Harris Teeter grocery store. Travel diagonally across the parking lot toward the adjacent Lowes home improvement store parking lot, also crossing that diagonally.   
- 67.5 Turn left on US 17.
- 68.2 Continue straight past Barlow-Vista Baptist Church on left.
- 69.6 Pass Pender Pines Garden Center on right. *Note:* The garden center provides MST hikers free water and a place to rest and relax.  
- 71.6 Turn right on Lodge Rd. into Holly Shelter Game Land at prominent NCWRC entrance sign. *Note:* Do not enter the 64,743-acre game land without a map and compass and without checking hunting seasons and regulations. Roads in the game land are only open to vehicles during hunting season; therefore, if the gate here is open, it is hunting season. During other times of the year, park outside the gates and walk into the game land. Find links for a map with the MST route marked on it and more information about hunting seasons and regulations in the game land in the "Hunting" section for this segment. See the "Seasonal Camping/Lodging" section for information about camping here during hunting season.  

- 74.4 Turn left to stay on Lodge Rd. where it leaves a power-line cut. Do not enter small gated road.
- 74.9 Continue straight past lesser-used road coming in from left.
- 75.7 At Y-intersection with Tram Rd., keep right to stay on Lodge Rd. (Signs are on left.)
- 77.0 Turn left onto Tram Rd. This is a 4-way intersection where the track to the right is much less prominent than the other three directions.
- 78.6 Take the first right onto lesser-used Military Rd. A dilapidated concrete post at the edge of the woods on the left is the only marker at this intersection.
- 80.4 At 4-way intersection, turn left onto New Rd. (marked on post partially hidden in undergrowth).
- 82.1 At sharp curve, turn right to continue on New Rd.
- 84.5 At sharp curve, turn left to continue on New Rd.
- 85.3 Turn right to remain on New Rd. A lesser-traveled road continues straight toward private land.
- 87.5 At T-intersection, turn left onto Lodge Rd.
- 87.7 Cross under power line.
- 90.6 Reach the Lodge Rd. entrance to the Holly Shelter Game Land at Shaw Hwy. and the western end of Segment 15. *Note:* Parking is available on Lodge Rd. See the “Seasonal Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for information about camping here during hunting season. To reach the Lodge Rd. entrance by car, drive northeast from Burgaw on Jacksonville Hwy. (NC 53) about 8.5 miles, then turn right on Shaw Hwy. The entrance is 5.2 miles ahead on the left.  



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies



Water



Picnic