



A tidal creek near Cedar Island
Photo by Mary Stewart

Down East North Carolina—MST Segment 17

OYSTER POINT CAMPGROUND TO CEDAR ISLAND FERRY

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

This 48-mile segment of the MST takes hikers “Down East” to see the North River, small fishing towns that face the Core Sound, and the 14,500 acres of the Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Heading east from Oyster Point Campground, the southern terminus of the Neusiok Trail (part of MST Segment 16), hikers experience a short roadside glimpse of the beauty and variety of the Croatan National Forest before crossing the North River to enter a part of Carteret County that its residents have traditionally referred to as “Down East.” Fishing, particularly for shrimp and blue crabs, is a mainstay of the economy.

Along US 70 at Eastbound (EB) Mile 20.7, Westbound (WB) Mile 27.2, look for the entrance to the NC Coastal Federation's North River Wetlands Preserve. NCCF is restoring this 6,000-acre farm back to its original state—forested, freshwater and tidal wetlands—in order to improve the water quality of degraded downstream estuaries and reopen these waters for shellfishing. In the future, when a bridge and boardwalk is built near the headwaters of the North River, the MST will traverse this property for more than eight miles. Hikers can visit the preserve now by registering and paying a \$5.00 fee at the entrance.

The trail route continues through a string of Down East communities fronting Core Sound. Hikers are rarely out of sight of bays, estuaries, and wetlands as they walk through Otway, Smyrna, Williston, Davis, and Stacy.

The route veers off US 70 onto NC 12 as it nears the Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge, where the only people on the road are visiting the refuge or heading for the ferry. The refuge sits where the Pamlico and Neuse Rivers empty into the Pamlico Sound. Here vast marshlands stretch toward the horizon, dotted with occasional “islands” of trees. Two hundred and seventy species of birds, 91 of amphibians and reptiles, and 35 mammals are known to live in the refuge, including breeding black rails, a bird species of special concern.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- The diversity of native plants and wildlife—first in the Croatan National Forest and then along the sounds, rivers, marshes, and estuaries of North Carolina's inner banks
- The welcoming people who live in the small villages “Down East” along the Core Sound

Total Distance: 48.0 miles (46.9 on paved roads; 1.1 on unpaved roads)

Difficulty: Easy

Trail Updates

When planning your trip using this guide, take a moment to see whether Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (Friends) has posted any updates about the trail route by visiting Friends' "Trail Updates" page at 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 17 and the services they can provide, see 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.

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 48.0

Oyster Point Campground, Forest Rd 181, Newport, 28570, 252-638-5628. This US Forest Service campground, seasonally closed from December through February, is at the southern terminus of the Neusiok Trail. Amenities include restrooms, picnic tables, water and fire rings. Sites are \$10-20 per night. To reserve a spot, visit www.recreation.gov and search for "Oyster Point Campground." (The search may return two entries; be sure to choose the one that allows reservations, which can be identified by a button marked "Check Availability.")

EB Mile 19.1; WB Mile 28.9

Otway House Bed & Breakfast, 368 US 70, Beaufort, 28516, 252-728-5636; www.otwayhouse.com. Rates are \$130 per night.

EB Mile 28.1; WB Mile 19.9

Davis Bed & Breakfast, 811 US 70, Davis, 28524, 252-418-0037; www.davisbandb.com. Rates are approximately \$179 per night.

EB Mile 48.0; WB Mile 0.0

Cedar Island Resort campground and motel, 3557 Cedar Island Rd., Cedar Island, 28520, 252-515-0201; www.cedarislandresort.com. Located at the Cedar Island ferry terminal, the resort offers lodging, camping, a restaurant, and a small store.

Also check Friends' "Trail Angels" page at MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels for additional camping and lodging options.

Food/Supplies/Post Office

EB Mile 10.3; WB Mile 37.6	Convenience store
EB Mile 19.5; WB Mile 28.5	Convenience store
EB Mile 19.9; WB Mile 28.0	Dollar General Store
EB Mile 20.1; WB Mile 27.9	Convenience store
EB Mile 21.6; WB Mile 26.4	Handy House gas station and convenience store, small supermarket
EB Mile 22.4; WB Mile 25.6	George's Take-Out
EB Mile 22.5; WB Mile 25.5	Smyrna post office
EB Mile 27.7; WB Mile 20.2	Handy House gas station and convenience store, Davis Shore Provisions
EB Mile 27.9; WB Mile 20.1	Davis post office
EB Mile 36.0; WB Mile 12.0	Dollar General Store
EB Mile 38.1; WB Mile 9.9	The Doodler grocery store
EB Mile 46.9; WB Mile 1.1	Island's Choice convenience store
EB Mile 48.0; WB Mile 0.0	Cedar Island post office, Cedar Island Resort restaurant and store

Water/Restrooms

Bottled water is available at convenience stores along the route, and many churches listed as Trail Angels allow people to take water from their spigots. Restrooms are available at Oyster Point Campground, Cedar Island ferry terminal, and at convenience stores along the route.

Hunting

Hunting is allowed throughout the Croatan National Forest; however, the only portion of Segment 17 that is in the Croatan is on roads, where hunting is illegal. See www.ncwildlife.org/hunting.aspx for information about seasons and licenses.

Signs/Blazing

As of this writing, there are no MST markings in this segment; however, we are developing plans for wayfinding on the road sections of this trail segment and expect to be installing signs and blazes in 2019.

Special Considerations

Avoid drinking untreated surface water.

Watch for traffic and narrow shoulders on paved roads throughout the route.

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



A most distinctive weathervane in Stacy
Photo by PJ Wetzel, www.pjwetzel.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Friends office: 919-825-0297 or info@MountainstoSeaTrail.org

Ferry information: www.ncferry.org

Carteret County Chamber of Commerce: www.nccoastchamber.com

Carteret County Tourism: www.crystalcoastnc.org

Croatan National Forest: www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/null/recarea/?recid=48466&actid=63

North River Wetlands Preserve:

www.nccoast.org/project/north-river-wetlands-preserve

Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge:

www.fws.gov/refuge/Cedar_Island/about.html

Trail Maps

Google map of the entire MST: MountainstoSeaTrail.org/map

Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge: www.fws.gov/uploadedImages/Region_4/NWRS/Zone_3/Mattamuskeet_Complex/Cedar_Island/Sections/About/new%20Cedar%20Island%20Map.jpg

PRIMARY PARKING LOCATIONS

Oyster Point Campground

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 48.0



N34.76076, W76.76168

Cedar Island Ferry Terminal

EB Mile 48.0; WB Mile 0.0




N35.01753, W76.31498










Down East crab pots
Photo by Mary Stewart

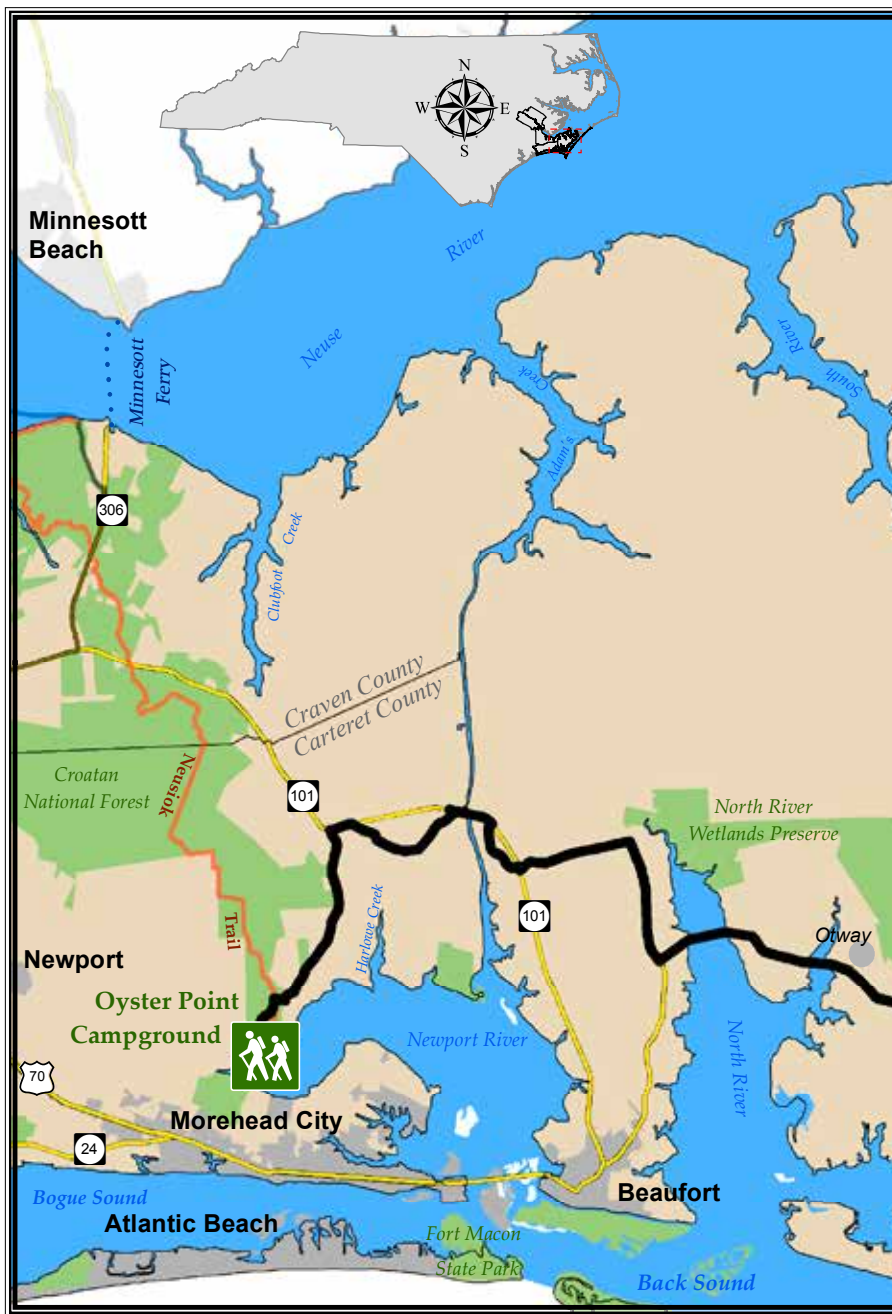
Hiking Directions, Eastbound

0.0 Begin Segment 17 at the Oyster Point Campground by heading north on FR 181. *Note:* Oyster Point Campground has camping, vault toilets, and water. See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information about camping here. To reach the trailhead from Beaufort, head north on NC 101 10.5 miles, then turn left on Old Winberry Rd. at the sign for Oyster Point. Continue 3.7 miles and turn right on Mill Creek Rd. After 0.2 mile, turn left on FR 181 just past the Carteret County Solid Waste Recycling Site. Continue 1.1 miles to the end of the road and the trailhead. 



1.1 Turn right on Mill Creek Rd.

- 1.3 Turn left on Old Winberry Rd. *Note:* There is no street name sign here, but the road is signed to NC 101.
- 1.5 Pass Reece's Chapel Baptist Church on left.
- 3.1 Continue straight past Mill Creek Rd. on right.
- 5.0 Turn right on NC 101, towards Beaufort, then cross bridge over Harlowe Creek.
- 5.3 Pass Harlowe United Methodist Church on right.
- 5.5 Turn right on Hardesty Loop Rd.
- 6.3 Continue straight past Hardesty Farm Rd. on right as pavement ends.
- 7.3 Continue straight past Turnpike Rd. on right as pavement resumes.
- 8.0 At highway bridge, turn left off road and walk under bridge to embankment. Climb embankment on far (north) side and cross guard rail to reach NC 101, and then double back to head east on NC 101.
- 8.3 Cross bridge over Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (Core Creek).
- 9.1 Turn right on Tuttle Grove Rd.
- 10.2 At first four-way intersection, turn left on Steel Tank Rd.
- 10.3 At T-intersection, next to gas station with convenience store and small restaurant, turn right on NC 101.  
- 10.4 Turn left on Laurel Rd.
- 12.7 At T-intersection, turn right on Merrimon Rd.
- 13.2 Pass Mt. Tabor Missionary Baptist Church on left and North River & Laurel Rd. VFD on right.
- 15.1 Turn left at light in front of East Carteret High School sports complex with gas station onto US 70, following signs to Cedar Island ferry.
- 16.2 Cross bridge over North River.
- 17.2 Pass Woodville Baptist Church on right.
- 18.5 Cross bridge over Ward Creek.
- 19.1 Pass Otway House Bed & Breakfast on right. *Note:* See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information. 
- 19.5 Pass convenience store and Otway Fire and Rescue on left. 
- 19.9 Pass Dollar General Store on left. 
- 20.1 Continue straight past Harker's Island Rd. on right at gas station with convenience store and grill open until 11 PM.  
- 20.7 Pass entrance to North River Wetlands Preserve on left.



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



Cedar Island Ferry

Cedar Isl. Ferry

Cedar Island

Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge

12

Atlantic

70

Core Sound

Sea Level

Cape Lookout National Seashore

Stacy

Davis

Williston

Jarrett Bay

70

Smyrna

Legend

Current Route

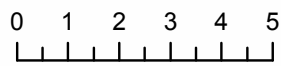
Trails

Roads

Endpoints

Ferry Routes






Miles















Crossing Core Creek

Photo by PJ Wetzel, www.pjwetzel.com







- 21.4 Pass Smyrna Pentecostal Holiness Church on the left.
- 21.6 Turn left at gas station and convenience store to stay on US 70. *Note:* A few yards to the right is a small supermarket.  
- 22.1 At Y-intersection with E. City Rd., bear left to stay on US 70, then take 90-degree left-hand curve.
- 22.4 Pass George's Take-Out on left. 
- 22.5 Pass Smyrna post office on left.
- 23.9 Pass Williston United Methodist Church on left.
- 24.0 Cross bridge over Williston Creek.
- 26.3 Cross bridge over Smyrna Creek.
- 27.5 Pass Davis Volunteer Fire Department on left.
- 27.7 At intersection with a gas station and convenience store on left and Davis Shore Provisions General Store on right, turn left to stay on US 70. 
- 27.9 Pass Horseshoe Rd. and Davis post office on right.
- 28.1 Pass Davis Bed & Breakfast on left. See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information. 
- 29.3 Cross bridge over Oyster Creek.
- 31.0 Cross bridge over Marina Creek.
- 32.3 Pass Stacy Free Will Baptist Church on right.
- 34.1 Pass Lighthouse Community Church on left.















- 35.6 Cross bridge over Salters Creek.
- 36.0 Continue straight past Dollar General where road becomes NC 12 and US 70 continues to the right. Stay on NC 12 all the way to the Cedar Island ferry. 
- 38.1 Pass Old Cedar Island Rd., then The Doodler grocery store, on right.   
- 39.1 Cross High Bridge onto Cedar Island. For the next 5.3 miles, you will be passing through the Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge. Camping is not permitted in the refuge.
- 44.3 Pass Lola Rd. on right.
- 44.4 Pass Cedar Island Volunteer Fire Department on right, entering community of Cedar Island.
- 44.9 Pass Goodwin Ridge Rd. on left.
- 45.7 Pass cemetery on left and harbor on right.
- 46.2 Pass Cedar Island United Methodist Church on left.
- 46.9 Pass Island's Choice convenience store on right. 
- 48.0 Reach Cedar Island ferry terminal and end of Segment 17. *Note:* See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for information about camping and lodging here. There is a post office here as well. By road, the ferry terminal is on NC 12 about 38 miles east of Beaufort. From Beaufort, take US 70 and NC 12, following signs to the ferry at the end of the road.     



Crossing Salters Creek
Photo by PJ Wetzel, www.pjwetzel.com

Hiking Directions, Westbound

- 0.0 From Cedar Island ferry terminal, head straight inland on NC 12 to begin Segment 17. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for information about camping and lodging here. There is a post office here as well. By road, the ferry terminal is on NC 12 about 38 miles east of Beaufort. From Beaufort, take US 70 and NC 12, following signs to the ferry at the end of the road.     
- 1.1 Pass Island’s Choice convenience store on left. 
- 1.8 Pass Cedar Island United Methodist Church on right.
- 2.3 Pass cemetery on right and harbor on left.
- 3.1 Pass Goodwin Ridge Rd. on right.
- 3.6 Pass Cedar Island Volunteer Fire Department on left. For the next 5.3 miles, until you cross the bridge leaving the island, you will be passing through the Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge. Camping is not permitted in the refuge.

- 3.7 Pass Lola Rd. on left.
- 8.8 Cross High Bridge onto mainland.
- 9.9 Pass The Doodler grocery store, then Old Cedar Island Rd., on left.   
- 12.0 Continue straight past Dollar General as the road becomes US 70. 
- 12.3 Cross bridge over Salters Creek.
- 13.9 Pass Lighthouse Community Church on right.
- 15.7 Pass Stacy Free Will Baptist Church on left.
- 16.9 Cross bridge over Marina Creek.
- 18.6 Cross bridge over Oyster Creek.
- 19.9 Pass Davis Bed & Breakfast on right. See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 20.1 Pass Horseshoe Rd. and Davis post office on left.
- 20.2 At an intersection with a Handy House gas station on right and Davis Shore Provisions General Store straight ahead, turn right to stay on US 70. 
- 20.4 Pass Davis Volunteer Fire Department on right.
- 21.7 Cross bridge over Smyrna Creek.
- 24.0 Cross bridge over Williston Creek.
- 24.1 Pass Williston United Methodist Church on right.
- 25.5 Pass Smyrna post office on right.
- 25.6 Pass George’s Take-Out on right. 
- 25.8 Where E. City Rd. comes in at sharp angle from left just beyond 90-degree right-hand curve, continue straight on US 70.
- 26.4 At gas station and convenience store, turn right to stay on US 70. *Note:* Just ahead is a small supermarket.  
- 26.5 Pass Smyrna Pentecostal Holiness Church on the right.
- 27.2 Pass entrance to North River Wetlands Preserve on right.
- 27.9 Continue straight past Harker’s Island Rd. on left at gas station with convenience store and grill open until 11 P.M.  
- 28.0 Pass Dollar General Store on right. 
- 28.5 Pass convenience store and Otway Fire and Rescue on right. 
- 28.9 Pass Otway House Bed & Breakfast on left. *Note:* See the “Camping/Lodging” section for this segment for more information. 
- 29.5 Cross bridge over Ward Creek.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies





Water







Picnic



At the ferry terminal at Cedar Island
 Photo by PJ Wetzel, www.pjwetzel.com

- 30.7 Pass Woodville Baptist Church on left then keep left as Old River Rd. bears right.
- 31.8 Cross bridge over North River.
- 32.8 At T-intersection with traffic light, turn right onto Merrimon Rd.
- 34.8 Pass Mt. Tabor Missionary Baptist Church on right and North River & Laurel Rd. VFD on left.
- 35.3 Turn left on Laurel Rd.
- 37.5 Turn right on NC 101.
- 37.6 Just past gas station with convenience store and small restaurant, turn left on Steel Tank Rd.  
- 37.8 Turn right at first intersection onto Tuttle's Grove Rd.
- 38.9 Turn left on NC 101.
- 39.2 Cross bridge over Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (Core Creek).
- 39.6 At end of bridge, cross over guard rail and double back to descend bridge embankment.
- 39.9 At bottom of embankment, turn right on Hardesty Loop Rd.

- 40.6 Continue straight past Turnpike Rd. on right as pavement ends.
- 41.7 Continue straight past Hardesty Farm Rd. on left as pavement resumes.
- 42.5 Turn left on NC 101.
- 42.6 Pass Harlowe United Methodist Church on left.
- 42.9 Cross bridge over Harlowe Creek, then turn left on Old Winberry Rd.
- 44.9 At Y-intersection where Mill Creek Rd. comes in from left (church a short distance on left), bear right to stay on Old Winberry Rd.
- 46.5 Pass Reece's Baptist Church on right.
- 46.7 At T-intersection, turn right on Mill Creek Rd.
- 46.9 Just past Carteret County Solid Waste Recycling Site, turn left on the gravel road to Oyster Point Campground and the southern terminus of the Neusiok Trail.
- 48.0 Reach end of road at parking area, and the western end of Segment 17. *Note:* Oyster Point Campground has camping, vault toilets, and water. See the "Camping/Lodging" section for this segment for more information about camping here. To reach the trailhead from Beaufort, head north on NC 101 10.5 miles, then turn left on Old Winberry Rd. at the sign for Oyster Point. Continue 3.7 miles and turn right on Mill Creek Rd. After 0.2 mile, turn left on FR 181 just past the Carteret County Solid Waste Recycling Site. Continue 1.1 miles to the end of the road and the trailhead.    



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies



Water



Picnic