



Pea Island Dunes  
Photo by Paul Travis

## The Outer Banks—MST Segment 18

### CEDAR ISLAND FERRY TO JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK

By Jim Grode

From the secluded beaches of Ocracoke Island to the tourist bustle of Nags Head, this segment captures the many aspects of North Carolina's easternmost parts. These barrier islands, or "banks," are rich with history, wildlife, and scenery. They are also the site of some of the most extreme weather in the country. Situated as it is—sticking far out into the ocean, where two major ocean currents collide—the region has earned its nickname, "The Graveyard of the Atlantic."

The western end of this segment is at the Cedar Island ferry terminal in Carteret County and the eastern end is at the highest point on the dunes at Jockey's Ridge State Park in Dare County. The segment includes 82.2 miles of trail plus two ferry rides. The ferry between Cedar Island and Ocracoke Island takes about 2½ hours, and the ferry between Ocracoke and Hatteras Island is about 60 minutes.

Because most of the trail in this segment is on loose, sandy beaches, it is not recommended for bicycles; however, NC 12 parallels the trail almost its entire length and is a good alternative for cyclists.

## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Ocracoke Village, a quaint and quiet town at the western end of the segment
- Cape Hatteras National Seashore, encompassing the beaches for nearly the entire segment
- The Ocracoke pony pens, which hold the descendants of a horse herd that once roamed on the island
- The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, which tells the story of the over 2,000 shipwrecks off the coast of North Carolina
- The Open Ponds Trail, a sandy track through maritime forest near Buxton Woods
- Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, at 208 feet the tallest brick lighthouse in North America, and the most recognized symbol of the Outer Banks. It is open for climbing in the summer.
- The historic Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station, the original site of the forerunners to the US Coast Guard, which is now a museum
- Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, a renowned haven for waterfowl, especially in the winter
- The historic Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station
- Jennette's Pier in Nags Head, a 1,000-foot fishing pier originally built in 1939 and reconstructed several times, most recently in 2011, which is now part of the North Carolina Aquarium
- Jockey's Ridge State Park, the largest and highest dune complex in the eastern United States

**Total Distance: 82.2 miles of hiking (67.3 on beach, 8.8 on other trails, and 6.1 on roads), plus two ferry rides, one 2½ hours long and one 60 minutes long**

**Difficulty: Moderate (although the trail is flat, much of the walking is on loose sand, which can be tiring)**

## 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](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 18 and the services they can provide, see [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels).

## Ferries

As of 2018, the one-way ferry fare between Cedar Island and Ocracoke Island is \$15.00 for cars, \$3.00 for bicycles, and \$1.00 for hikers. The Ocracoke-Hatteras ferry is free. Reservations are highly recommended in the summer. Ferry schedules and reservations are available online ([www.ncferry.org](http://www.ncferry.org)) or by phone (1-800-By-Ferry), and schedules are posted at the terminals. Note that actual sailings are subject to weather.

## Camping

*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 82.2

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

Camping on the beach is prohibited throughout this segment of the MST. Please camp only in legal campgrounds.

As noted in the directions, the trail passes through or near the towns of Ocracoke Village, Hatteras, Frisco, Buxton, Avon, Salvo-Waves-Rodanthe, and Nags Head. There are numerous privately owned campgrounds, both year-round and seasonal, in these towns. However, many of them have only a few tent sites, and finding a spot can be difficult in high season. The directory of campsites at [www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay](http://www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay) can help you find a place. Also see the tourism websites listed in the “Additional Information” section for this segment for more information.

The National Park Service (NPS) operates three campgrounds on the route:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| EB Mile 4.5; WB Mile 77.7  | Ocracoke Campground; head inland at ORV Ramp 68 to reach the campground.  |
| EB Mile 21.0; WB Mile 61.2 | Frisco Campground; the trail goes through the campground.   |
| EB Mile 68.1; WB Mile 14.1 | Oregon Inlet Campground; from the northern end of the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge, head north on NC 12 0.3 mile to the campground. |

A fourth NPS campground, Cape Point, is about a mile south of the MST route near the Hatteras Lighthouse. From EB Mile 25.6, WB Mile 56.7, head south on Lighthouse Rd. to the entrance.

All of the NPS campgrounds are open from April through November. Information about all of the campgrounds is available at [www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm](http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm). Make reservations at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

### Other Lodging

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 82.2

Cedar Island Resort campground and motel. See “Camping,” above, for information.

All the towns along Segment 18 except Frisco have numerous lodging options. See [www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay](http://www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay) or the other tourism websites listed in the “Additional Information” section for this segment for more information.

Also check Friends’ “Trail Angels” page at [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/the-trail/trail-angels) for additional camping and lodging options.



## Food/Supplies/Post Office

As with lodging, food and supply options abound in the towns along the trail. See the “Additional Information” section for websites.

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 82.2  | Cedar Island post office, Cedar Island Resort restaurant and store.   |
| EB Mile 1.1; WB Mile 81.2  | The Ocracoke post office is on NC 12 here.  |
| EB Mile 14.4; WB Mile 67.8 | The Hatteras post office is on NC 12 approximately 1.3 miles east of the Hatteras ferry terminal.                                       |
| EB Mile 21.0; WB Mile 61.2 | The Frisco post office and a general store are 1.2 mile away; follow the instructions in the hiking directions to reach them.           |
| EB Mile 33.2; WB Mile 49.0 | From the Avon Pier, the Avon post office is approximately 0.2 mile south on NC 12.  |
| EB Mile 81.4; WB Mile 0.8  | The Nags Head post office is on S. Croatan Hwy., approximately 1.2 miles south of the intersection of S. Croatan Hwy. and Hollowell St. |

## Water/Restrooms

In addition to bottled water from stores in the towns described above, water and/or restrooms are available at the following public sites. Avoid drinking surface water.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 82.2 | Ocracoke Visitor Center   |
|---------------------------|---|

EB Mile 2.4; WB Mile 79.9	Ocracoke Day Use Area (MP 84.5) 
EB Mile 7.8; WB Mile 74.5	Ocracoke Pony Pens parking area 
EB Mile 14.3; WB Mile 67.9	Ocracoke-Hatteras ferry terminal  
EB Mile 14.3; WB Mile 67.9	Hatteras ferry terminal  
EB Mile 18.2; WB Mile 64.0	Frisco Day Use Area (water seasonal)  
EB Mile 21.0; WB Mile 61.2	Frisco Campground (seasonal)  
EB Mile 26.2; WB Mile 56.1	Hatteras Island Visitor Center  
EB Mile 29.7; WB Mile 52.5	Haulover Day Use Area (water seasonal)  
EB Mile 46.1; WB Mile 36.1	Salvo Day Use Area (water seasonal)  
EB Mile 50.5; WB Mile 31.7	Rodanthe Beach Access (water seasonal)  
EB Mile 59.4; WB Mile 22.9	Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center  
EB Mile 71.0; WB Mile 11.2	Coquina Beach parking area (seasonal)  
EB Mile 76.8; WB Mile 5.5	Jennette's Pier  
EB Mile 81.7; WB Mile 0.5	Jockey's Ridge State Park Visitor Center  

## Hunting

Hunting is allowed on Ocracoke Island outside the village; however, hunting on the beach is extremely rare. Other than on Ocracoke Island, the trail is not on any land that is open for hunting in this segment.

## Signs/Blazing

There are MST blazes—a 3-inch white circle—on the trail in Jockey's Ridge State Park and a few places in the Buxton Woods area. In addition,

there are a few blazes along the beach portions of the trail, mainly at the dune line where the trail leaves the beach; however, these are often destroyed by storms, so they should not be relied upon. Finally, there are mileposts on the Open Ponds Trail in the Buxton Woods area and every 0.5 mile on the beach on Ocracoke Island.

### Shorebird Nesting

The Outer Banks are important nesting habitat for several rare and endangered bird species. To protect those species, the beaches may be closed seasonally in spots. The scope and distance of these closings, and whether they are for hikers or only vehicles, vary. We recommend checking the Cape Hatteras National Seashore facebook page, [www.facebook.com/CapeHatterasNS](http://www.facebook.com/CapeHatterasNS), for information about beach closings.

### Dogs

Dogs are prohibited in Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge west of NC 12 (EB Miles 59.5-60.0; WB Miles 22.2-22.8). Elsewhere on this segment, dogs are allowed but must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet. In addition, even dogs on leashes can disturb shorebirds, so please do not take dogs on the beach when birds are present.

### Special Considerations

The Outer Banks are a highly dynamic landscape. The forces of storms, tides, winds, and currents constantly rearrange the sand that forms these islands. Most of the land south of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse did not exist a hundred years ago; on the other hand, in 1999, beach erosion forced relocation of the lighthouse 2,900 feet west from its original site. For the MST hiker, this means that the trail is constantly changing. What is an easy stroll on the beach today may be completely impassable after the next storm, and vice versa.

Other factors affect a hiker's ability to access the beach. Tides are a major consideration: A reasonably wide beach at low tide may be completely covered at high tide. Tide tables should be considered an essential tool for hiking this segment (see "Additional Information" for online tide resources). Parts of the beaches may be closed at certain times of the year to protect turtle or shorebird nesting sites. And strong winds may influence the direction a day hiker chooses to go.

For all these reasons, the route outlined in this guide and on maps should be considered an approximation only. The route assumes the hiker will stay on the beach in most places, but keep in mind that NC 12 parallels the MST virtually its entire length, and prudence or legalities may dictate using this as an alternate route.

This segment includes two significant bridge crossings. One, over a small inlet at EB Mile 56.9 (WB Mile 25.3), is narrow, but is very short. At the time of this writing (November 2018), the inlet has filled in, and it may be possible to continue on the beach to avoid the bridge. The other bridge, the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge between Hatteras and Bodie Islands (EB Miles 65.1-68.1; WB Miles 14.1-17.1), has wide shoulders but does not provide any physical separation from traffic. We recommend that you use your best judgment about how to cross these inlets.

Above all, avoid placing yourself at risk whenever possible!



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Friends office: 919-825-0297 or [info@MountainstoSeaTrail.org](mailto:info@MountainstoSeaTrail.org)  
Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce: [www.outerbankschamber.com](http://www.outerbankschamber.com)  
Outer Banks Tourism: [www.outerbanks.org](http://www.outerbanks.org)  
OuterBanks.com tourism site: [www.outerbanks.com](http://www.outerbanks.com)  
Ocracoke Island Tourism: [www.visitocracokenc.com](http://www.visitocracokenc.com)  
Camping and lodging directory: [www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay](http://www.outerbanks.org/where-to-stay)  
NC Department of Transportation NC 12 Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/NCDOTNC12](http://www.facebook.com/NCDOTNC12)  
Outer Banks National Scenic Byway: [outerbanksbyway.com](http://outerbanksbyway.com)  
Ferry schedules: [www.ncferry.org](http://www.ncferry.org)

## Tide Tables

Ocracoke Island: [usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Ocracoke%20Island](http://usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Ocracoke%20Island)  
Cape Hatteras Fishing Pier: [usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Cape%20Hatteras%20Fishing%20Pier](http://usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Cape%20Hatteras%20Fishing%20Pier)  
Rodanthe: [usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Rodanthe](http://usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Rodanthe)  
Oregon Inlet Bridge: [usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Oregon%20Inlet%20Bridge](http://usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Oregon%20Inlet%20Bridge)  
Nags Head: [usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Nags%20Head](http://usharbors.com/monthly-tides/North%20Carolina-North%20Shore/Nags%20Head)

## Trail Maps

Google map of the entire MST: [MountainstoSeaTrail.org/map](http://MountainstoSeaTrail.org/map)  
Cape Hatteras National Seashore:  
[www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/maps.htm](http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/maps.htm)  
Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge:  
[www.fws.gov/southeast/pubs/Pea\\_tearsheet.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southeast/pubs/Pea_tearsheet.pdf)

## Links for Parks, Historic Sites, and Other Points of Interest Along the Route

Ocracoke Preservation Society & Museum: [ocracokepreservation.org](http://ocracokepreservation.org)  
Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum: [www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com](http://www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com)



Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the symbol of the Outer Banks  
Photo by Jim Grode

Frisco Native American Museum: [nativeamericanmuseum.org](http://nativeamericanmuseum.org)

Buxton Woods Coastal Reserve:

[portal.ncdenr.org/web/crp/buxton-woods#visitingbw](http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/crp/buxton-woods#visitingbw)

Cape Hatteras and Bodie Island Lighthouse climbs:

[www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/lighthouseclimbs.htm](http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/lighthouseclimbs.htm)

Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station: [www.chicamacomico.net](http://www.chicamacomico.net)

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge: [www.fws.gov/refuge/pea\\_island](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/pea_island)

Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station:

[uslife-savingservice.org/station/endangered-stations/  
oregon-inlet-life-saving-station-1898-rodanthe-nc](http://uslife-savingservice.org/station/endangered-stations/oregon-inlet-life-saving-station-1898-rodanthe-nc)

Jennette's Pier: [www.jennettespier.net](http://www.jennettespier.net)

NC State Parks Jockey's Ridge State Park:

[www.ncparks.gov/jockeys-ridge-state-park](http://www.ncparks.gov/jockeys-ridge-state-park)

Friends of Jockey's Ridge State Park: [www.jockeysridgestatepark.com](http://www.jockeysridgestatepark.com)

## PRIMARY PARKING LOCATIONS (Page 1)

### Cedar Island Ferry Terminal

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 82.2



N35.01753, W76.31498

### Ocracoke Preservation Museum

near Ocracoke Ferry Terminal

EB Mile 0.0; WB Mile 82.2



N35.11678, W75.98529

### Ocracoke Day Use Area

EB Mile 2.4; WB Mile 79.9



N35.10854, W75.95441

### Ocracoke Pony Pens Parking Area

EB Mile 7.8; WB Mile 74.5



N35.14782, W75.87129

### ORV Ramp 63

EB Mile 9.2; WB Mile 73.0



N35.15668, W75.84835

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12

EB Mile 13.8; WB Mile 68.4



N35.18097, W75.78367

### Hatteras Ferry Dock

EB Mile 14.3; WB Mile 67.9



N35.20712, W75.70247

### Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum Parking Area

EB Mile 14.5; WB Mile 67.7



N35.20610, W75.70350

### Frisco Day Use Area

EB Mile 18.2; WB Mile 64.0



N35.22479, W75.64355

### Lighthouse Rd. Parking

EB Mile 25.6; WB Mile 56.7



N35.24805, W75.53276

### Buxton Woods Picnic Area and Trailhead

EB Mile 26.0; WB Mile 56.2



N35.25269, W75.52895

### Hatteras Island Visitor Center

EB Mile 26.2; WB Mile 56.1



N35.25144, W75.52771

### Haulover Day Use Area

EB Mile 29.7; WB Mile 52.5



N35.29904, W75.51362

## PRIMARY PARKING LOCATIONS (Page 2)

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12 at ORV Ramp 34

EB Mile 35.3; WB Mile 47.0



N35.37794, W75.49586

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12 at ORV Ramp 30

EB Mile 39.6; WB Mile 42.6



N35.43863, W75.48581

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12 at ORV Ramp 25

EB Mile 43.8; WB Mile 38.4



N35.49933, W75.47955

### Rodanthe Beach Access

EB Mile 50.5; WB Mile 31.7



N35.59430, W75.46429

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12

EB Mile 56.6; WB Mile 25.6



N35.68012, W75.48198

### Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

EB Mile 59.4; WB Mile 22.9



N35.71631, W75.49341

### Cape Hatteras National Seashore Parking Area on NC 12 Just South of Oregon Inlet

EB Mile 64.8; WB Mile 17.5



N35.76689, W75.52508

### Coquina Beach Parking Area

EB Mile 71.0; WB Mile 11.2



N35.82931, W75.55806

### Jennette's Pier

EB Mile 76.8; WB Mile 5.5



N35.90950, W75.59701















### Jockey's Ridge State Park

EB Mile 81.6; WB Mile 0.6



N35.96471, W75.63323

## Hiking Directions, Eastbound

- 0.0 Board ferry at Cedar Island ferry terminal and ride it to Ocracoke to begin Segment 18. *Note:* See the “Camping” and “Other Lodging” sections for this segment for information about camping and lodging here. There is a post office here as well. See the “Additional Information” section for this segment for ferry information and the “Special Considerations” section for issues unique to this segment. 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.     
- 0.0 From ferry dock, turn right and walk along the concrete waterfront. *Note:* The Ocracoke Visitor Center across the street has water and restrooms, and parking is available next to the Ocracoke Preservation Museum.   
- 0.1 Turn right on NC 12. *Note:* You are entering Ocracoke Village, with numerous food and lodging options.   
- 0.2 Pass British Cemetery Rd. on left. *Note:* Teeter’s Campground is 0.2 mile down British Cemetery Rd. 
- 0.4 At Y-intersection in front of surf shop, bear left to stay on NC 12.
- 1.1 Pass Ocracoke post office.
- 1.2 Pass ORV Ramp 72 on right and continue on separated multi-use path. *Note:* You are entering Cape Hatteras National Seashore.
- 1.7 Turn right at signs for ORV Ramp 70 and airstrip, then pass airstrip on right.
- 1.9 Turn left onto beach.
- 2.4 Just before Milepost (MP) 84.5, pass stairs and boardwalk across dunes leading to Ocracoke Day Use Area, with parking and restrooms.  
- 4.2 Pass MP 82.5.
- 4.5 Just past a line of posts marking an ORV closure area, pass ORV Ramp 68, marked with a square sign atop the dunes. *Note:* The ramp leads to a parking area with a port-a-john and the National Park Service’s Ocracoke Campground. See the “Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at this seasonal campground.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms

























Supplies



Water



Picnic

- In addition, just on the other side of NC 12 is the trailhead for the Hammock Hills Nature Trail, a 0.75-mile self-guided loop.  
- 4.7 Pass MP 82.
  - 5.7 Pass ORV Ramp 67.
  - 7.8 At MP 79, pass stairs and boardwalk across dunes leading to a parking area with port-a-john and the Ocracoke pony pens.  
  - 8.5 Pass beach access parking area. 
  - 9.2 Pass ORV Ramp 63, which has a small parking area. 
  - 13.5 Turn left through the dunes on ORV Ramp 59.
  - 13.8 Turn right on NC 12. *Note:* There is a parking area about 150 yards to the left on NC 12. 
  - 14.3 Arrive at Ocracoke ferry dock and ride ferry to Hatteras.  
  - 14.3 Arrive at Hatteras ferry dock and continue straight out toward highway, passing ferry terminal building on your right. *Note:* Ferry terminal has restrooms and concessions.    
  - 14.4 At traffic light, turn right on NC 12. *Note:* Turning left leads to Hatteras Village with numerous services, including the Hatteras post office approximately 1.3 miles ahead.    
  - 14.5 Turn left into parking area across from Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, then take boardwalk across dunes. 
  - 14.6 Turn left on beach.
  - 17.5 Pass beach-access boardwalk, leading to a parking area. 
  - 18.2 Pass beach-access boardwalk, leading to Frisco Day Use Area, with parking, restrooms, and, seasonally, water and outdoor showers. *Note:* The boardwalk has both stairs and a wheelchair ramp. It is a few hundred yards before a cluster of four sets of stairs.   
  - 20.5 Pass ORV Ramp 49. *Note:* The sign is set well inland and may be difficult to see but it is an obvious cut and just between two posts, one with two green stripes and one with green-and-red stripes.
  - 20.7 At a fairly obvious path, marked by a wooden post, walk across the dunes. In the interdune area, the sandy path becomes a boardwalk.
  - 20.9 Continue straight under power lines and enter pine woods.
  - 21.0 Emerge from woods at a small parking area and turn right onto paved road in National Park Service's Frisco Campground. Continue through campground, staying right at all turns until Mile 21.2. *Note:* To camp here, turn left to go to the entrance and register. See the



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



























Ocracoke Village

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












“Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at this seasonal campground. Turn left on the campground access road and continue 1.2 miles to NC 12 to reach the Frisco post office, adjacent convenience store, and Frisco Native American Museum.  


















- 21.2 Just beyond campsite P-38, turn right on road marked “Authorized Vehicles Only Beyond this Point.” The road quickly turns into a road-gravel trail, which is marked with white MST blazes.
- 21.6 Pass MP 4.
- 22.0 At Y-intersection near maintenance building and water tank, bear left, following MST sign, then take immediate left.
- 22.1 Continue straight where horse trail turns off to right.
- 22.2 Continue straight at Y-intersection, then pass sign for Open Ponds Trail.
- 22.6 Pass MP 3.
- 23.6 Pass MP 2.












- 24.1 Pass pond viewpoint on left.
- 24.5 Pass MP 1.
- 24.9 Continue straight past trail on the left.
- 25.1 Continue straight past trail on the left.
- 25.4 Continue straight past trail on the left.
- 25.5 Pass gravesite for British sailors killed in World War II on left.
- 25.6 At small parking area with signs for MST and WWII British Sailor Cemetery, turn left on paved road. *Note:* See the “Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at the NPS Cape Point Campground about a mile south of here.  
- 25.8 Continue straight past Loggerhead Ln. on left.
- 26.0 Pass parking area for picnic area and trailhead for Buxton Woods Trail, a 0.75-mile self-guided nature trail, on left. 
- 26.1 Turn right onto Cape Hatteras National Seashore access road just beyond Buxton Woods parking area.
- 26.2 Pass Hatteras Island visitor center on right. Continue straight through the parking lot, curving to your left. *Note:* The visitor center has restrooms, water, and a small museum and bookshop.   
- 26.2 At end of parking lot, continue straight, skirting field to the right.
- 26.3 Continue straight across the second parking lot.
- 26.5 At end of parking lot, bear left on road, then right onto sidewalk.
- 26.6 At end of sidewalk, bear right across sand toward beach. This area is roughly where the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse stood, before it was moved 2,900 feet to its current location in 1999. To the north and west of this location is the town of Buxton.    
- 26.7 Turn left on beach.
- 29.7 Pass path through dunes leading to a parking area with restrooms and, seasonally, water and outdoor showers. *Note:* The parking area, known as the Haulover Day Use Area, is a popular launch point for kiteboarding.   
- 31.3 Pass ORV Ramp 38, leading to a parking area. *Note:* The sign is set well back on the dunes and may be hard to see. For the next 4.0 miles, you walk through the town of Avon, which has numerous services. All boardwalks lead to the town, but the best public access is from here at Ramp 38 (turn right on the walking path at NC 12) or at the Avon Pier, Mile 33.2.     



Open Ponds Trail in maritime forest near Buxton  
Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 33.2 Pass under Avon Pier. *Note:* To access groceries, lodging, and other shopping, walk on the path through the dunes on the north side of the pier and inland to NC 12. The Avon post office is approximately 0.2 mile south on NC 12.     
- 35.3 Pass ORV Ramp 34, leading to a parking area, just before a line of signs marking an area closed to vehicles. 
- 37.4 Pass path leading to parking area. 
- 37.7 Pass ORV Ramp 32, leading to a small parking area. 
- 39.6 Pass ORV Ramp 30, leading to a parking area. 
- 41.8 Pass ORV Ramp 27, leading to a parking area. 
- 43.8 Pass ORV Ramp 25, leading to a parking area. 
- 46.1 Pass ORV Ramp 23, leading to a small parking area. The Salvo Day Use Area, with restrooms and, seasonally, water and outdoor show-

- ers, is across the highway from this parking area, but there is no direct path between them; the entrance to the day use area is about 0.2 mile south. *Note:* For the next approximately 5.5 miles, you will be walking through the towns of Salvo, Waves, and Rodanthe, with many services. The best public access points are at the Rodanthe Pier, Mile 49.9, and the Rodanthe Beach Access, Mile 50.5.   
- 49.9 Pass under Rodanthe Pier. *Note:* Head inland here and then continue inland on Atlantic Dr. to reach NC 12 and numerous services in both directions.    
- 50.5 Pass Rodanthe Beach Access, a boardwalk recognizable by an octagonal gazebo. The boardwalk leads to a parking area with water, restrooms, and outdoor showers (seasonally) and to services in the town of Rodanthe. *Note:* Approximately 0.1 mile north on NC 12 is the historic Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station, now a museum.    
   
- 56.5 Just before New Inlet, follow path through dunes. *Note:* At the time of this writing (November 2018), the inlet ahead has filled in and it may be possible to make a dry crossing; if so, we recommend staying on the beach and returning to these directions at Mile 57.0.
- 56.6 Turn right on NC 12 at parking lot. 
- 56.9 Cross bridge over New Inlet. *Note:* This bridge is very narrow. Please cross facing traffic and use extreme caution.
- 57.0 After crossing bridge, leave road and return to beach.
- 59.3 Near where telephone lines come down to the beach and end, cross dunes at low point. A flagpole should be visible across the dunes. *Note:* If you miss this turn, the route returns to the beach in about 1.5 miles, so you can keep walking on the beach if needed.
- 59.4 Cross NC 12 at striped crosswalk. Turn left through Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center parking lot, continuing on wooden boardwalk just left of restrooms at end of lot. *Note:* The visitor center has books and drinks.   
- 59.5 Turn right onto concrete path.
- 60.0 At wildlife observation tower, descend from berm and turn right onto service road. Follow service road around pond.
- 61.9 Cross NC 12 and then cross dunes.
- 62.0 Turn left on beach.

- 64.4 As you see historic Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station to your left, head inland before inlet.
- 64.6 Pass historic Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station on left.
- 64.7 Just before path leads to water, turn left on smaller path through dunes.
- 64.8 Turn left at parking lot and continue on driveway. 
- 65.1 At end of driveway, cross over NC 12 and begin to climb up the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet. Use the wide shoulder facing traffic.
- 68.1 At the end of the bridge, turn right on ORV Ramp 4. *Note:* The National Park Service's Oregon Inlet Campground is 0.3 mile straight ahead on NC 12. See the "Camping" section for this segment for more information about camping at this seasonal campground. 
- 68.4 Turn left on beach.
- 71.0 Pass path through dunes where boardwalk is visible just on other side of dunes. The path leads to Coquina Beach parking area, with water, restrooms, and cold showers seasonally. *Note:* A road on the opposite side of NC 12 leads to the Bodie Island Lighthouse about a mile further.   
- 72.0 At remains of old pier, pass path (Ramp 1) through dunes leading to a parking area. *Note:* This is the end of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore; you are entering Nags Head, with numerous services. 
- 74.9 Pass under Outer Banks Fishing Pier.
- 76.8 Pass under Jennette's Pier.   
- 81.0 Pass remains of abandoned pier.
- 81.2 Cross dunes at boardwalk just before octagonal gazebo. At the correct boardwalk, a power pole is visible behind the dunes.
- 81.3 Cross S. Virginia Dare Tr. at public access parking area and continue straight on Hollowell St. 
- 81.4 Cross S. Croatan Hwy. and continue on concrete pathway through gate marked with white circular MST blaze into Jockey's Ridge State Park. *Note:* The Nags Head post office is approximately 1.2 miles south on S. Croatan Hwy.
- 81.6 Cross entrance road twice on the concrete pathway at edge of Jockey's Ridge State Park parking lot. 



Historic Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station  
 Photo by PJ Wetzel, [www.pjwetzel.com](http://www.pjwetzel.com)

- 81.7 Follow trail marked for MST into woods. *Note:* You are beside the Jockey's Ridge State Park Visitor Center, which has a small museum along with restrooms and water. If the visitor center is open, please go in and sign the MST register. 💧 🚻
- 81.8 The route is across sand dunes and constantly changes. Mileages and routes in this section are approximate. The official end of the MST is the highest point of the dunes.
- 82.2 Reach the highest point of Jockey's Ridge State Park, and the eastern end of Segment 18 and the MST. *Note:* The entrance to Jockey's Ridge State Park is in Nags Head on S. Virginia Dare Tr. (US 158), approximately 4.5 miles north of the intersection with US 64, the highway from Manteo and the mainland.












## Hiking Directions, Westbound

- 0.0 The beginning of the MST and Segment 18 is the highest point on the dunes in Jockey's Ridge State Park. This point is constantly changing, so locations, routes, and mileages through the park are approximate. From this point, the route is across sand dunes, generally northeasterly, towards the wind turbine at the visitor center. *Note:* The entrance to Jockey's Ridge State Park is in Nags Head on S. Virginia Dare Tr. (US 158), approximately 4.5 miles north of the intersection with US 64, the highway from Manteo and the mainland. See the "Special Considerations" section for this segment for information unique to this segment.
- 0.4 Follow obvious trail into woods.
- 0.5 Pass through pavilion and onto concrete walkway marked with MST sign. Follow white circular blazes through woods. *Note:* You are beside the Jockey's Ridge State Park Visitor Center, which has a small museum along with restrooms and water. If the visitor center is open, please go in and sign the MST register. 💧 🚻



Jockey's Ridge State Park, the largest dune complex on the east coast  
Photo by Jim Grode



- 0.6 Cross entrance road twice on the concrete pathway at edge of Jockey's Ridge State Park parking lot. 
- 0.8 Walk through gate marked with white circular MST blaze, then cross S. Croatan Hwy. and continue onto Hollowell St. To your right is the town of Nags Head, with numerous services. *Note:* The Nags Head post office is approximately 1.2 miles south on S. Croatan Hwy.
- 0.9 Cross S. Virginia Dare Tr. and continue into public beach access parking area. 
- 1.0 Turn right on the beach.
- 1.2 Pass remains of abandoned pier.
- 5.5 Pass under Jennette's Pier.   
- 7.3 Pass under Outer Banks Fishing Pier.
- 10.2 At remains of old pier, pass path (Ramp 1) through dunes leading to a parking area. *Note:* This is the southernmost end of Nags Head and the northern end of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. 
- 11.2 Pass path through dunes where boardwalk is visible just on other side of dunes. The path leads to Coquina Beach parking area, with water, restrooms, and cold showers seasonally. *Note:* A road on the opposite side of NC 12 leads to the Bodie Island Lighthouse about a mile further.   
- 13.8 Turn right onto ORV Ramp 4.
- 14.1 Turn left on NC 12 and cross Herbert C. Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet. Use the wide shoulder facing traffic. *Note:* The National Park Service's Oregon Inlet Campground is 0.3 mile to the right on NC 12. See the "Camping" section for this segment for more information about camping at this seasonal campground. 
- 17.1 At the end of the bridge, make a U-turn onto the driveway to Oregon Inlet parking.
- 17.5 Turn right at the parking area and continue on sandy path 
- 17.5 Turn right on wider sandy path.
- 17.6 Pass historic Oregon Inlet Life-Saving Station on right.
- 17.8 Turn right on beach.
- 20.2 At concrete post with benchmark, turn inland and cross dunes.
- 20.3 Cross NC 12 and then continue straight on trail on berm.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms



Supplies

























Water



Picnic

























- 22.2 At wildlife observation tower, ascend berm and turn left onto gravel trail.
- 22.8 Turn left onto wooden boardwalk.
- 22.9 Turn right on beach. At end of wooden boardwalk, continue straight past restrooms and across parking lot toward Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. Cross NC 12 at striped crosswalk. *Note:* The visitor center has books and drinks.   
- 25.2 Turn left on NC 12. *Note:* At the time of this writing (November 2018), the inlet ahead has filled in and it may be possible to make a dry crossing; if so, we recommend staying on the beach and returning to these directions at Mile 25.7.
- 25.3 Cross bridge over New Inlet. *Note:* This bridge is very narrow. Please cross facing traffic and use extreme caution.
- 25.6 Turn into parking lot, then cross dunes on path to beach. 
- 25.7 Turn right on beach.
- 31.7 Pass Rodanthe Beach Access, a boardwalk recognizable by an octagonal gazebo. The boardwalk leads to a parking area with water, restrooms, and outdoor showers (seasonally) and to services in the town of Rodanthe. *Note:* Approximately 0.1 mile north on NC 12 is the historic Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station, now a museum.    
   
- 32.4 Pass under Rodanthe Pier. *Note:* Head inland here and then continue inland on Atlantic Dr. to reach NC 12 and numerous services in both directions.    
- 36.1 Pass ORV Ramp 23, leading to a small parking area. The Salvo Day Use Area, with restrooms and, seasonally, water and outdoor showers, is across the highway from this parking area, but there is no direct path between them; the entrance to the day use area is about 0.2 mile south.   
- 38.4 Pass ORV Ramp 25, leading to a parking area. 
- 40.5 Pass ORV Ramp 27, leading to a parking area. 
- 42.6 Pass ORV Ramp 30, leading to a parking area. 
- 44.5 Pass ORV Ramp 32, leading to a small parking area. 
- 44.8 Pass path leading to parking area. 
- 47.0 Pass ORV Ramp 34, leading to a parking area, just after a line of signs marking an area closed to vehicles. *Note:* For the next 4.0 miles,



Jennette's Pier at dawn





Photo by Debbie Fecak

- you will be walking through the town of Avon, which has numerous services. All boardwalks lead to the town, but the best public access is from the Avon Pier, Mile 48.3. 
- 49.0 Pass under Avon Pier. *Note:* To access groceries, lodging, and other shopping, walk on the path through the dunes on the north side of the pier and inland to NC 12. The Avon post office is approximately 0.2 mile south on NC 12.     
- 50.9 Pass ORV Ramp 38, leading to a parking area. *Note:* The sign is set well back on the dunes and may be hard to see. 
- 52.5 Pass path through dunes leading to a parking area with restrooms and, seasonally, water and outdoor showers. *Note:* The parking area, known as the Haulover Day Use Area, is a popular launch point for kiteboarding.   
- 55.6 Just before jetty, bear right off beach toward parking lot.
- 55.7 Bear left onto sidewalk next to parking lot. This area is roughly where the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse stood, before it was moved 2,900 feet to its current location in 1999.    
- 55.8 At end of sidewalk, bear left along road toward parking lot, then continue straight through lot toward lighthouse.
- 55.9 At end of parking lot continue straight towards lighthouse on sandy track.

- 56.0 Continue straight on left side of parking lot towards lighthouse.
- 56.1 Pass Hatteras Island Visitor Center on left and continue on access road. *Note:* The visitor center has restrooms, water, and a small museum and bookshop.   
- 56.2 At T-intersection, turn left. Pass parking area for picnic area and trailhead for Buxton Woods Trail, a 0.75-mile self-guided nature trail, on right. 
- 56.4 Continue straight past Loggerhead Ln. on right.
- 56.7 At small parking area with signs for MST and WWII British Sailor Cemetery, turn right onto Open Ponds Trail. Pass gravesite for British sailors killed in World War II on right. *Note:* See the “Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at the NPS Cape Point Campground about a mile south of here.  
- 56.8 Continue straight past trail on the right.
- 57.1 Continue straight past trail on the right.
- 57.3 At Y-intersection, bear left to stay on main trail.
- 57.7 Pass Milepost (MP) 1.
- 58.1 Pass pond viewpoint on right.
- 58.7 Pass MP 2.
- 59.6 Pass MP 3.
- 60.0 Continue straight on sandy track past sign and where trail comes in from the right.
- 60.1 Continue straight where horse-trail sign points left. The correct trail is marked by an MST sign.
- 60.2 Emerge into a clearing in front of a maintenance building and water tank and turn right on grassy track.
- 60.6 Pass MP 4.
- 61.0 Just after emerging onto paved road, turn left at T-intersection.
- 61.2 At small parking area just beyond campsite P-22, turn left onto boardwalk and enter woods. *Note:* To camp at the Frisco Campground, continue straight to go to the entrance and register. See the “Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at this seasonal campground. Continue straight on the campground access road 1.2 miles to NC 12 and the town of Frisco, with limited services. The Frisco post office, adjacent convenience store, and Frisco Native American Museum are at this intersection.  



Outer Banks beach cottages and fisherman at sunrise  
Photo by Randy Flynn

- 61.3 Emerge from woods and continue straight under power lines.
- 61.5 Turn right on the beach.
- 61.7 Pass ORV Ramp 49. *Note:* The sign is set well inland and may be difficult to see but it is an obvious cut and just between two posts, one with two green stripes and one with green-and-red stripes.
- 64.0 Pass beach-access boardwalk, leading to a Frisco Day Use Area, with parking, restrooms, and, seasonally, water and outdoor showers. *Note:* The boardwalk has both stairs and a wheelchair ramp. It is a few hundred yards past a cluster of four sets of stairs.   
- 64.7 Pass beach-access boardwalk, leading to a parking area. 
- 67.6 Shortly before you reach ORV Ramp 55, turn right onto a beach-access boardwalk through the dunes. *Note:* A sign with the ramp number for ORV Ramp 55 is on top of the dunes but is well inland and may be hard to see.



Camping



Lodging



Parking



Food



Restrooms























Supplies










Water



Picnic

- 67.7 Pass through parking area and turn right on paved road. The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum is across the street from the parking area. 
- 67.8 At first traffic light, turn left toward ferry terminal area. *Note:* Turning right leads to Hatteras Village with numerous services, including the Hatteras post office approximately 1.3 miles ahead.     

- 67.9 Arrive at Hatteras ferry dock and ride ferry to Ocracoke. *Note:* Ferry terminal building has restrooms and concessions. See the “Additional Information” section for this segment for ferry information.   
  
- 67.9 Arrive at Ocracoke ferry dock. Turn right on NC 12.  
- 68.4 Turn left at the sign for ORV Ramp 59. *Note:* There is a parking area about 150 yards straight ahead on NC 12. 
- 68.7 Turn right on the beach.
- 73.0 Pass ORV Ramp 63, which has a small parking area. 
- 73.7 Pass beach access parking area. 
- 74.5 At MP 79, pass stairs and boardwalk across dunes leading to a parking area with port-a-john and the Ocracoke pony pens.  
- 76.5 Pass ORV Ramp 67.
- 77.5 Pass MP 82.
- 77.7 Just before a line of posts marking an ORV closure area, pass ORV Ramp 68, marked with a square sign atop the dunes. *Note:* The ramp leads to a parking area with a port-a-john and the National Park Service’s Ocracoke Campground. See the “Camping” section for this segment for information about camping at this seasonal campground. In addition, just on the other side of NC 12 is the trailhead for the Hammock Hills Nature Trail, a 0.75-mile self-guided loop.  
- 78.0 Pass MP 82.5.
- 79.9 Just after MP 84.5, pass stairs and boardwalk across dunes leading to Ocracoke Day Use Area, with parking and restrooms.  
- 80.3 Turn right onto ORV Ramp 70 (also marked with MP 85).
- 80.5 Pass airstrip on left. At T-intersection, turn left onto multi-use path paralleling NC 12.

- 81.0 Pass ORV Ramp 72 on left and rejoin road. *Note:* You are entering Ocracoke Village, with numerous food and lodging options.    

- 81.2 Pass Ocracoke post office.
- 81.8 At T-intersection, turn right to stay on NC 12.
- 82.1 Pass British Cemetery Rd. on right. *Note:* Teeter's Campground is 0.2 mile down British Cemetery Rd. 
- 82.2 Just before sign for "Historic Civil War Symbol Marker," turn left to walk along the waterfront. Reach Ocracoke ferry dock; board ferry and ride to Cedar Island. *Note:* When reaching the Ocracoke/Cedar Island ferry dock, westbound hikers continuing to Segment 17 will need to bear right to visit the ticket office for ferry tickets to Cedar Island. The ticket office is at the far end of the circle with ferry loading lanes. Be sure to board the Cedar Island ferry, as the Swan Quarter ferry also departs from this location. The Ocracoke Visitor Center across the street from the dock has water and restrooms, and parking is available next to the Ocracoke Preservation Museum.   
 
- 82.2 Reach Cedar Island ferry terminal and western end of Segment 18. *Note:* See the "Camping" and "Other Lodging" sections 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 Cedar Island, take NC 12 and US 70 to Beaufort. 