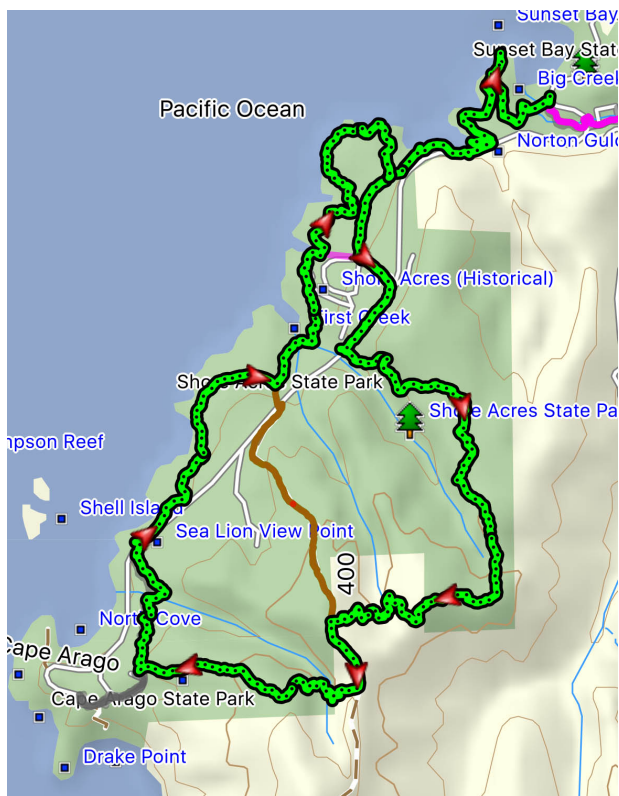


## Sunset to Cape Arago Trails

Start at the Sunset Bay Day Use parking lot (near the volleyball courts). You will follow a trail to the right of the restrooms, cross a bridge, and start uphill. At the top of the hill, follow the trail somewhat north. You'll reach a 'T' intersection. If you go right, you will soon get to a point overlooking Sunset Bay. You can take that side trip and return, or you can take a left, which will take you to the shore side, overlooking the ocean. Follow that back to the road. The trail then runs on the side of the road, then enters the woods for a short time before getting back NEAR the road. There are great viewpoints to the right. You'll pass a small parking area on the left. You COULD park there, making the trip shorter.

Shortly after that parking lot (heading south), there will be an intersection. At the intersection there is a large tree to the right, and trails to the right and straight ahead. This can be the beginning of a loop. The arrows on the map show the 'straight' option. This will take you along a wide path (it was once the driveway for L. J. Simpson's Shore Acres estate), and eventually you will hit the road in Shore Acres State Park. Go left along the road, and you will get to the Cape Arago Highway. Follow the road for about 1/4 mile, and there will be a trail heading uphill to the left. Watch closely. It may be over your left shoulder as you pass it.

Take that trail uphill. This section has about the steepest climbs of the hike (there's some debate about whether a later one is steeper, but that's only because hikers are a little more tired then).



Follow this section of the trail uphill (through the woods) for about 2.3 miles. After your climb (to 575 feet) you will come to an intersection with the trail shown in brown on the map. That's the Cape Arago Pack Trail. You can go left here, staying on the green trail, or you can go right, which will take you downhill.

### **If you go right**

About two-thirds to the bottom there will be a small path to the left that leads to an old WWII bunker (a radio transmission station). At the bottom you will cross the highway and follow the trail as it turns right near the ocean.

### **If you go left**

You will follow the trail slightly uphill until it turns to the left, starting downhill. There is a steep downhill, followed by a stream crossing, and another uphill (the one that some argue is the steepest of the trip).

Follow that for about a mile until you reach a trail that goes off to the right. It's a VERY easy trail to miss because it isn't marked (or marked well). If you get to a dirt road you've gone too far. You can choose to turn around and go back a short distance, looking for the trail on the left), or you can take the dirt road to the left until you get to a paved road. If you choose that option, take the paved road to the right and follow it to Simpson Reef overlook (where the trail meets the road). If you found the trail, take that through the woods to the same location.

## Sunset to Cape Arago Trails

Stop there and look at the seals, elephant seals, and sea lions. Then continue North along the road for a short distance until the trail moves off to the left. Follow the trail (as a rule, making left turns) until you go down a short hill to sea level at Simpson Beach.

From Simpson beach, go back uphill (to the north), into Shore Acres State Park. You'll pass the Botanical Gardens, and can stop in there.

After the gardens, go left toward the ocean (you'll see an enclosed pavilion there, where there are displays about the Simpsons). Just keep following the 'trail'(it's a sidewalk at this point) along the waterside, around the parking lot, and back toward the ocean. You'll pass the old Shore Acres tennis courts, and just continue following the path as it goes right, and then left toward the ocean again. You'll get excellent viewpoints as you follow the trail above the ocean until you come across that tree at the intersection where you started this loop several miles ago.

If you decided to follow the loop to the right when you got to the tree, reverse all the directions. One benefit is that the trail that's hard to see is much easier to find.

The WHOLE trail (starting at Sunset Bay) is about 8.9 miles. It's probably about 7 if you start at the beginning of the loop.