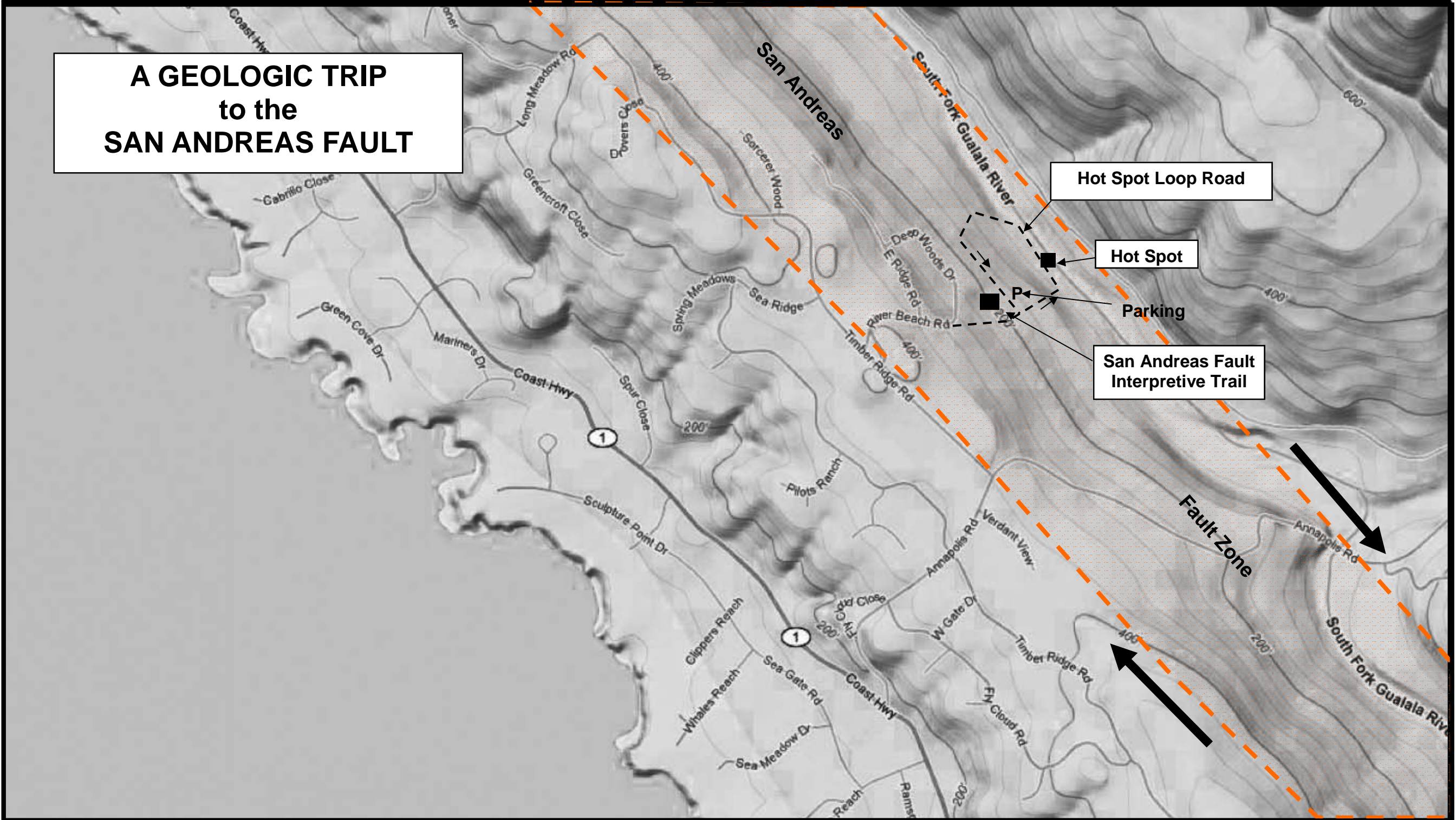


A GEOLOGIC TRIP to the SAN ANDREAS FAULT



Map: San Andreas Fault Zone

During the 25 million years that the San Andreas Fault has been active, most of the fault movement has occurred within a zone that is about half a mile wide. At the Hot Spot, the fault zone extends from the upper part of River Beach Road to the opposite side of the Gualala River. The rocks within fault zone have been broken, crushed and offset many times along many different fault traces. One of the best places to see many of the fault features is on the short *San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail*. To get to the trailhead go down River Beach Road and take the one-way Hot Spot Loop Road. Continue past the Hot Spot and park in the small parking area near the end of the loop. The trailhead is on River Beach Road just uphill from the parking area.

Gualala River Hot Spot



Photo: Looking northwest down the Gualala River from the Hot Spot

The Hot Spot is on the Gualala River and is a popular destination for summer swimming when the river is slow and the water is warm. The Hot Spot lies within the San Andreas Fault zone, and a visit to the Hot Spot provides a good opportunity to see some of the features of the San Andreas Fault.



**Offset of the Gualala River
by the San Andreas Fault**

During the last 500,000 years the San Andreas Fault has moved the mouth of the Gualala River seven miles to the northwest and the river has followed the fault zone to stay connected with its mouth.

Gualala

Gualala River

Highway 1

San Andreas Fault Zone

Offset by San Andreas Fault

Hot Spot

Pacific Ocean

N

1 Mile

San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail Trailhead



Photo: Trailhead

The trailhead for the San Andreas Fault trail is on River Beach Road just uphill from the beginning of the one-way Hot Spot Loop Road. One hundred years ago this part of the Gualala River Valley was the site of an extensive redwood logging operation, and the trail also offers a good look at how the logging operation was carried out.

**San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail
Logging**

Notches for springboards used for logging



Photo: Pamphlet Box near trailhead
Trail guides are available at the pamphlet box near the trailhead. Redwood forest, logged, scars of logging

San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail Ridge



Photo: Looking northwest along trail

The first part of the trail follows along the top of a northwest-trending ridge. This is one of several ridges that have formed within the fault zone. Ridges like this are a common feature of faults like the San Andreas and are formed when the rocks in the fault zone are squeezed and/or uplifted by the faulting.

San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail
Sag Pond



Sag Pond

Photo: Looking from top of ridge to sag pond on west side of ridge

Sag ponds such as this are also a common feature of the San Andreas Fault zone. They are formed in the low spots between the ridges and/or when stream drainage is offset and blocked by horizontal movement within the fault zone. The water does not drain from the sag ponds because the rocks in the fault zone have been ground to a fine clay and are impermeable.

**San Andreas Fault
Interpretive Trail
Tree Damage**



Photo: Double Trunk

During the 1906 earthquake a number of trees were damaged by the severe shaking, either breaking off the top or splitting the trunk, When this happens, a double trunk often develops above the damaged area.

**San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail
Fault Scarp**



Photo: Looking southeast along Hot Spot Loop Trail

The end of the San Andreas Fault Interpretive Trail connects to the Hot Spot Loop Trail and the loop trail returns to River Beach Road. On the return trip, you pass a fault scarp that formed during uplift of the ridge on the left side of the photograph.