

Bean Hollow - Pebble Beach - San Mateo Coast Walks - May 2014 by Toni Corelli

The one mile walk along the Arroyo de los Frijoles (Creek of the Beans) Trail between Pebble Beach and Bean Hollow Beach offers a close-up look at tide pools, wildflowers and colonies of harbor seals and shorebirds.



Plant habitats include coastal bluff scrub, coastal prairie, cliff faces, freshwater and saltwater wetlands, and gullies. The most extensive plant community along the trail is coastal bluff scrub, characterized by low-growing vegetation, herbaceous perennials, and low-growing woody shrubs. Interspersed among the scrub are patches of coastal prairie, dominated by grasses and wildflowers, without any woody plants.

A large portion of the coastal scrub and prairie along our

coast has been lost to agriculture or development. This bluff is unusual because it has never been farmed and so still has a large diversity of native plants. Walking the trail, you can get a remarkable view of what the whole coast might have looked like more than 200 years ago.

State parks and volunteers have an ongoing restoration program removing invasive non-native ice plant that has taken over some areas on the bluff top.



The bluff above the beach is a 500,000 year-old marine terrace - once at the bottom of the ocean, but uncovered as

tectonic forces raised the coast. At Pebble Beach the surface of many of the rocks on the beach has been weathered in a honeycomb-like surface known as Tafoni. The pebbles on the beach are quartz chipped from an offshore reef, tumbled ashore, then wave-polished and rounded into beautifully hued small stones.



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