

Tips for the Trail

Myrtle Beach State Park strives to preserve and maintain our coastal habitat. These tips are designed to protect you along with this unique and beautiful habitat.

***Stay on marked trails and boardwalks.** Wandering off the trail or boardwalk will disturb and destroy parts of the habitat you came to enjoy.

***Collect seashells sparingly** and always put any live sea creatures back in the ocean.



Live Florida Horse Conch

***Respect the environment** by admiring leaves, berries, and especially flowers. Myrtle Beach State Park has over 1.2 million visitors a year. If each visitor picked a flower, there would be none left for others to enjoy.

***Always stay off the sand dunes** (hills of grass) or any live grasses at the beach. Sand dunes are critical nesting habitat for sea turtles and the first line of defense against high tides and storms. Use a boardwalk to reach the beach!



Sand Dunes

***Respect the needs of wildlife** for an undisturbed territory. Don't chase animals or throw stones or shells at them.



Protect your dog- Use that leash. Your pet running off can disturb native wildlife or pose a danger to your beloved pet (poison ivy, snakes, etc).

***Resist the temptation to feed wildlife (even pigeons and gulls).** Feeding wildlife can alter their feeding habits, migration, and reproduction levels which result in unnatural behaviors.



Poison Ivy

***Do not litter.** If you see litter, please pick it up and dispose of it properly.

***For your personal safety, wear closed toed shoes while on the nature trail.** Many unexpected issues may arise such as exposed roots, snakes, poison ivy, etc. along the trail.

***Have a plan!** Let someone know when you are heading out on the trail and what time they should expect you to return.

Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration

Scavenger Hunt– One Hour/ 1.3 miles/ 2.2 km

Most of the answers to the following numbered questions can be found on educational waysides and signs throughout the park. Use the numbers on the map to guide you to the answers for the corresponding numbered question.

**Start-Nature Center parking lot*

1. What recycled material was used to make the black walkway? _____

**Cross the street to the start of the Sculptured Oak Nature Trail*

2. How many acres is the maritime forest (**Heritage Trust Site**) at MBSP? _____

**Take a stroll on the Sculptured Oak Nature Trail heading towards the pond.*

3. On your way to the pond, look for a tree identification sign. Name one tree. List one fun fact about this tree. Can you find one of its leaves on the ground?

**At the intersection continue going straight towards the pond– 180 feet. Walk onto the observation deck.*

4. What determines the water level of this pond? _____

On average, how many eggs does a female wood duck lay? _____

**Retrace your steps back to the trail entrance. Turn right at the road heading towards the pier. Watch out for cars! Go out onto the pier for questions 5 and 6.*

5. List one difference between a Harbor Porpoise and a Bottlenose Dolphin. _____

Which one is common in SC? _____

6. MBSP has one mile stretch of beach. From where you are standing, look left and right. The hotels mark the north border and the houses mark the south border of MBSP. Observations only - Take a few seconds to think about what this area would look like if it was not a South Carolina State Park. _____

**Leave the pier and head right on the boardwalk that parallels the sand dunes (walk towards the black sign off to the right of the boardwalk).*

7. Name two plants that can grow on the sand dunes? _____

**At boardwalk N1 turn left toward parking lot (look for the signs on posts to the left) to answer 8 and 9*

8. If caught in a rip current, name two things you should you do? _____

9. Name one reason sand dunes and sea oats are important/protected? _____

**Go onto the beach via boardwalk N1. Walk left towards boardwalk N2.*

10. Do you see a distinct line on the beach composed of shells and plant matter? This is called a wrack line and was put there by past high tides. Is it high or low tide right now? (hint- look for the wrack line) _____ Today's Date: _____ Time: _____

11. Can you find two different shells? These were once living animals! Find out the name of your shells during Nature Center hours or see the beachcombing guide on www.myrtlebeachsp.com. **NEVER** take live animals!

**Exit the beach at boardwalk N2. Turn right to walk to the end of the boardwalk that runs through the maritime grassland.*

12. Name two plants and three animals that live in the maritime grassland. How many did you observe? _____

**Continue on the concrete walkway towards the campground.*

13. Look for the cabbage palmettos (palm trees) straight ahead. This is the state tree of SC! How many do you see? _____

14. Notice the “leaning” affect of the trees in this area. What is the main cause of this? _____

**Continue straight towards the large information kiosk. Walk past the kiosk and down the hill into the campground. Take first left onto the main campground road until you get to the Nature Center.*

15. Name two items in front of the Nature Center made from recycled plastic. Look for the green recycle symbol! _____

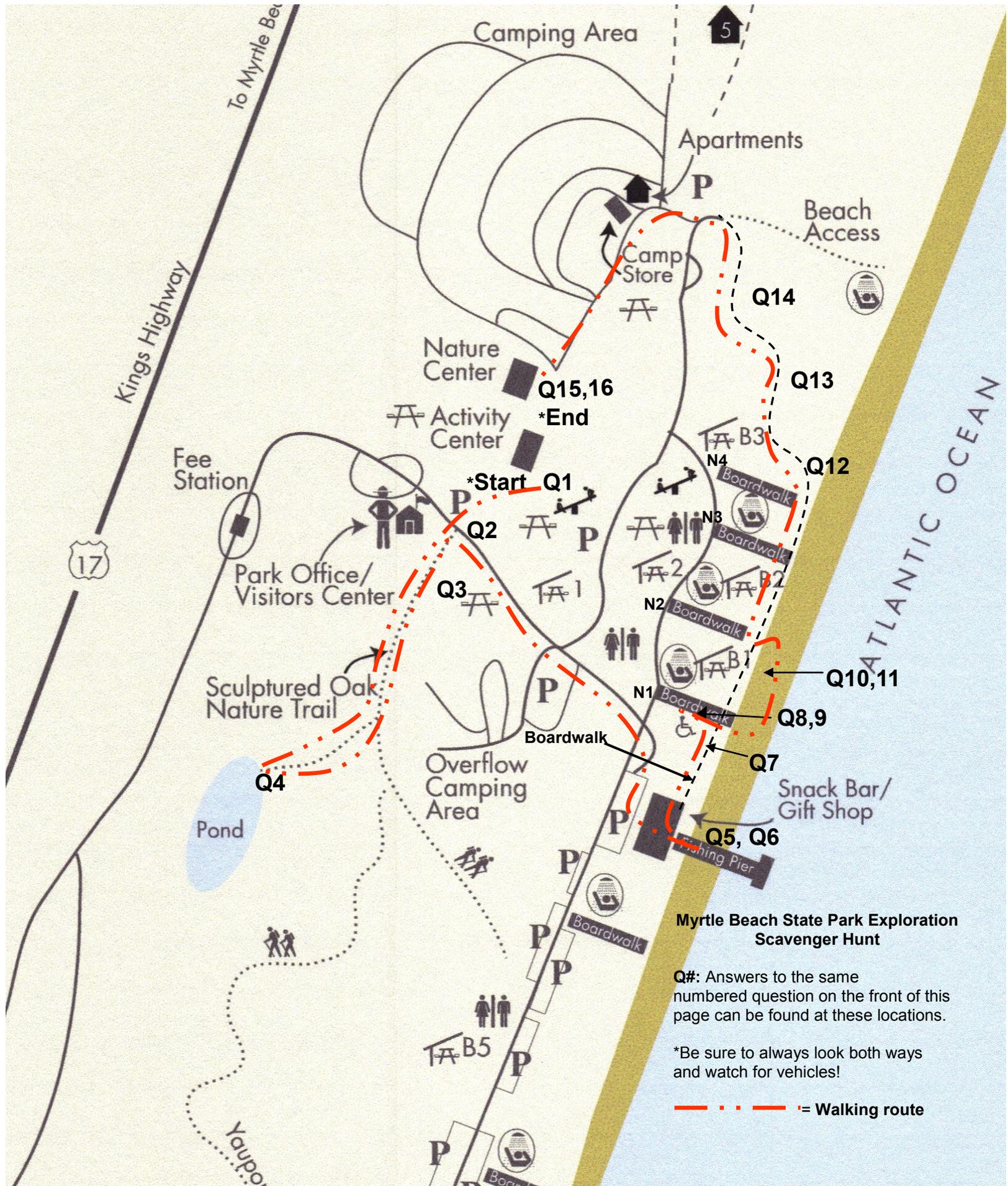
16. How many tires were used to make the recycled tire walkway? _____

***END**



Answers can be checked during Nature Center hours or online at www.myrtlebeachsp.com.
This scavenger hunt counts as one program. Complete three programs to earn a MBSP habitat patch.

Myrtle Beach State Park



Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration Scavenger Hunt

Q#: Answers to the same numbered question on the front of this page can be found at these locations.

*Be sure to always look both ways and watch for vehicles!

— · · · — = Walking route

Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration Scavenger Hunt Answers

Use this information to check your answers from the self led scavenger hunt.

1. Recycled tires— see picture on the answer for question 15

2. 136 acres— In 1989 the maritime forest (forest by the sea) was put under protection of the South Carolina Heritage Trust Act. This ensures the forest will be protected for the future and prohibit development in this area.



3. Answers may vary: *Water Oak— its acorns are a food source for ducks, songbirds, turkeys, squirrels, mice, and deer.

4. The pond at MBSP is dependent on rainfall. Female wood ducks lay an average of 12 eggs per nest.



5. Bottlenose dolphins are commonly seen in SC. They range from Nova Scotia to South America along the Atlantic coast. Harbor porpoises inhabit colder, more northern waters.



6. The hotels mark the north border of MBSP and the houses mark the southern border. MBSP would probably be highly developed if it were not a state park!

Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration Scavenger Hunt Answers

Use this information to check your answers from the self led scavenger hunt.

7. Answers may vary: Pictured are just a few of the plants that can grow on a sand dune.



Beach Morning Glory



Sea Oats



Sea Rocket

8. If caught in a rip current you should swim parallel to the beach and then swim towards shore.

9. Sand dunes are natural barriers that help prevent flooding during high tides and storms. Sand dunes also provide critical nesting habitat for sea turtles and shorebirds. Sea oats and other dune plants are not only beautiful, they also play a vital role in preserving sand dunes. The root systems of these plants hold sand in place to help form and maintain dunes.



Sand Dunes and Sea Oats

RIP CURRENTS
Break the Grip of the Rip!

ESCAPE ESCAPE ESCAPE ESCAPE

RIP CURRENT

Rip currents are powerful currents of water moving away from shore. They can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

SAFETY

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out

More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:
www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov
www.osta.org

Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration Scavenger Hunt Answers

Use this information to check your answers from the self led scavenger hunt.

10. Check at the pier or nature center for a tide chart. Or go online at: <http://www.saltwatertides.com/dynamic.dir/scarolinasites.html> to check the approximate times of high and low tides for the day you did the scavenger hunt. Click on “Myrtle Beach, Springmaid Pier,” scroll down, and then key in the date and time you were on the beach.

We have two high tides and two low tides a day. The tides are caused by the gravitational pull from the moon and the sun.

11. Check the park’s online beachcombing guide to see if you can identify the shells you found!



12. Answers may vary: These are just some of the plants and animals that can be seen in the maritime grassland!



13. You should have seen three cabbage palmettos.



Myrtle Beach State Park Exploration

Scavenger Hunt Answers

Use this information to check your answers from the self led scavenger hunt.

14. The edge of the maritime forest closest to the ocean is shaped by the salt spray. The ocean breeze deposits salt on the branches and leaves facing the ocean. The exposed leaves die from the salt, while the leeward side is protected. This leaves the trees and bushes with a carved, spindly, lopsided effect. As plants grow further away from the ocean and the salt spray blast, they assume the more typical growth.



15. In front of the nature center you can find a bike rack, benches, and a few bird feeders (seasonal) made from recycled plastic. They are labeled with a green recycle symbol.

16. Two hundred tires were used to make the recycled tire walkway at Myrtle Beach State Park.

All pictures were taken at MBSP by Ann Malys Wilson unless otherwise noted.