

STEPS, LANES, & PATHS

AND A FEW
FAVORITE
DOG-FRIENDLY
TRAILS BEYOND.



Mill Valley's Steps, Lanes, and Paths (or SLPs, as locals call them) have connected neighborhoods since the late 1800s. First mapped as shortcuts for residents on foot or horseback, these narrow walkways once led to schools, shops, and the train to San Francisco. Today, thanks to volunteers and local groups, many of these historic routes are being restored and remain a beloved part of Mill Valley's charm and accessibility.

Some SLPs are steep and rugged, others wind through redwoods or reveal quirky surprises—but all offer a glimpse into Mill Valley's past and present. Whether you're looking for a serious workout, a peaceful wooded escape, or a hidden gem, the SLPs invite adventure.

LOCAL RESIDENT HEIDI KOTANSKY

What began as a casual stroll turned into a months-long mission: hike every one of Mill Valley's legendary SLPs. With her dog Zuky often charging uphill, Heidi set out with a map, curiosity, and rotating companions—including her husband Jim Welte, daughter, mom, and friends.

"Within minutes, I'd go from quiet streets to feeling like I was deep in nature," she said. "The steps got easier as I went—and my lungs were grateful for the workouts!"

SLP SUPERLATIVES

Highlights (and a few humbling moments) from Heidi's all-weather, all-dog adventure:

- **Hardest Climbs:** Paths 72, 23, 39 & 33 – serious stair burn. While Dipsea Steps area classic, these lesser-known climbs pack a punch.
- **Most Advanced:** Path 305 – narrow, unmarked, and borderline bouldering in the rain. Not quite treacherous, but close. Connects to the Zig Zag Trail.



- **Most Whimsical:** Path 50 – a tiny carved toy world tucked in the trees.
- **Most Urban:** A cluster of SLPs right behind City Hall—Paths 67, 72, 71 & 69—tackle them all in one downtown loop.
- **Most Woodsy:** Paths 124/302 (Cypress Trail) – minutes from downtown and feels miles away. One of the longest SLPs.
- **Best Maintained:** Path 39's steps/McGlashan Lane, Path 8's smooth steps, Path 76's wooden bridge, and Path 230's railings and even paved steps.
- **Least Maintained:** Paths 37, 41, 65, 110 & 18 – rugged and charming with uneven footing and missing railings.
- **Hardest to Find:** Path 311 – nearly hidden beneath a redwood trunk. Blink and you'll miss it.
- **Biggest Workout Day:** February 2 – 45 floors on Path 305 alone.
- **Best for Dogs:** All SLPs welcome pups, but if yours tends to pull, skip 305 & 352.

WANT TO EXPLORE MILL VALLEY'S SLPs?

The Friends of the Mill Valley Steps, Lanes & Paths—a volunteer group dedicated to maintaining and improving for these historic walkway—offers maps and tips at mvslpfriends.org. Find more info at cityofmillvalley.gov/774/Steps-Lanes-Paths.

Need more inspiration for (non-SLP) dog-friendly paths?

Local pet pros and pup lovers share their favorite trails on Mt. Tam:





BRE & PICHICHI

BRE RUSSELL, SPOT PET CARE

750 Redwood Hwy. Frontage Rd. Ste. 1212,
415.389.1064 | spotpetcare.com

Discover one of Mill Valley's hidden gems with the Muir Woods Beach Hike for dogs—a scenic and dog-friendly adventure perfect for locals and visitors alike. Starting near the entrance of Muir Woods, this trail winds through redwood groves and opens up to coastal views, offering a blend of shaded forest and breezy ocean air. Dogs on leash are welcome along certain stretches, and the path rewards both pups and people with a peaceful beach destination. It's a favorite for **Spot Pet Care** clients and their furry companions looking for exercise, connection, and a refreshing escape into nature.

MADELINE SOWRY, MODERN ANIMAL

50 Belvedere Dr. | 424.360.2800 | modernanimal.com

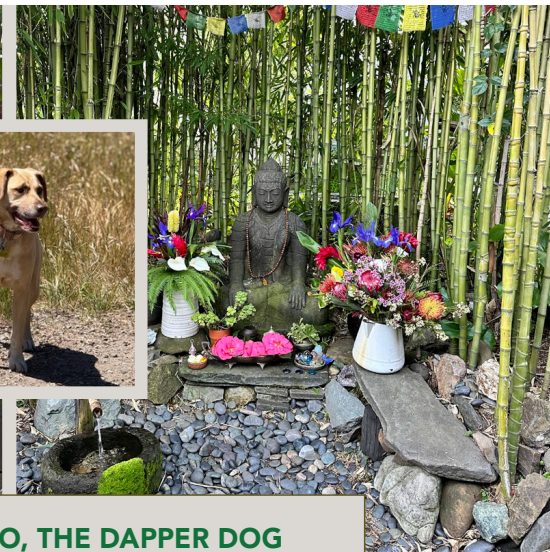
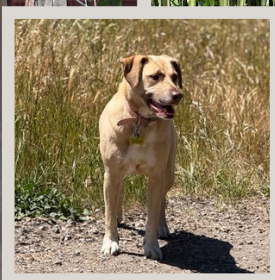
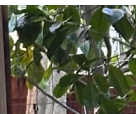
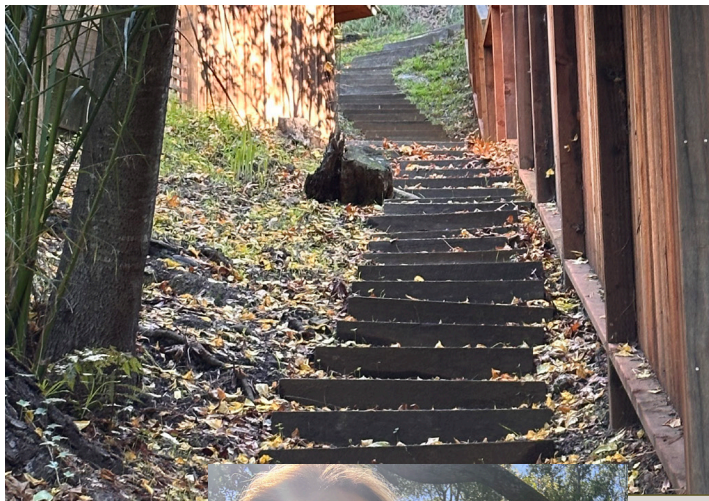
Tempala Trailhead, tucked at the top of Fern Canyon Road in Mill Valley, is one of my favorite ways to access the many trails atop Mount Tamalpais. Right from the start, you get a stunning view of the East Peak observatory and on a clear day, San Francisco. It's the perfect launch point for classic trails like the Dipsea, Matt Davis, Hoo Koo e Koo, and Old Railroad Grade. Whether I'm looking for a quiet walk--through redwoods or a hike with sweeping views of the Pacific, it never disappoints. It's also dog-friendly and my pup Luna loves it just as much as I do. Just remember to keep all dogs leashed to help preserve the beauty of Marin's favorite Mount Tamalpais for everyone.



dipseacapital.com

MADELINE & LUNA





LIA & LONDON, THEIR MASCOT

LIA VALENTINO, THE DAPPER DOG

9 East Blithedale Ave. | 415.888.8341

thedapperdogsalon.com

Railroad Grade is one of my favorite Mill Valley trails—it's mellow, super scenic, and full of that classic Mill Valley magic. The path winds through a ton of greenery with a little creek running alongside it, and there are always happy birds singing and butterflies floating by. I bring my dog London there sometimes—she loves sniffing around and trotting ahead while I take in the views. It used to be an old railway line, so the incline's really chill, which makes it a great spot whether you're hiking, biking, or just out for a peaceful stroll.

ERNIE CERVANTES, THE GRATEFUL DOG MARIN

2094 Redwood Hwy., Greenbrae | 415.945.9663

greenbraedogdaycare.com

As an ultra-runner, I've had the privilege of exploring the many beautiful trails Marin has to offer. As a doggy business owner, I've also had the opportunity to share these trails with our four-legged clients. My favorite trail would have to be the Coastal Trail between Rodeo Beach and Muir Beach—stunning views! I also love Ring Mountain, which is practically my backyard: dog-friendly with great views.

But if you want to keep it in Mill Valley, there's nothing better than a trek up and down the Dipsea stairs—all 688 steps. It's great exercise for both pooch and companion, and the views from the top are worth it. Your dog will love you for it.



GRATEFULDOG - ERNIE AND DOGS, ROGER & PUFFIN

Also check out **Woodland's Pet Food & Treats** at 701 Strawberry Village and **Fideaux** at 29 Miller Ave. at the **Mill Valley Lumber Yard** for all your pets' needs.