



## A Brief History of Visitor Exclosure Installation as of 2015



**Cadillac Mountain Exclosures, Installed in 2000 (2010 Photo)**

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## CONTENTS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION ..... | 1 |
| RESULTS.....       | 1 |

## FIGURES

|                                                                             |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| FIGURE 1: Cadillac Mountain and Blue Hill Overlook Exclosures. ....         | 5 |
| FIGURE 2: South Bubble, Dorr, Raven’s Nest, and Wonderland Exclosures. .... | 6 |
| FIGURE 3: Ocean Path Exclosures.....                                        | 7 |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank trail crew, ridgerunners, recreation technician, and volunteers who, over many summer seasons, constructed and installed the exclosures.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the year 2000 exclosures have been installed to direct visitor use to protect soil and plants throughout the park. Starting with three wooden barricaded areas on Cadillac Mountain, their number has increased to include many other mountains and trails. Ten thousand feet of ropes are now installed and maintained at ten locations.

This report pulls together what we know about when and where these exclosures were installed. We compiled information from several sources to fully document their history. For several sites, we were not able to identify the year of installation precisely so the year indicates our best guess. All exclosures in this report are numbered by site with the numbers corresponding to the associated maps. The report is organized by location and year of installation. The locations of exclosures are: Cadillac Summit; Blue Hill overlook; Dorr Mountain summit; South Bubble summit; Ocean Path, North of Monument Cove; Ocean Path, South of Monument Cove; Ocean Path, North of Thunder Hole; Ocean Path, South of Thunder Hole; Ocean Path, Otter Cliffs; Otter Cliffs Climbing Area; Raven's Nest (Schoodic); and Wonderland Trail.

We selected exclosure areas because of severe soil and vegetation loss, as on Cadillac Mountain, or because of numerous social trails, as along the Ocean Path. We wanted to give these areas a chance to recover. On mountaintops like Cadillac, the recovery of vegetation has been very slow. Mountaintop areas that were still reasonably intact with soil and vegetation were left open to visitor use. The sense was that visitors have not used and impacted these areas substantially thus far and the likelihood was they would continue to avoid them. We understood that concentrating visitor use on a smaller footprint might have unintended consequences, but much of the area available for visitor use is exposed granite and thus quite durable.

Some of the areas protected are fully surrounded by the exclosure ropes. Others (Wonderland e.g.) are not closed polygons but lines of ropes where the terrain or vegetation acts as part of the barrier. Each exclosure is accompanied by a combination of Leave No Trace and Restoration Area (red slash) signs within or adjacent to them. Leave No Trace messaging asks visitors to "Stay on Established Trails or Step on Rock."

## RESULTS

### **Cadillac Mountain and Blue Hill Overlook**

**2000:** Exclosures 1, 2, and 3 were installed on Cadillac Mountain as wooden barricades. All of these are within the Loop Trail. Numbers one and two are very large ones separated by granite ledge that provides a wide walkway between them. Number one is the northernmost of the two. Neither of these is adjacent to the trail. Number 3 is farther east and smaller, and is adjacent to the summit loop trail near the Bar Harbor Overlook and exhibit.

**2002:** Four smaller exclosures, numbers 4 – 7, were installed using wooden barricades. These four are close to the parking area and adjacent to the summit loop trail. Number four is north of the trail junction near the north trail entrance off the parking lot. Number 5 is west of the

northern section of the accessible trail and between it and the parking area. Number 6 is west of the trail to the Mather plaque. Number 7 is east of the accessible trail.

**2010:** All seven exclosures of wooden barricades are replaced “as is” with stones and ropes.

**2011:** Three new barriers (8 – 10) are installed east of the Loop Trail and south of the Gorge Path. Number 8, a line, is the largest and northernmost of the three and is adjacent to part of the Gorge Path. Number 9, an exclosure, is south of that, and number 10, a line, is the smallest and cordons off part of a wide visitor-created trail leading to the rocky ridge overlooking Bar Harbor. One other line, number 11, was installed along the edge of the Gorge Path where it leaves the summit loop trail. This last one was intended to protect a rare plant station for alpine club moss, but the plants disappeared within two years of installation. The reason for their disappearance is unclear; it cannot be clearly attributed to trampling. Two more barriers were also installed at Blue Hill Overlook. Number 12, a line, is the one adjacent to the sidewalk. Number 13, an exclosure, is to the north and west of 12 and is a vegetation patch surrounded by bare ledge.

**2015:** Eight new barriers are installed in the vicinity of the North Ridge Cadillac Trail including the area between the trail and the “stairs to nowhere.” Number 14 is the large exclosure adjacent to the bus parking spaces. Number 15 is the smaller exclosure near it. Number 16 is a large exclosure north of 15 and 16. Number 17 is a line west of the “trail” from the “stairs to nowhere” and runs from near the stairs to the sharp turn of the North Ridge Cadillac Trail. Number 18 is a line that runs from the sharp turn in the North Ridge Cadillac Trail northwards, adjacent to and on the west side of the North Ridge Trail. Number 19 is a line north of 18 and runs along the east side of and adjacent to the North Ridge Cadillac Trail. Number 20 is a line on the east side of the “trail” from the “stairs to nowhere” and runs from the near the stairs northward almost to the Hawkwatch site. Number 21 is a line at the Hawkwatch site.

### **Dorr Mountain**

**2000:** Two barriers are installed on the west side of the North Ridge Dorr Trail between the summit and the first trail junction to the north. First installed with wooden stakes and twine, they were replaced with stones in 2011. Number 1, a line, is the northernmost and number 2, also a line, is the southernmost and closer to the summit cairn.

### **South Bubble**

**2011:** Thirteen barriers are installed in 2011. Numbers 1 and 2 are lines at the junction of the Bubbles Trail and the side trail to Bubble Rock. Number 2 is the southernmost of these. Number 3 is a line just west of Bubble Rock and Number 4 is an inverted L-shaped line north of the side trail to Bubble Rock. Numbers 5 – 13 are all on the southern slope of South Bubble and are numbered from north to south. Number 5 is the northernmost and is a line at the top of the viewpoint over Jordan Pond. Number 6 and 7 are exclosures just south of number 5, with 6 the westernmost. Number 8 is a line and is just south of 7. Number 9 is a line south of 8 and parallels the Bubbles Trail on the east side. Numbers 10 and 11 are lines on each side of the Bubbles Trail, across from one another, and define the trail corridor. Number 12 is a line west of 10 running NW-SE. Number 13 is a small exclosure.

### **Ocean Path, North of Monument Cove**

**2009:** Number 1 is a line of rope and stones placed along the edge of the Ocean Path for several hundred feet north of Monument Cove. There are no gaps in this rope. Access trails are open at either end of the rope with Leave No Trace signs posted there. “Ghostbuster” signs were placed along the edges of the rope and the access trails to keep visitors out of the center area. This enclosure began with wooden stakes and rope.

### **Ocean Path, South of Monument Cove**

**2011:** Number 2 is a line installed south of Monument Cove after a new culvert was put in across from the Gorham Mountain Parking Area entrance and the bank on the west side of the Park Loop Road and Ocean Path was cleared and opened up to possible foot traffic. This bank was steep and was likely to develop an eroded path or two from visitors using it to access Monument Cove. We closed it off and are lightly maintaining a longer route around and into the cove for visitors willing to explore. Two “Ghostbuster” signs are installed as well.

### **Ocean Path, North of Thunder Hole**

**2010:** From Thunder Hole North for several hundred yards, seven lines of ropes are installed along the edge of the Ocean Path with gaps for six controlled, designated access routes to the rocky shore. Leave No Trace signs are installed at each access route. Each line is numbered 1 – 7 beginning at the south end near Thunder Hole. “Ghostbuster” signs are installed at many locations to close social trails, especially many additional ones from the Ocean Path, but a shoreline route is maintained by lightly trimming brush every few years. Number 8 is a small triangular enclosure and is located just below the accessible viewing platform.

### **Ocean Path, South of Thunder Hole**

**2011:** Five barriers were installed just south of Thunder Hole. Number 1 is the northernmost and is a line. Number 2 is a not quite fully enclosed line, part of which runs adjacent to the Ocean Path. Number 3 is an enclosure with access trails to its north and south. Number 4 is a line, part of which is adjacent to the Ocean Path. Number 5 is a line east of number 4 with a narrow access trail between them.

### **Otter Cliffs Climbing Area**

**1998:** Numbers 1 and 2 were installed after the Climbing Management Plan was completed in 1997 and are designed to discourage the use of trees as climbing anchors. They extend along the tree line and are away from the cliff edge. Recovery of vegetation here has been excellent.

### **Ocean Path, Otter Cliffs**

**2011:** Number 3 is a very short section was installed along the Ocean Path with two ghostbuster signs located just north of the Otter Cliffs Parking Area. The signs are intended to prevent visitors from shortcutting between the Park Loop Road and the Ocean Path just before the road split. Two Leave No Trace signs and several “Ghostbuster” signs are placed on the east side of the Ocean Path in the same area.

**Raven's Nest, Schoodic**

**2011:** These were installed by Schoodic Ranger Bill Weidner. Number 1 excludes hikers from scrambling down the rocks between the two major cliff areas. Numbers 2 and 3 exclude visitors from the triangular area between the trails.

**Wonderland Trail**

**2013:** Ropes were installed on both sides of a long section of trail to the open ledges to protect the globally rare (G2) pitch pine - broom crowberry community. "Ghostbuster" signs were placed as well.

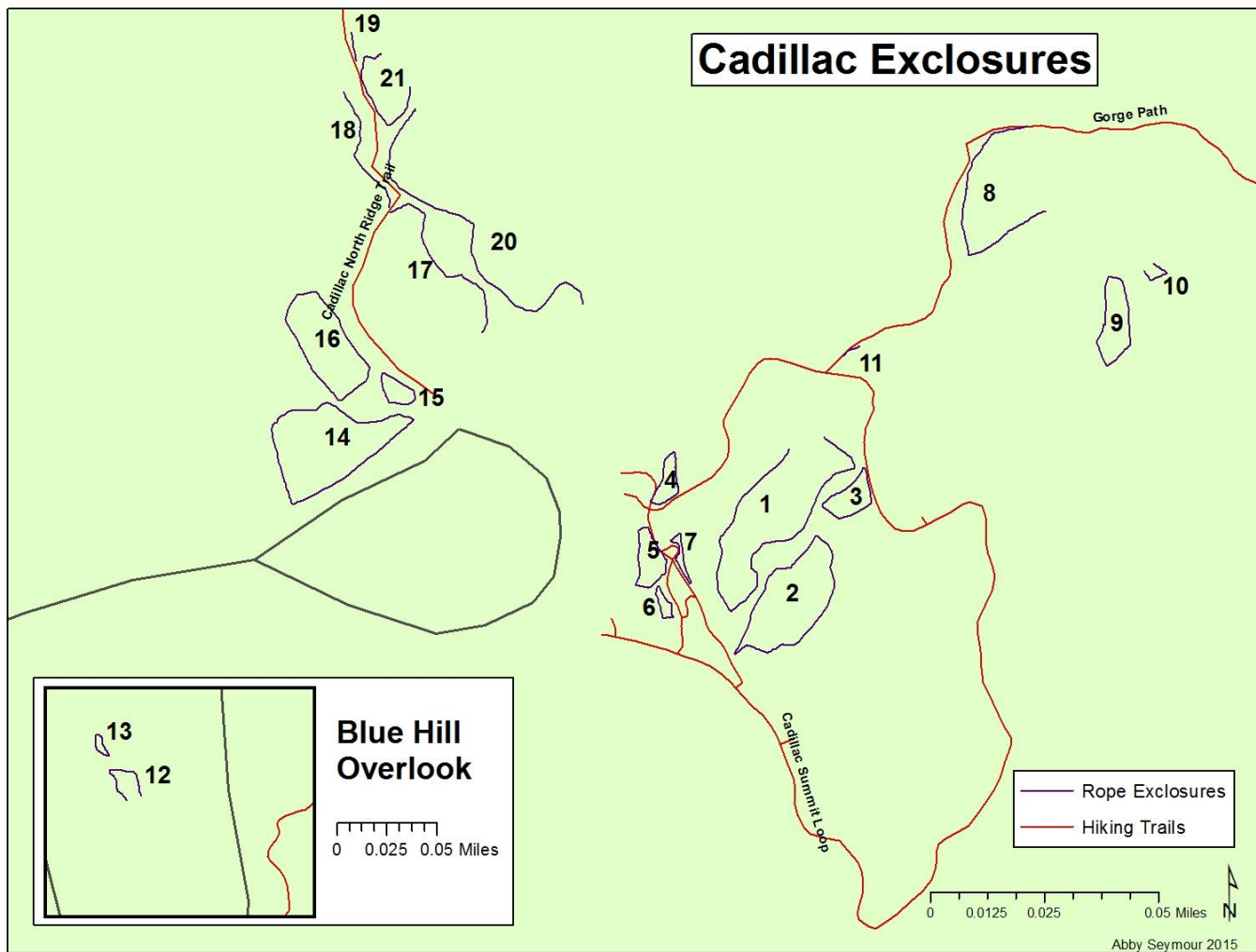


Figure 1: Cadillac Mountain and Blue Hill Overlook Exclosures.

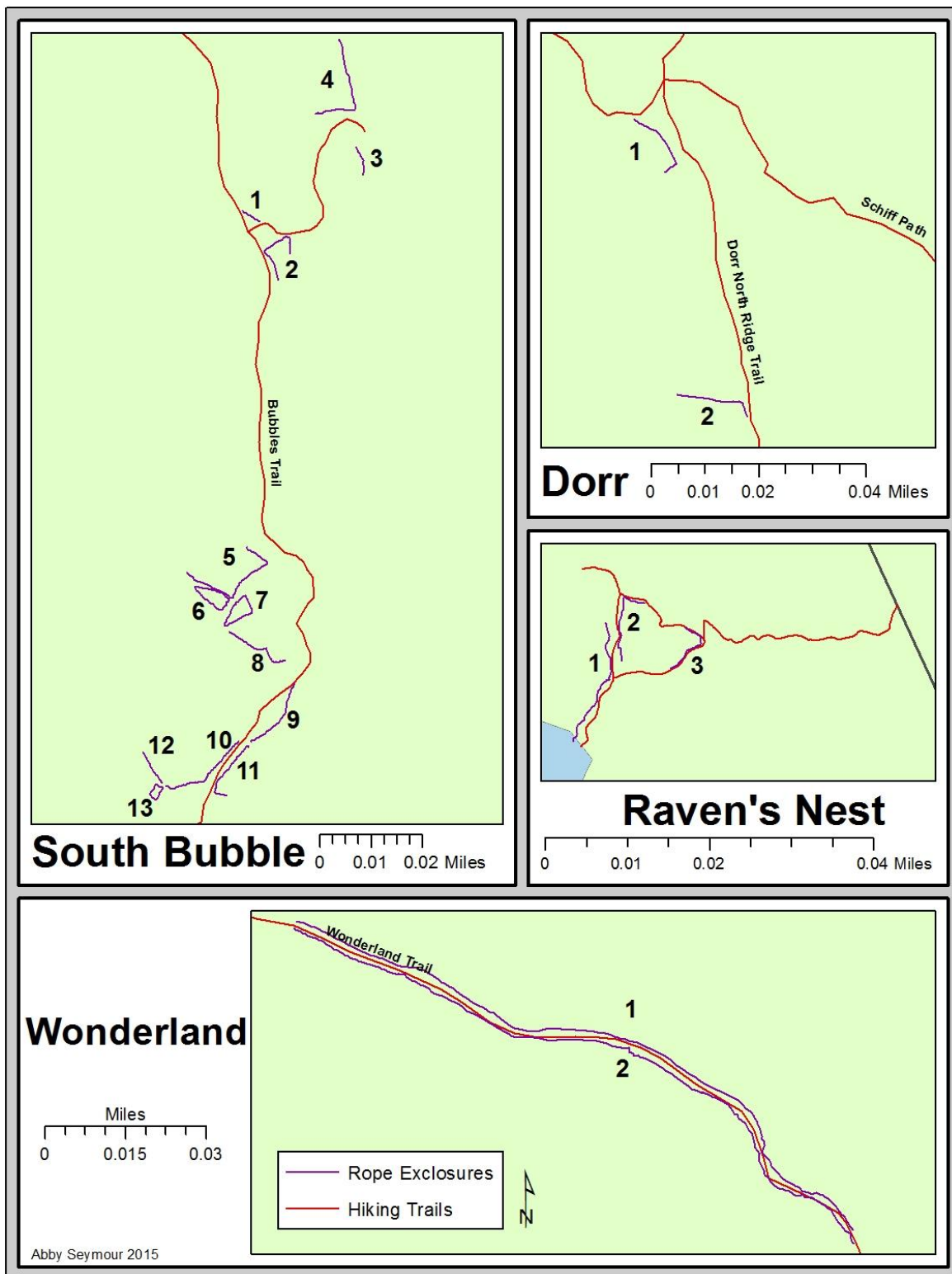


Figure 2: South Bubble, Dorr, Raven's Nest, and Wonderland Exclosures.

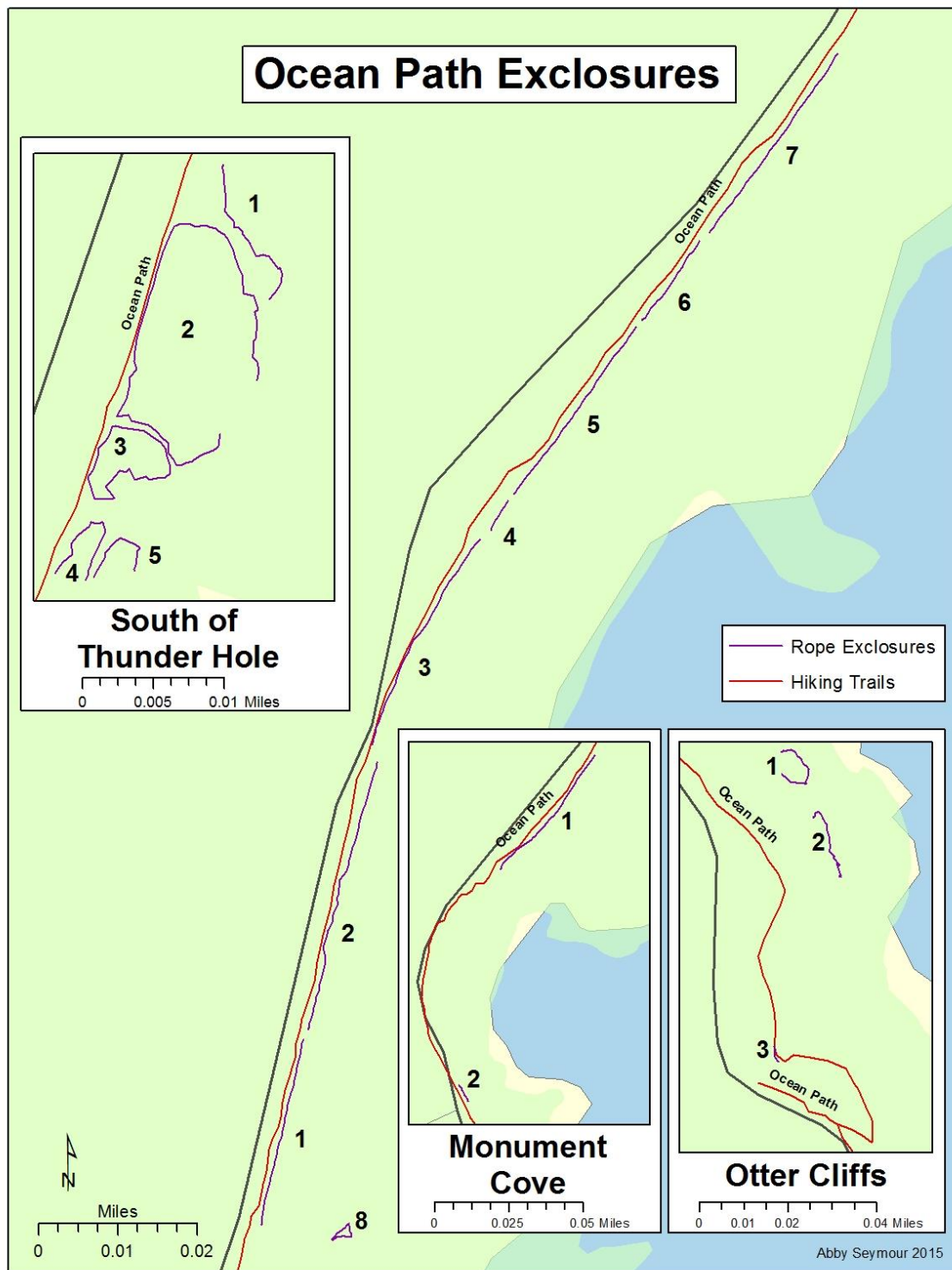


Figure 3: Ocean Path Exclosures