Explore the Pathway of Giants around the Seymour Center and see if you can find these 9 objects.

- Which direction is south?
- Why are the elephant seal's eyes so big?
- Which is native and which is invasive?
- Why is this mast still standing?
- Why is Mr. Gray rolled on his side?
- How does the sea water get here?
- What should you do if you see a marine mammal stranded on the beach?
- Where are the fluke (tail) bones?
- What are these bones?
SCAVENGER HUNT - Did you know?

Which direction is south?
The blue whale wind vane shows that the south direction is directly out to sea... on clear days you can see the city of Monterey which is south of Santa Cruz.

Why is this mast still standing?
When the La Feliz ran aground in 1924, the mast was placed against the bluff and used in recovering sardine cargo and equipment from the ship. Though much of the Santa Cruz coastline continues to erode, the bluff in front of the Seymour Center is composed of a very resilient Santa Cruz mudstone - thus the mast and the reef below remain after 90+ years!

Why are elephant seal eyes so big?
The elephant seal’s eyes are so big to help let in more light - these marine mammals can dive up to a mile deep! Their eyes also have a special layer of reflecting plates (tapetum lucidum) behind the retina to increase their light gathering ability.

What should you do if you see a marine mammal stranded?
Information gathered from marine mammal strandings help scientists understand what is going on in the ocean. The most important thing to do is keep a safe distance and not touch the animal. Then depending on whether the animal appears dead or alive, notify the entity that can help. For live animals, call 831-633-6298; for dead animals, call 831-212-1272.

Why is Mr. Gray rolled on his side?
Gray whales feed by sucking sediment and food (like amphipods) from the sea floor by rolling on their sides, swimming slowly and filtering the food through their baleen.

What are those funny small bones hanging under the blue whale skeleton?
They are called vestigial pelvic (hip) bones, previously used when their ancestors walked on land 40+ million years ago. Vestigial means they have degenerated and become functionless in the course of evolution, as modern whales only swim. What vestigial bone do humans have?

Which is native and which is invasive?
Ice plant is an invasive species that was introduced in the early 1900’s to help with erosion control. Unfortunately it spreads easily and competes with native coastal vegetation like the woolly sunflower.

How does the sea water get here?
The sea water in these blue storage tanks is drawn from the ocean by pumps (deep under the caisson lid you see on the bluff) that send the water through a set of horizontal sand filters and then here. The tank on the right was also used for sea otter diving research!

Where are the fluke (tail) bones?
Whale flukes (tail fins) don’t have bones! They are made of muscles and dense fibrous tissue. A blue whale’s fluke can be 20 feet wide. Fun word - the narrow muscular area where the fluke connects to the body is called a peduncle.