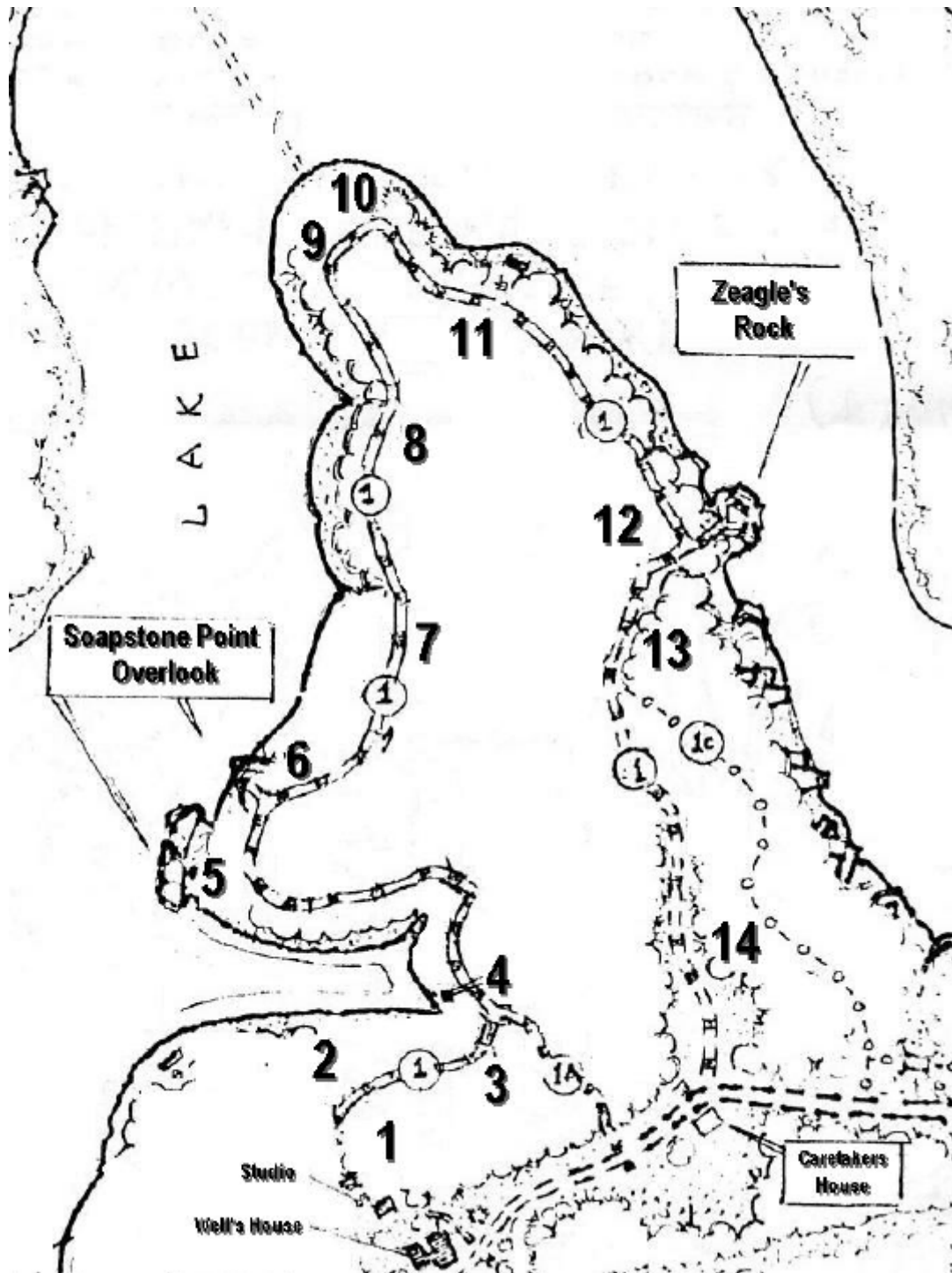


Zeagle's Rock Loop Trail



Follow the numbered white markers for a one mile self-guided trail. Terrain varies and the last half is mostly uphill. Please stay on the trail and do not pick wildflowers.



Zeagle's Rock Loop Trail - text

1 Mangum Terraces This leveled area in the path is the first of a series of six erosion-control terraces to be crossed as you continue on the path. The distance between them varies from 15 feet on the steepest slopes to an average of 50 feet for more gradual slopes. Look to the right and left of the trail and you will notice each terrace nearly follows a level contour, sloping only enough to carry collected rain water along the hill into a natural gully or constructed collector ditch leading to the river (now lake).

Charles Ray terraced the entire 90 cultivated acres of the farm in the early 1900's. These terraces were developed by James Priestly Mangum of Wake Forest in the late 19th Century. These Mangum Terraces qualifies the area for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

2 Beech Grove - Several American Beech trees over eighty years old exist on this slope. As they die habitat is created for woodpeckers and other cavity nesting birds. This cove of the lake is called Spring Branch Bay after a spring tapped nearby.

3 Footbridge; wildflower trail - This footbridge crosses one of two natural intermittent streams which feed Spring Branch Bay. Volunteers from the B.W. Wells Association built this bridge in the 1980's. The wildflower trail to your right leads along a north facing slope which harbors a variety of spring wildflowers.

4 Spring - Dr. Wells, after several attempts to find adequate water for their needs from dug or drilled wells, found and tapped a never-failing spring. It is about 100 feet to the left of this marker, now under water.

5 Soapstone outcrops - A short path to the left leads to a small outcrop of soapstone. This soapstone was once on the ocean floor and was thrust up when the African plate stuck the North American plate. Early settlers found many uses for soapstone since it could be easily cut into smaller pieces. Warming stones were frequently made as bed-warmers. Mica flakes or "fools gold" can be seen in the sandy shallow water.

6 Soapstone Ledge - To the left is to a weathered soapstone ledge covered with lichens, ferns and wildflowers. Adjoining Mountain Laurel adds to this natural scene.

7 Revegetation; erosion on shore - Boat wake and lake winds have eroded this shoreline and reduced woodland tree cover. It will be interesting to watch the natural processes at work in re-vegetating this stretch of trail.

8 Signs of farming - The large rock pile on the left, Mangum Terrace just ahead and relatively small tree canopy indicate this area was farmed or clear cut in the last 35 years. The re-growth is composed of pine and hardwoods: oak, maple, holly, sweet gum and a few river birch.

9 Peninsula - The end of the peninsula has gradually been eroding away at flood periods of the Neuse River. Layers of sand-fine clay were deposited along the rivers edge. Now wave action from the lake is rapidly accelerating soil erosion. Notice that all the Loblolly Pines have been girdled by Beavers and are dying. River Birches will soon prosper once the pine over-story is lessened.

10 River ford - A 1952 air photo showed this area to be in old field status. It also showed a ford across the river to the opposite shore. Charles Ray used to take his horses across the river to be shod by a blacksmith in the early 1900's.

11 Pink Lady Slipper Site - This area is being improved for the benefit of the Pink Lady Slipper wildflower. Plants rescued from nearby development will supplement existing plants. The flower blooms from April – July.

12 Short left spur to Zeagle's Rock. - Before 1978 Zeagle's Rock towered 70 feet above the Neuse River, now it's only about 20 feet. Local folklore supplies many theories as to how the rock was named. A local church who used to perform baptisms below the rock is thought to have named the rock after a philosopher Ezekiel, mentioned in the bible. The shore line to the right is a series of rock outcroppings. These rock cliffs are worn-down (eroded) remnants of an ancient mountain thrust up millions of years ago.

Dr. Wells painted Zeagle's Rock several times. Immediately to the south was a high overhanging cliff making a cave-like shelter (now under water). The cave was used by American Indians.

13 Erosion - This section of farm road shows how normal rains will erode the raw clay soils of the area. The wisdom of constructing erosion control structures such as the Mangum Terrace is readily seen. The water bars (telephone poles) were placed to divert rain water off the trail.

14 Spur trail to Piggery - On the left was David Ray, the caretaker's piggery, in operation when B.W. Wells lived at Rock Cliff Farm in the 1950's. Fencing, hog house and turning pit are visible. The hog meat was smoked in the Smokehouse and then sold in Wake Forest.