

# Ragged Mountain Natural Area

## PLEASE NOTE

It may take 2-3 hours to walk the main loop trail. Parts of the trail are quite steep. The natural area is closed and locked at dusk. Do not attempt the entire loop trail late in the day.

## PARK HOURS

7:00 a.m. - dusk

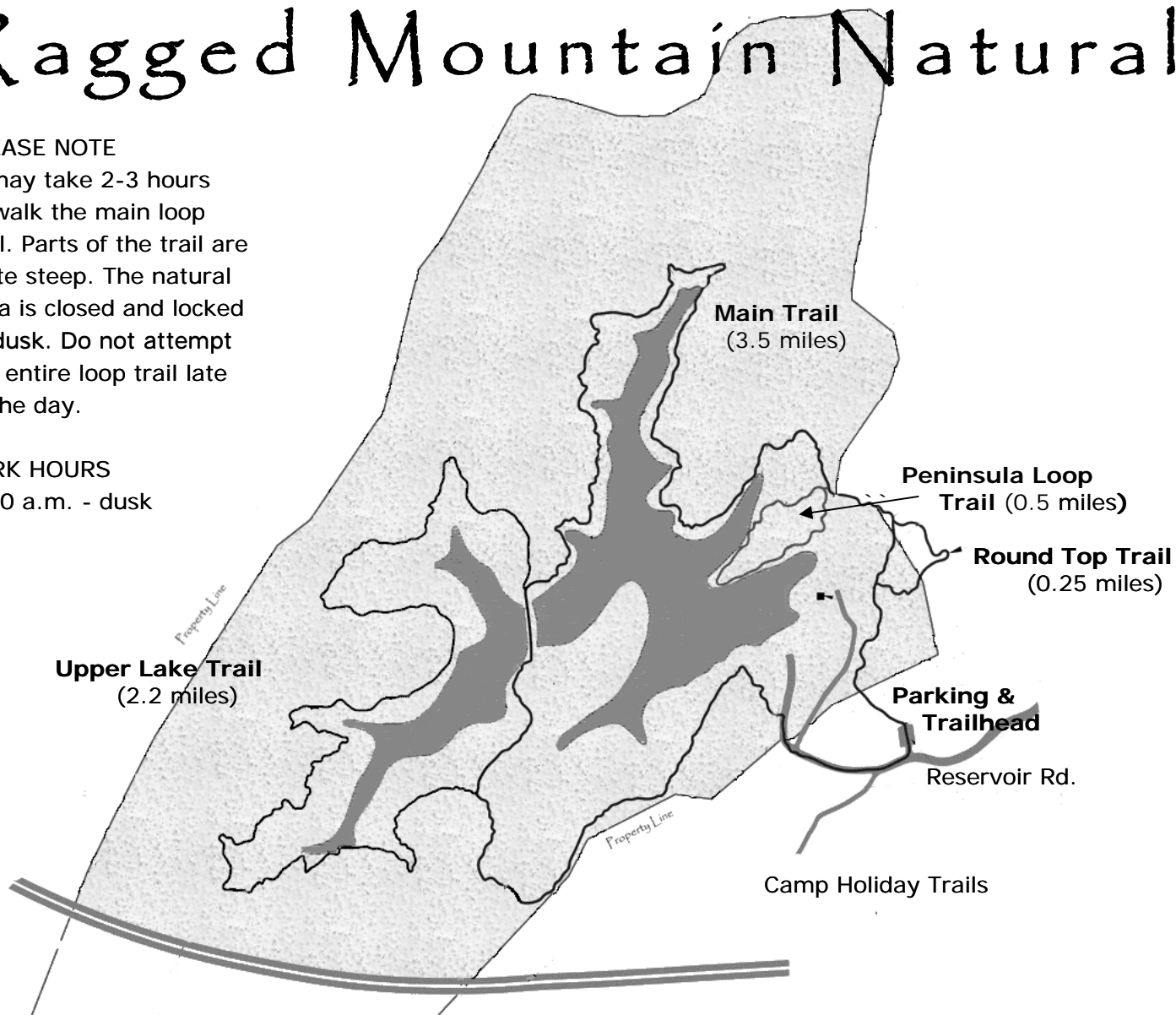
In order to protect the wildlife, water quality and serenity of the Ragged Mountain Reservoir, please respect Natural Area Rules

Stay on the trails  
Foot traffic only

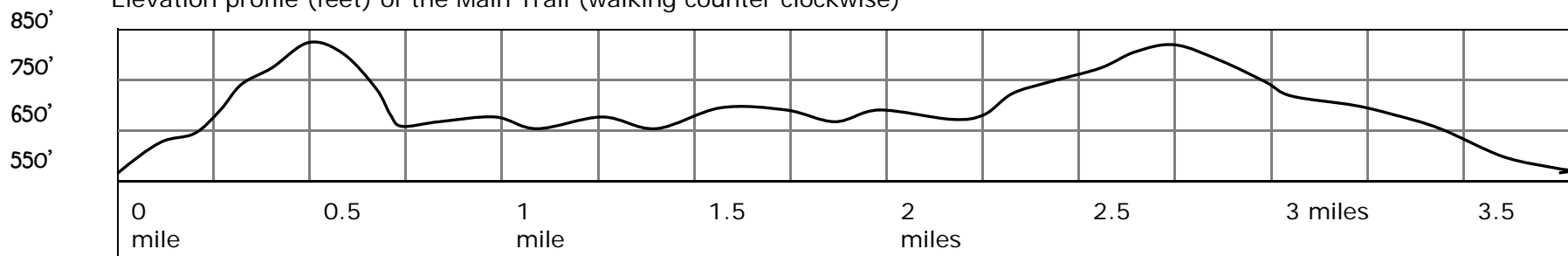
The following are **PROHIBITED**

- ✗ Dogs
- ✗ Jogging/running
- ✗ Bikes
- ✗ Collecting
- ✗ Motorized vehicles
- ✗ Horses
- ✗ Swimming
- ✗ Camping and fires
- ✗ Hunting

Special Thanks to the Heyward Family for land easements that make access to the natural Area possible. Please respect private property boundaries



Elevation profile (feet) of the Main Trail (walking counter clockwise)



# The Trails of the Ragged Mountain Natural Area

## **The Main Trail (4 miles)**

From the parking lot, the Main Trail climbs sharply to Round Top Mountain. Here hikers can take a ¼ mile spur trail to Round Top Overlook for a panoramic view of the countryside below. The trail descends turning right at the emergency access road. Up the road and on the left, the ½ mile Peninsula Loop Trail offers breathtaking views of the lower reservoir. A little farther along, the Main Trail turns left into the woods following gently sloping hills for 1.5 miles along the water as it passes through mature hardwoods, over mossy creeks, and along rocky outcrops. An old quarry along the shore was used to mine rock for construction of the dam (now a land bridge) in the mid 1880s.

At the land bridge, the 2.2 mile Upper Lake Trail turns off to the right. The Main Trail crosses the land bridge and starts ascending into the woods, passing a turn-off to the Upper Lake Trail. The last mile traverses terrain that is characteristic of the Ragged Mountains - high peaks and deep valleys, rocky crags, and scattered stands of ferns, spicebush and mountain laurel. This section of the trail is most reminiscent of the landscape in Poe's

*A Tale of the Ragged Mountains.*

At the end of the footpath, follow the driveway down to the road and turn left to get back to the parking lot.

## **Spur Trails**

### **Round Top (0.22 miles)**

At 919 feet, Round Top is one of the highest peaks at the Ragged Mountain Natural Area. Eagle Scout Noah Green created an area replete with benches carved out of fallen logs for visitors to sit, relax and enjoy the 360-degree view of the surrounding countryside.



### **Peninsula Loop Trail (0.5 miles)**

A favorite fishing spot for years, the Peninsula Loop is also one of the most accessible trails at RMNA. It circles a beautiful neck of pine and oak woods flanked on each side by quiet bays. Old stone chimneys (photo) lend an historic character to a walk along this path which also provides the best vantage point to view the lower lake and observe waterfowl.

### **Upper Lake Trail (2.2 miles)**

This remote trail passes high into a beautiful upland forest of majestic oak, hickory, and poplar and into a habitat unusual in Albemarle County, seasonally flooded wetland. This boggy valley supports a variety of wildlife including heron, waterfowl, otter, and snapping turtles. Cool damp coves define the area SW of the lake, its northern exposures thick with ferns beds.