



Map 5

## Eagle Rock Reservation to O'Connor Park

The Lenape Trail enters the northern end of Eagle Rock Reservation on footpaths, and the yellow blazes should be followed carefully to avoid turning onto other trails. It turns onto sidewalks near the September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial before turning back onto footpaths, eventually reaching road sidewalk at the southern end of Eagle Rock Reservation. Road sidewalks and roadwalks are then followed to reach the sidewalk through Degnan Park. The Lenape Trail then follows road sidewalk under Interstate 280 to eventually reach O'Connor Park, where sidewalk leads to Ellison Avenue at Mount Pleasant Avenue.

### Points of Interest:

**Casino/Highlawn Pavilion Restaurant:** A historic structure known as the casino was built on the Eagle Rock crest in 1911. It was an Italian-style country house, an open masonry shelter with a series of arches. During World War I, experiments for the nation's military were conducted in the casino by both Thomas Edison, whose laboratory was just down the hill, and the rival Westinghouse Company. They came to Eagle Rock to take advantage of its natural elevation and the view toward the Atlantic Ocean. The turn-of-the-century structure was restored and now is the site of the Highlawn Pavilion restaurant.

**Essex County Eagle Rock September 11th Memorial:** The Eagle Rock Overlook became a gathering place where thousands came to watch and pay respect to those who were lost on September 11, 2001. As word spread that this was a place where people gathered to grieve, to reflect, and to pay tribute, a spontaneous memorial of cards and candles, flags and flowers, photographs, prayers, and poems filled the wall overlooking New York City. Through funds raised by the County and the hard work of volunteers and family members, the Memorial was officially dedicated on October 20, 2002. At the center of the memorial is a 120-foot granite wall, carved with the 3,000 names of people who lost their lives. The site includes several bronze statues and a memorial grove of seven trees. In 2011, on the 10th anniversary of the attacks, a 7,400-pound steel and concrete piece of the World Trade Center foundation was installed along with a bronze plaque recognizing the bravery of emergency medical technicians. The memorial remains a special place where visitors find comfort and a tribute to resilience, peace, and hope.

**Eagle Rock Overlook:** Formed by glaciers of the last ice age, this overlook on top of Orange Mountain provides sweeping panoramic views of the area, including the New York City skyline. From this vantage point, Washington's army monitored British troop movements across the Hudson River during the American Revolution. In 1874, Alexander T. Compton began development of the Eagle Rock Resort, a year-round destination for city-dwellers to view nature and take in the fresh mountain air. In 1894, an electric trolley line was constructed to the base of the mountain, where visitors would then climb a wooden staircase known as the Hundred Steps to reach the top. When the Essex County Park Commission was formed in 1895, it protected the land at Eagle Rock from quarrying and residential construction. The old resort buildings were cleared and, in 1907, a spiked concrete wall was created to secure the edge. Today, the wall forms part of the boundary of the September 11th Memorial.

**Eagle Rock Climb Historic Automobile Race:** In the early 20th century, hill climb competitions tested the speed and endurance of early automobiles. The Eagle Rock Hill Climb, held in November 1901, was one of the first events of its kind in the United States. Drivers vied to reach the top of the 4,962-foot steep climb in record time. It became an annual event attracting thousands of spectators, but it ended in 1905 due to concerns over safety. At that time, Eagle Rock Avenue ran directly into the reservation with a very sharp left turn. It was realigned in 1957 to make the road safer, and the southern entrance to Eagle Rock Reservation was moved to its present location.

**O'Connor Park:** This town park in West Orange has a walking path and a hands-on living science exhibit. The two-tiered ecosystem exhibit includes a wetlands area and a stream-fed pond.