

ACCESS/PARKING:

- Pine Mountain Road, south end. [GPS Address: 149 Pine Mountain Road]
- By trail from Lake Windwing, Bennett's Pond, Hemlock Hills, and via the Ives Trail from Wooster Mountain.

DIFFICULTY: Moderately challenging with significant elevation gain. Hikes can range from 45 minutes to the Ives overlook or over 2 hours when hiking additional trails. Pine Mountain is an all-day hike if linked with Hemlock Hills, Bennett's Pond, and the Ives Trail.

FEATURES: Pine Mountain boasts extensive mountain laurel plantings at the start of the trail; a large glacial erratic rock perched on the ridge is evidence of glacial activity. This rock marks one of the highest points between the coast and West Point, and during the Revolutionary War soldiers set fires atop it in order to relay signals.



The first overlook sports a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. Near this outlook stood the weekend cabin of the composer Charles Ives. It was here, overlooking the hills, valleys, and churches of Ridgefield, that Ives wrote *From the Steeples and Mountains* in 1901. In Autumn, after the leaves are down, there is a clear view of three Ridgefield lakes.

The history of the stone chimney further along the trail is unknown. Shortly after this point is the Bennett's Pond Red trail junction and the continuation of the Ives Trail.

The end of the Yellow trail is a circular trail that passes the foundation of an airway tower built in 1938. Close to the tower there are three United States Geological Survey circular brass markers embedded in rock. A large iron bar dates from around 1889 and was an attempt to mark out the Ridgebury-Danbury boundary. The highest point in Ridgefield is at the old beacon (1,021 feet above sea level).

HISTORY: The area was purchased by the town in the 1970s. More detailed information can be found in the *Hemlock Hills-Pine Mountain Yale School of Forestry study*, which may be viewed at the Conservation Commission Office.

A major addition was made to the Pine Mountain open space in 2022 with the purchase by the Commission of 58 acres of property from the Boy Scouts of America. The Commission then created a series of new trails on this piece of land connecting it to the existing trails in Pine Mountain.



Source: Kevin Claesgens



