



## Area RT RIDGEFIELD RAIL TRAIL



Easy walk along a paved trail

Length: 2.3 miles long

**ACCESS/PARKING:** Parking at the end of Halpin Lane behind the Ridgefield Guild of Artists barn; foot access from the end of Prospect Street Ext., and at pedestrian crossings at Ivy Hill, Cooper Hill, and Florida Roads. Restricted to pedestrian use. [GPS Address: 37 Halpin Lane]

**DIFFICULTY:** Easy, 2.3 miles long, with gentle grade of approximately 200 feet from the high end at Prospect Street Extension down to Florida Road. Marked at 0.2 mile intervals.

**FEATURES:** The trail goes by several wetlands areas, crosses and re-crosses Cooper Pond Brook, and joins three open space trail systems. White and blue striped markers indicate the interconnected trails of the Norwalk River system.

At the Halpin Lane parking area there is a short wooded trail between the parking area and the Rail Trail. On the north side of the trail at approximately 1.8 miles there is access to the trails of the 63-acre Florida Refuge (see Area 31), and on the south side of the trail between the 2 and 2.2 mile markers the Whitbeck Preserve trail winds through a 5-acre parcel (see Area 39).

Wildflowers and wildlife abound along the trail. Turtle sightings are common during their egg-laying season, significant stands of mountain laurel bloom in late June, and numerous species of mammals, amphibians and birds frequent the area.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING:** The entire trail is accessible for cross-country skiing, but skis usually must be removed at road crossings.

**HISTORY:** The trail, which opened on December 11, 2000, follows a portion of the abandoned railway that originally ran from Branchville to the center of Ridgefield. It was built and presented to the town by Eversource (formerly Connecticut Light & Power), current owner of the right-of-way, as part of a Department of Energy and Environment (DEEP) mandated cleanup of arsenic that had been used by the railroad to control weeds. Three layers of material topped with stone screenings were used to protect the environment and create the approximately 10-foot wide trail.



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