

Topsmead-Bantam Lake Tour

Total Distance: **31.2 miles**

Elevation Gain: **2377 feet**

Degree of Difficulty Index: **2377 ft / 31.2 mi = 76.18 ft/mi** Terrain: **Very hilly**

Killer Hills: **Several lengthy climbs, some of them quite steep**

Geographical Region: **Northwest Connecticut**

City/Town: **Harwinton**

Starting Location: **Rt. 8 Exit 42 CPL (Rt. 118) in Harwinton**

Ride Description: **This ride visits the towns of Litchfield and Morris and tours Topsmead State Forest and Bantam Lake in a rather hilly, but exceptionally beautiful part of the state. Points of interest that can be visited are the Haight Vineyard, the White Memorial Foundation and the Lourdes in Litchfield (catholic shrine).**

Facilities and *Points of Interest*:

Mile	Facilities - <i>Points of Interest</i>
4.6	<p>Topsmead State Forest estate and grounds. <i>Topsmead State Forest is the former summer estate of Miss Edith Morton Chase, daughter of Henry Sabin Chase and Alice Morton Chase. Henry Sabin Chase was the first President of Chase Brass and Copper Company in Waterbury. Chase Brass was one of the leaders in the brass industry when Waterbury was the Brass Capital of the world.</i></p> <p><i>The English Tudor style house was completed in 1925. The exterior woodwork is of cypress, the downspouts are lead, the walls of brick and stucco, and the roof is slate. The interior woodwork is oak, as is most of the flooring. The foyer, hallway and dining room floors are of polished terra cotta tile. Most of the interior walls are of the same type of stucco as is found on the exterior. Fine craftsmanship, an eye for detail and understated wealth are evident throughout the house, which is tastefully and simply furnished with 17th and 18th century English country antiques.</i></p> <p><i>Free guided tours of the residence are offered from June through October on the 2nd and 4th weekends of each month. Reservations are not required. On open weekends, tours are available from 12:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.</i></p> <p><i>Nestled in the Litchfield Hills, Topsmead State Forest remains a precious piece of an era past.</i></p>
5.5	<p><i>Haight Vineyard on the left. Connecticut's oldest winery, having planted the first of the fine wine grapes in Connecticut in 1975. Complimentary tasting and winery tours are offered year-round, seven days a week. Our daily hours of operation are, Monday through Saturday, 10:30 to 5:00 P.M., and Sundays from noon to 5:00 P.M.</i></p>
5.8	<p><i>Views...especially to your right</i></p>
10.7	<p><i>Occasional views of Bantam Lake to the right for the next mile or so</i></p>
14.6	<p><i>Begin ~ 1-mile CCW tour around Deer Island (Bantam Lake)</i></p>
16.7	<p><i>Begin 1.6-mile lakeside ride; spectacular views of Bantam Lake</i></p>
17.3	<p><i>White Memorial Family Campground & Marina: store on left; marina right; bathrooms on left</i></p>
19.4	<p><i>White Memorial Conservation Center...great spot for lunch; bathrooms & water available. The Conservation Center operates a Nature Museum with exhibits focusing on the interpretation of local natural history, conservation, and ecology, as well as a Museum Nature Store. Dormitory and Classroom Facilities on the property extend the opportunities for visitors to interact with the natural world.</i></p>
22.9	<p><i>Litchfield Green ahead and to the left; Litchfield business block to left</i></p>
23.5	<p><i>Lourdes in Litchfield to the left</i></p>
27.1	<p><i>Possible ice cream stop at Peaches and Cream on the right</i></p>