

Weir Farm National Historic Site, straddling the Wilton-Ridgefield border on Nod Hill Road in Branchville, is a magnificent 60-acre site of open fields and second-growth forest. Weir Farm is Connecticut's first and only National Park and the only national park preserving landscapes, home and studio of an American painter.

J. Alden Weir (1852-1919) purchased the Branchville farm in 1882. The property has housed artists since then and was farmed into the 1940's. Weir was a leader of the American Impressionist movement, and many notable contemporaries and friends painted at the site. The Park Visitor Center in Burlingham House is open year-round; information on studio tours and programs is available by calling (203) 834-1896.

Weir Farm boasts a number of trails. The trail to Weir Pond is among the most interesting as its destination is the pond Weir built in 1896 for picnicking, fishing and painting. The pond trail is accessed through a barway on Nod Hill Road just north of Weir's home and studios and is designated by yellow markers. The trail crosses a former pasture and enters second-growth forest and wetlands. The forest is notable for so-called "wolf-trees," those trees which escaped the farmer's ax and are characterized by broadly spread limbs; two such trees are a sycamore and a shagbark hickory on either side of the of the trail as it crosses through a wall and descends into wetlands. Technically a wooded swamp, this wetland is one of many on the property draining into the Norwalk River. The trail follows an old stone wall, one of many fences defining small farming plots. The trail emerges at the 3.6 acre pond's northwest corner and continues around the pond. The summer house, boathouse and dock are long gone but the pond remains in the form Weir designed for it.

Weir Farm boasts a painting-sites trail including the pond trail. The self-guided walking tour covers 12 sites which can be compared to famous paintings by Weir, Childe Hassam and Albert Pinkham Ryder, all celebrating this unique landscape.

Another trail leads in a southerly direction from the Visitor Center in Burlingham House to the south of Weir's home and studios. From the Burlingham Barn this trail cuts through an open meadow that had served as pasture during Weir's time and long before. This trail boasts handsome vistas of fields lined with stone walls and ancient trees. It is favored by painters and bird watchers alike. The trail connects with the Weir Preserve's white trail and the juncture of the two properties (see page 80 for Weir Preserve trail information). Together with Weir Preserve and Town of Ridgefield open space, Weir Farm is part of more than 200 acres of protected, varied landscapes that were an important focus of American Impressionism.



**Directions:** From Wilton Center proceed north on Rte. 33 (Ridgefield Road) for 2 miles. Turn right on Nod Hill Road. Proceed 3.5 miles to parking lot on right.

**Acreage:** ± 60

**Parking:** A 15 car parking lot is located across from the Burlingham house.

**Access:** Entrance to trails at Burlingham House and north of town boundary, on east side of Nod Hill Road, Ridgefield.

**Trails:** Approximately 1 mile

**Ownership:** National Park Service, Weir Farm Heritage Trust

