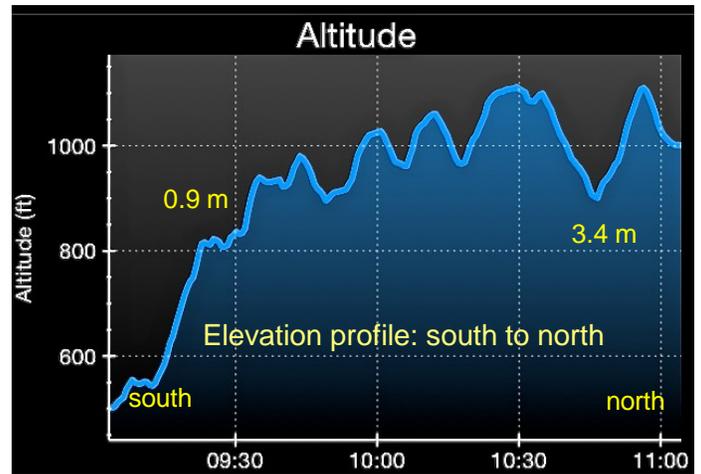


Tunxis Trail- southern section 8.6 miles, 3,400 vertical feet, 5.6 hours



Lake McDonough viewpoint



The Tunxis Trail, southern section has 3 hiking options: The complete “out & back” from either parking spot is 8.6 miles & 3,400’. If you use 2 cars, it becomes 4.3 miles & 1,700’. If your goal is just to complete the Tunxis Transit in Barkhamsted (southern to northern border) using 1 car, it would be 7.0 miles & 2,600’. For the last option, you would park on rt 219, hike south to the Lake McDonough view point which is in New Hartford, and then return to your car.

There are 2 parking locations for this hike. At Ski Sundown (41°53'6.48"N 72°56' 51.56"W), since the Tunxis Trail follows Ratlum Road. The other is a small lot where the Tunxis crosses rt 219. The small lot is 100 feet west of the junction with Hillcrest Drive (41° 55' 34.42" N 72° 55' 30.17" W). Look at the elevation profile to decide the direction.

The directions are written for a one way hike going north, using 2 cars. Parking at Ski Sundown, follow the blue blazed Tunxis Trail north along Ratlum Road, turning left into the forest at 0.2. At 0.8 you reach the junction for the short connecting trail to one of the best views off the Tunxis Trail. Head west off the Tunxis & at 0.9, after making a 180° hairpin turn, you reach a great view of Lake McDonough (photo). Return to the Tunxis at 1.0. Turn left & continue up & down along the ridge, reaching the highest point on this section with a view of Barkhamsted Reservoir at 2.9. Continue north on the trail that follows the ridge (Do not head east on a wide unmarked trail from this viewpoint). Cross Ratlum Road (3.4) and enter one of the thickest patches of Mountain Laurel in Connecticut (4.0). Return to your car at 4.3.

If you are hiking back to Ski Sundown, reverse direction & cross Ratlum Road (5.2), reaching the highpoint at 5.7. Return to the Lake McDonough turn off (7.8) & your car at 8.6. If you are doing the “out & back” to the Lake McDonough viewpoint, cross Ratlum Rd (0.9), reach the highpoint at 1.4, and Lake McDonough viewpoint at 3.5. Return at 7.0.

A 2 car mileage summary, hiking north: At 0.2 turn left off Ratlum Rd > at 0.8 Lake McDonough view option > continue north reaching the highpoint with view at 1.9 > follow B to your car at 4.3 miles.