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Staff Reports

[The Tonawanda News \(http://tonawanda-news.com\)](http://tonawanda-news.com)

— — There were an estimated 605,000 visits to the Canalway Trail at Niawanda Park in Tonawanda in 2011, according to the annual trail count conducted by the New York State Canal Corporation and Parks & Trails New York.

There are an estimated 1.7 million visits annually to the Erie Canalway Trail that spans Upstate New York, the state's thruway authority announced in a detailed report of annual traffic on the Canalway Trail at four locations in Western and Central New York.

The results indicated that 56 percent were walkers, 30 percent cyclists and 10 percent of trail users were joggers. Counters also noted that 54 percent of all cyclists counted were wearing helmets.

"This year's count illustrates the growing popularity of the Erie Canalway Trail," said Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York. "It's clear that visitors and residents are discovering that walking or cycling the tranquil, traffic-free trail is a perfect way to experience the magic of the canal and the warmth and charm of the historic communities along its length."

The trail count information can be used in trail design and management to help determine trail surface and width, to factor whether stop lights at intersections are warranted, and to evaluate mowing frequency, according to the thruway authority. Trail counts can also be used in making decisions about funding and marketing. More than three-quarters of the 365-mile Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany is now completed.

"The Erie Canalway Trail provides multiple recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities, as well as an economic boost to canal communities across the state," added Brian U. Stratton, director of the Canal Corporation.



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