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News

Trail user count for Canalway in Syracuse area

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ALBANY, NY (01/27/2011)(readMedia)-- The New York State Canal Corporation and Parks & Trails New York today announced the availability of "Who's on the Trail? The Erie Canalway Trail User Count 2011," the fourth annual report about how people use the Old Erie Canal section of the Canalway in Onondaga and Cayuga counties.

Volunteers at several locations along the Canalway counted an estimated 237,000 people in the past year.

Walkers made up 55 percent of those counted, followed by 21 percent joggers and 21 percent bicyclists. Counters noted that 50 percent of the bicyclists wore safety helmets.

Carmella R. Mantello, Director of the Canal Corporation, said, "The Canalway Trail provides multiple tourism and recreational opportunities, as well as an economic boost to hundreds of canal communities. The volunteers who conducted the trail counts this year along the Old Erie Canalway Trail did a superb job, and I would like to thank them for the countless hours of work that went into collecting this important information. We would like to commend Parks & Trails New York for their continued partnership and ongoing efforts to support and enhance this recreational, tourism and economic asset."

Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York, said, "This year's estimate of more than 230,000 annual visitors at two different locations confirms the ever-growing popularity of the Erie Canalway Trail. 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."

During six weeks in July and August 2010, volunteers stationed themselves at five locations situated along the Old Erie Canal portion of the Erie Canalway Trail at the estimated time of peak use on successive days in the same week or on the same days in at least three successive weeks. In total, 35 counts were conducted.

The data collected was used to calculate an annual traffic estimate of nearly 237,000 on the restored Nine-Mile Creek Aqueduct in Camillus.

Each year different sections of the Canalway are counted. The findings for 2010 are consistent with counts of previous years for different sections of the trail. An estimated 2.4 million people use the Canalway Trails annually.

Parks & Trails New York and the Canal Corporation followed a procedure outlined by the National Bicycling and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NPBD) for conducting the count and calculating estimates of annual trail traffic. Since many trails around the country are using the NPBD methodology for conducting trail counts, it allows the Erie Canalway Trail data to be added to and compared with a national database.

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 in determining mowing frequency. Trail counts can also be

used regarding trail funding decisions and in marketing activities.

For a copy of "Who's on the Trail? The Erie Canalway Trail User Count 2011," please visit Parks & Trails New York website at http://www.ptny.org/pdfs/canalway_trail/user%20counts/2010.pdf .

Parks & Trails New York is the only statewide nonprofit organization working to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open space across New York State for all to enjoy. Its work includes advocacy, outreach, technical assistance to communities, bicycle tourism promotion, and bicycle tours such as Cycling the Erie Canal. For more information on Parks & Trails New York, please visit www.ptny.org .

URL: <http://www.oneidadispatch.com/articles/2011/01/27/news/doc4d41c18b08cf1647525820.prt>

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