

# Who's on the Trail

## Genesee Valley Greenway

2021 Trail User Count



February 2022





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Background</b>	3
<b>Counter Locations</b>	3
<b>Trail Usage by Location</b>	4
Scottsville	5
Mount Morris	7
Cuba	9
<b>Methodology</b>	11
<b>Conclusion</b>	12



*Credit: Suzy Allman*



# BACKGROUND

**G**enesee Valley Greenway State Park is a 90-mile state park located on a former canal and rail corridor that passes through 16 towns across five counties between Rochester in Monroe County and Hinsdale, near Olean, in Cattaraugus County. In 2021, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) received funding from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation to pursue a Genesee Valley Greenway Trail Town Program. Partnering with Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway and Letchworth Gateway Villages, PTNY is providing technical assistance to 10 communities in the region in an effort to ensure the communities can fully benefit from trail tourism. To better understand use across the corridor, PTNY set up electronic trail counters in three locations along the Greenway in June 2021. The analysis presented here will function as a baseline to understand the impact of investments in the trail on future trail use, and help demonstrate the economic potential of the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park to benefit the counties, towns, villages, and cities in the region.

PTNY began using trail counts in 2005 to support anecdotal evidence of the popularity of the Erie Canalway Trail among walkers and cyclists with more objective data. In 2010, PTNY and the NYSCC began using the current protocol and methodology developed by the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD) to extrapolate data collected over a short period of time to represent a full year of use. The NBPD is a nationwide effort to provide consistent data collection and adjustment factors to estimate annual trail use. Since 2010, PTNY’s trail count programs have used electronic trail counters, and they have been the primary tool for collecting trail use data since 2014. For more information on the functioning of the trail counters to collect data, and the means by which count data is extrapolated to represent longer periods of time, see the methodology section beginning on page 5.

# COUNTER LOCATIONS

**E**lectronic counters measured trail use along Genesee Valley Greenway State Park at three locations between June and October 2021. As the counters were only installed for portions of the year in these three specific locations, the data discussed here only provides a snapshot of trail use in these locations. Counters were installed in Scottsville (Monroe County), Mount Morris (Livingston County), and Cuba (Allegany County). No attempt was made to use this data to estimate weekly, monthly, or yearly trail traffic volume across the entire corridor.



*Map 1: 2021 Counter Locations*



# TRAIL USE BY LOCATION

The 2021 Who's on the Trail: Genesee Valley Greenway State Park report analyzes partial data measured over five months in Scottsville, Mount Morris, and Cuba.

TABLE 1 - 2021 USAGE AT GENESEE VALLEY GREENWAY STATE PARK COUNT LOCATIONS										
		Scottsville			Mount Morris			Cuba		
Month	Year	Total	Days	Avg	Total	Days	Avg	Total	Days	Avg
Jun	2021	2,264	20	113	619	22	28	894	22	41
Jul	2021	3,640	31	117	983	31	32	941	31	30
Aug	2021	2,794	31	90	604	31	19	702	31	23
Sep	2021	2,881	30	96	640	30	21	733	30	24
Oct	2021	2,390	26	92	561	25	22	600	25	24
<b>2021 Recorded</b>		13,969			3,407			3,870		
<b>2021 Annual Usage</b>		27,373			6,598			7,494		

*\*Annual use estimates based on NBPD factors*



*Credit: Suzy Allman*

# SCOTTSVILLE



Average of  
**101** visits by  
trail users per  
day in 2021



Peak use  
occurred in the  
month of **July**



Peak summer  
use on  
Sundays from  
11am to 12pm

The village of Scottsville, located in the town of Wheatland in Monroe County, was once home to the hunting grounds of the Seneca tribe of the Iroquois Nation. Situated along Oatka Creek, Scottsville is one of the oldest permanent settlements west of the Genesee River. Settlement began along the creek and started to flourish in the 1800s when its waterpower helped establish gristmills, woolen mills and sawmills. When the Genesee Valley Canal was completed in 1840 Scottsville served as a port on the canal where tolls were collected. While the Scottsville and Wheatland are no longer a hub for wheat production and the canal is no longer present, the area boasts one of the oldest Historic Districts in the nation and functions as a major gateway to Genesee Valley Greenway State Park.

In 2020, a resurfacing project was completed between U.S. Route 20 in Avon and Canawaugus Park in Scottsville, providing this 8-mile section of the trail with a new stone dust surface and other trail enhancements. In August 2021, Genesee Valley Greenway State Park announced plans for a second resurfacing project that, when complete, will provide a new stone dust surface along the existing greenway from Canawaugus Park in Scottsville north to Ballantyne Road in Rochester. The first part of this project started on September 16. While this section of trail will remain open during the winter, when the closure resumes in early spring, the trail will be cut off at this location from the primary nearby population center in Rochester, which may negatively impact trail use in Scottsville.

The data analyzed in this report reflects use between June 9, 2021 and October 25, 2021. The counter was located south of Canawaugus Park, south of the main trailhead and parking lot. Over the course of 139 days, the counter recorded 13,969 visits to the trail. This recorded use corresponds to an annual use of 27,373 visits to the trail. This was easily the highest recorded use of the three sites along the trail for this period of time. This counter was removed in October 2021.



**TABLE 2 – TRAIL USAGE BY MONTH,  
SCOTTSVILLE (MONROE COUNTY), JUNE– OCTOBER 2021**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Daily Average</b>
<b>June 2021</b>	2,264	20	113
<b>July 2021</b>	3,640	31	117
<b>August 2021</b>	2,794	31	90
<b>September 2021</b>	2,881	30	96
<b>October 2021</b>	2,390	26	92
<b>2021 Recorded</b>	13,969	138	101
<b>2021 Annual Use</b>	27,373	365	

During summer months (June to August), this location saw the most visitors on weekend days, with Sunday the busiest day of the week. Weekend use peaked from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and remained consistent throughout the day, tapering off between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. The consistent use throughout the day reflects the wide array of uses on the trail, from long-distance riders to those who stay closer to home. During the week, Wednesday was the most popular day, with Friday second. Weekday visitation saw a morning peak from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. and an evening peak from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., suggesting that this location attracts local residents primarily outside typical work hours.

Nearly 300 visits were recorded on Sunday, July 18, marking the highest recorded use during the full observation period. On this particular day, a five-mile hike was scheduled by the Genesee Valley Hiking Group, to begin at 9 a.m. at Canawaugus Park. In addition to high turnout for the scheduled hike, the weather may have influenced visitation. On Saturday July 17, high temperature was only 67 degrees, making it one of the coolest days that month, while the following day, temperatures were nearly 80 degrees, making it a more attractive alternative.

During the fall (September to October) the weekend remained the busiest time, with Saturday seeing the most visits. Weekend use peaked between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and slowly tapered off during the day, slowing to a trickle between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., slightly earlier than during the summer; reflecting shorter daylight periods. During the week, Monday saw the highest use, followed by Friday.



# MT. MORRIS



Credit: Suzy Allman



Average of **25** visits by trail users per day



Peak use occurred in the month of **July**



Peak fall use on Saturdays from 12pm to 1pm

**M**ount Morris, located in Livingston County, is at the northern entrance to Letchworth State Park. Incorporated in 1835, Mount Morris is named after Robert Morris, a financier of the American Revolution, and birthplace to Francis Bellamy, the author of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Genesee Valley Greenway State Park runs for two miles directly through the village, as part of a generally continuous, open 34-mile stretch of the trail from Chili in Monroe County to Sonyea in Livingston County. The counter is located on the southern end of a relatively new bridge crossing the Genesee River. The greenway is accessible by foot or vehicle, with convenient parking located off Mount Morris Road north of the bridge.

The data analyzed in this report reflects use between June 9, 2021 and October 25, 2021. The counter was located south of the Mount Morris Bridge. Over the course of 139 days, the counter recorded 3,407 visits to the trail. This recorded use corresponds to an annual use of 6,598 visits to the trail.

**TABLE 3 – TRAIL USAGE BY MONTH, MT. MORRIS (LIVINGSTON COUNTY), JUNE– OCTOBER 2021**

Month	Total	Days	Daily Average
June 2021	619	22	28
July 2021	983	31	32
August 2021	604	31	19
September 2021	640	30	21
October 2021	561	25	22
2021 Recorded	3,407	139	25
2021 Annual Use	6,598	365	



During summer months (June to August), this location saw the most visitors on Wednesdays, with peak use from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. During the weekend, Saturday use exceeded Sunday, with peak visitation across both days also occurring from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. By late June, mask mandates were lifted. However, the uncertainty and fear of a new strain may have made residents somewhat reluctant to resume all normal activities. It is possible that those working from home, or those getting prepared to return to an office setting after more than a year of working from home, took advantage of the flexible work week, opting to spend more time outdoors during the week. The relatively high mid-week use could also reflect high use by school-age children, who have more schedule flexibility during summer months.



On Monday, July 5, more than 200 visits were recorded, by far the most visitors on any given day during the full observation period. Because the Fourth of July holiday allowed for some flexibility, it is possible that visitors took the day off, or offices were closed, allowing users to take advantage of the time off to spend on the Greenway.

During the fall (September to October), this location saw the most visitors on the weekend; specifically, use peaked on Saturday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. By September, mask mandates had lifted for several months, with indoor activity and most establishments operating at full capacity and during normal business hours. The change in visitation suggests that more people returned to work or to school during this time period, limiting their flexibility during the week, and relegating trail use to weekend days. During the week Friday was the most popular day behind Monday.





# Cuba



Credit: Suzy Allman



Average of **44** visits by trail users per day



Peak use in **July**, with consistent use during all summer months



Peak use during the summer on Thursday from 6 to 7 p.m.

The village of Cuba, in Allegany County, is best known for cheese and dairy production. In 1871 the first cheese company in the region, Ackerly Sill & Co, was formed. The current Cuba Cheese Shoppe building served as a storage facility for Ackerly Sill & Co., with ice harvested from nearby Cuba Lake used as a means of refrigeration. The 1.5-mile section of Genesee Valley Greenway State Park in Cuba is located along the former canal path and railway corridor. Connections to the Prospect Street footbridge provide access to Empire City Farms, a major attraction more commonly referred to as the “Block Barn” where the Tsar of Russia once sent some of his mares to Cuba to be bred so that the famous McKinney strain could become part of his stable.

The data analyzed in this report reflects use between June 9, 2021 and October 25, 2021. The counter is located just west of the Griffin Creek bridge. Over the course of 139 days, the counter recorded 3,870 visits to the trail. This recorded use corresponds to an annual use of 7,494 visits to the trail.

**TABLE 4 – TRAIL USAGE BY MONTH, CUBA (ALLEGANY COUNTY), JUNE– OCTOBER 2021**

Month	Total	Days	Daily Average
June 2021	894	22	41
July 2021	941	31	30
August 2021	702	31	23
September 2021	733	30	24
October 2021	600	25	24
2021 Recorded	3,870	139	28
2021 Annual Use	7,494	365	

During summer months (June to August), the busiest days for visitors were mid-week- Wednesday and Thursday. Peak weekday use in Cuba occurred between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. During the weekend, Saturday use was higher than Sunday, with overall peak weekend visitation occurring from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Similar to Mount Morris, the circumstances of the pandemic, coupled with flexible work schedules may have impacted visitation during the week over the summer. In a smaller community like Cuba, it is possible that some establishments were still not operating at full capacity at this time; therefore, time off during the week was spent outdoors.

On Wednesday August 4, 121 visits were recorded, the most visitors recorded during the full observation period. During this week, the Village of Cuba hosted their final summer recreation program. From August 2 through August 6 the community held several outdoor events, including a bike rodeo. While the event was held in Chamberlain Park, roughly one mile from the greenway, it is possible that this week-long event encouraged additional use of the greenway.

During the fall (September to October), Saturday was the busiest day on the trail. Weekend use was later in the day during fall, with use peaking from 4 to 7 p.m. By September, mask mandates had been lifted for several months, with indoor activity and most establishments operating at full capacity and during normal business hours. The change in visitation suggests that more people returned to work during this time period, limiting their flexibility during the week, and taking advantage of the weekend to spend time outdoors.





# METHODOLOGY

PTNY’s electronic count process relies on the PYRO-Box counter manufactured by Eco-Counter, a French company that sells a range of pedestrian and bicycle counting products. The PYRO-Box counter is a simple grey plastic box that can be installed on a post or other vertical surface. The counter uses infrared pyroelectric technology to count the people passing within range of the sensor by detecting body temperature. Counters are installed for a minimum of one month, although PTNY prefers to install counters for one year or longer so as to use actual counts rather than samples of data to estimate full-year counts. To collect data from the counter, PTNY staff visits the counter or removes the counter to return it to the office. Using Bluetooth technology, the counter can be connected to a mobile phone application or a laptop program to sync the data.

Three counters (Scottsville, Mount Morris, Cuba) were installed in June 2021. The counter in Scottsville was removed in October, while the Mount Morris and Cuba counters remain in place.

## EXTRAPOLATION METHODOLOGY

Since 2010, PTNY and the NYSCC have used the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Project (NBPD) protocol and methodology to estimate full-year trail use based on a subset of observed data. The adjustment factors account for season, type of facility (multi-use path or high-density pedestrian and entertainment area), day of the week and month when the count was conducted, and type of climate. As NBPD methodology is used nationally for trail count studies, it allows the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park data to be compared with annual use estimates from trails across the country.

For all three sites, the observed use was extrapolated to calculate a full-year estimate for that site. The raw data was downloaded for the entirety of the time the counters were installed at each location. Data was downloaded at an hour-level granularity to ensure that it was available for hour-by-hour analysis as used above. The data was checked for any anomalies, and any data excluded that may have been downloaded from outside the period of time when the counter was installed. The data was then aggregated by day.

The NBPD extrapolation figures allow for the conversion of hourly, daily, or monthly count data into daily, weekly, or yearly figures, respectively. The instructions to the NBPD extrapolation spreadsheet, which is publicly available at [bikepeddocumentation.org](http://bikepeddocumentation.org), are based on the use of manual counts. The extrapolation spreadsheet calls for five input variables: count dates, count times, type (multi-use path or street/sidewalk), climate zone, and two-hour count volume. Count dates provide the spreadsheet with information on the day of week and month of the count, and count time provides the inputs on what times were observed. For this analysis, all counts use the “multi-use pathway” and “Long Winter-Short Summer” extrapolation factors.

Our analysis relies on “Table 3” of the NBPD formula. The NBPD structure is based on three tables. Table 3 adjusts the monthly estimate to an annual estimate, based on past observed use in each climate region. Each month of the year is estimated to be a set portion of total annual use (see figure). For PTNY’s analysis, an estimated 2021 total use figure was calculated based on the available data collected during 2021. To calculate this, a percentage of total annual use figure was calculated by summing the NBPD figure for months where full month data was available, and adding a portion of the NBPD monthly factor for months where only a part of the month had data available. The total observed use was divided by the percentage of annual use to obtain the total annual use figure.

MONTHLY ADJUSTMENT FACTORS	
CLIMATE REGION	Long Winter Short Summer
JAN	3%
FEB	3%
MAR	7%
APR	11%
MAY	11%
JUN	12%
JUL	13%
AUG	14%
SEP	11%
OCT	6%
NOV	6%
DEC	3%

# CONCLUSION

The 2021 Who's on the Trail: Genesee Valley Greenway report is the first report to comprehensively analyze use on the Genesee Valley Greenway. Data collected will serve as a baseline for future efforts and could help justify current and future levels of support for the greenway, encourage local involvement in its enhancement and promotion, and provides a base from which to evaluate the impact of the trail on local economies of the towns, villages, cities, and counties that it connects. While the findings of this report appear to indicate that trail use is relatively consistent across the length of the trail, the data is insufficient for estimating total trail use over the 90-mile corridor, as additional count sites will be needed in future years to confirm the consistency of observed data. However, the data reflects that the Greenway is used on a regular basis and functions as a valued community asset, with potential for additional use.

The 2022 Who's on the Trail: Genesee Valley Greenway report will include additional data gathered from Mount Morris and Cuba, and there will be additional locations at which data is also gathered. We hope to find new ways to engage with volunteers to complete in-person trail counts, which rely more heavily on projections, but can provide valuable data on the demographics of trail users and the uses they undertake while visiting trails. As we gain additional insight into the nature of trail use, we will be better able to estimate total trail-wide use, and will be better positioned to respond to the needs of our growing trail network.



*Credit: Suzy Allman*