Performing Trail User Counts

May 23, 2023, 12 PM
Zoom

PARKS & TRAILS
NEW YORK

Agenda

I. Introductions

II. *Who's on the Trail* - History of trail count program

III. Why we count trail use

IV. Counting trail use - when, where and how

V. Questions?

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

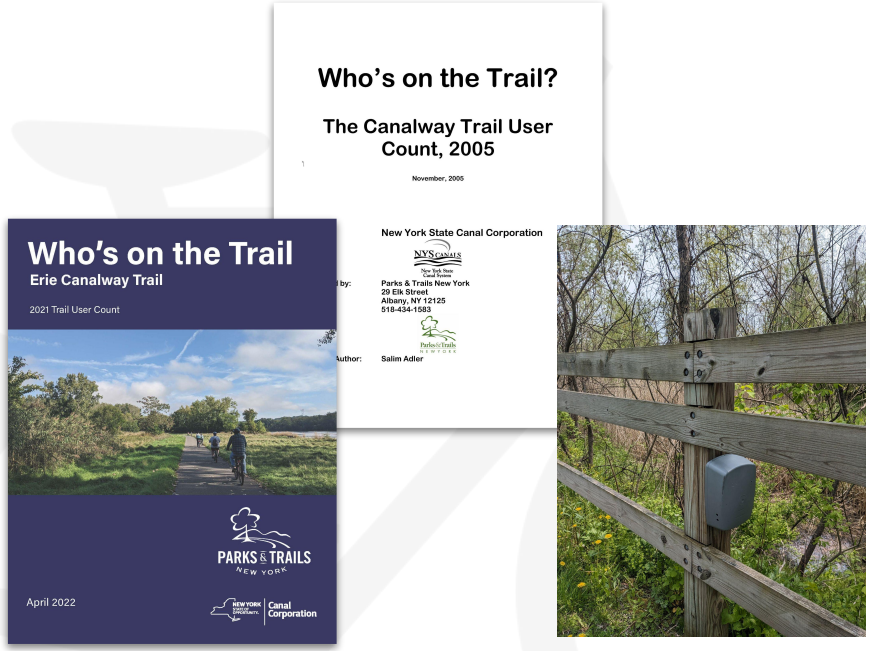
Parks & Trails New York: 35 Years of Advocacy

The state's leading advocate for parks and trails, working since 1985 to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces for use and enjoyment by all.

PARKS & TRAILS
NEW YORK

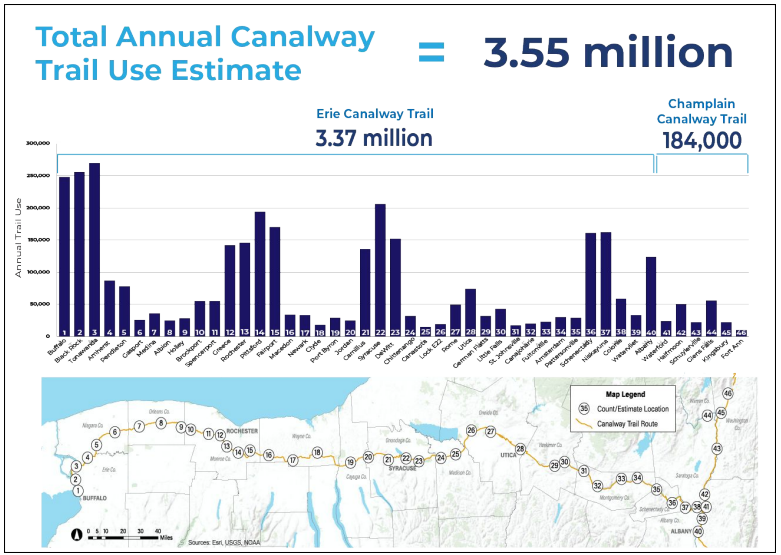
Who's on the Trail Reports

- **2005** - First *Who's on the Trail* report
- **2014** - First electronic counters deployed
- **2019** - *Who's on the Trail* includes total trail use estimate



PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Who's on the Trail Reports



PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

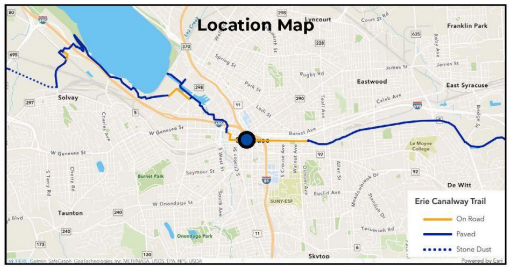
Who's on the Trail Reports

Syracuse

Erie Canal Museum

8/17/22, 8/20/22, 8/24/22, 8/27/22

Volunteers counted trail users in front of the Erie Canal Museum in downtown Syracuse, one of the larger urban centers along the canal. Through this section, a sidewalk serves as the Erie Canalway Trail for pedestrians, while cyclists must ride in the road. This likely accounts for the high ratio of pedestrians to cyclists.



Estimated Annual Use

165,256

10% bicyclists

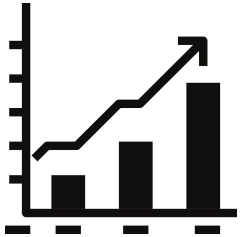
88% pedestrians

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

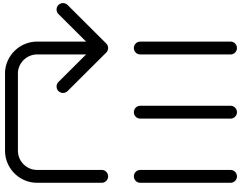
Why Count Trail Use

Funding

Demonstrate value



Track performance



Prioritize projects

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

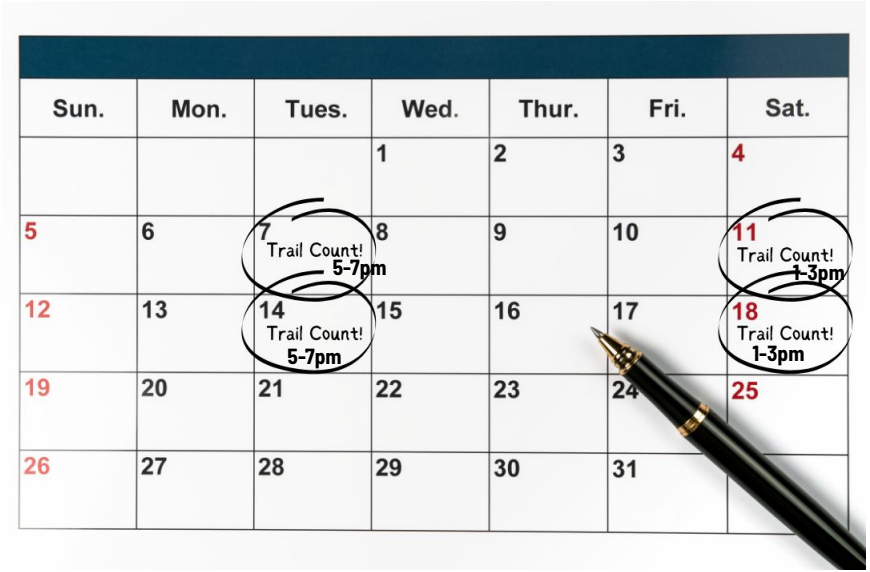
Trail Count Procedure

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Dates & Times

- At each site, four separate 2-hour counts should be conducted
  - Count at least **two weekdays** (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) and **two weekend days.**
- Conduct the count at the **same time on the same days** for each location (so two Tuesdays and two Saturdays, not a Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday), two weeks in a row.
- Count trail users for **2 hours**
  - Choose a time that you think the trail is busiest

Example Trail Count Schedule



PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Choosing a Location

Two types of count locations:

- Trail count at a new location
  - Choose a site about 20-50 feet in from a trailhead, so you will catch people who are using the trail and won't be distracted by activity from the nearby trailhead
  - Can choose an on-road location
  - Avoid parks/high traffic areas
- Verification at an installed electronic trail counter
  - Locate at the counter– it's ok if you're not 20-50 feet away from a trailhead

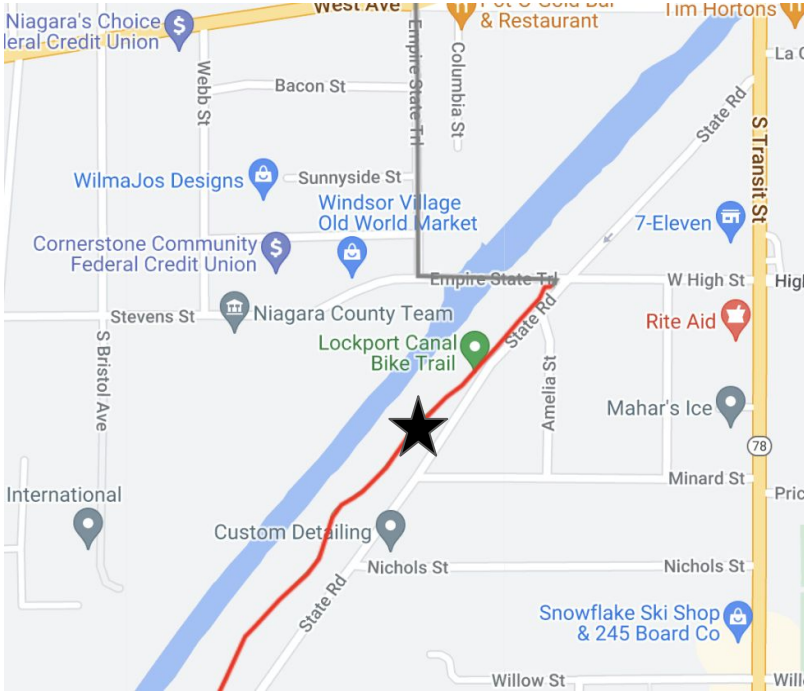
Note: Each Trail Town should aim to conduct counts at three locations: one as a verification count at the electronic counter, and two at independent locations determined by the steering committee.

Example of an electronic trail counter in Medina, NY

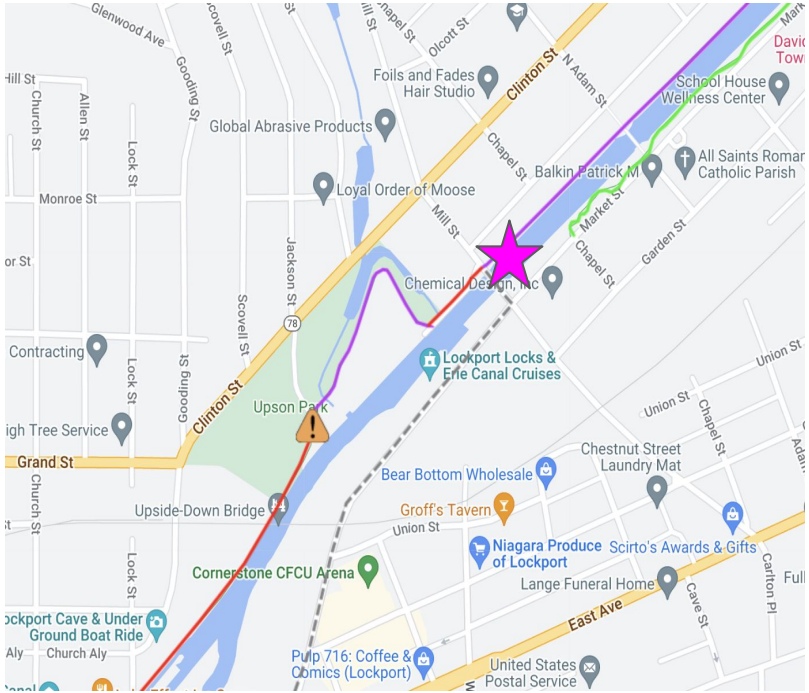
PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Suggested Locations: Lockport

New location

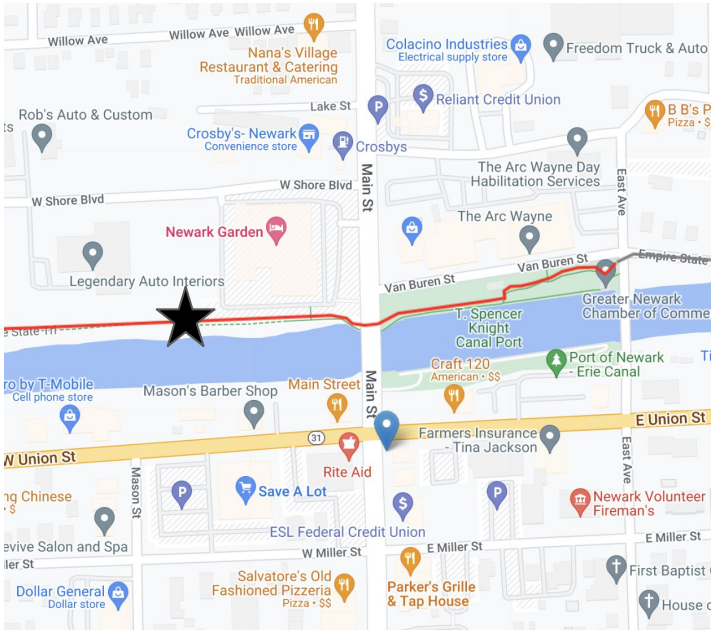


Verification count at electronic counter

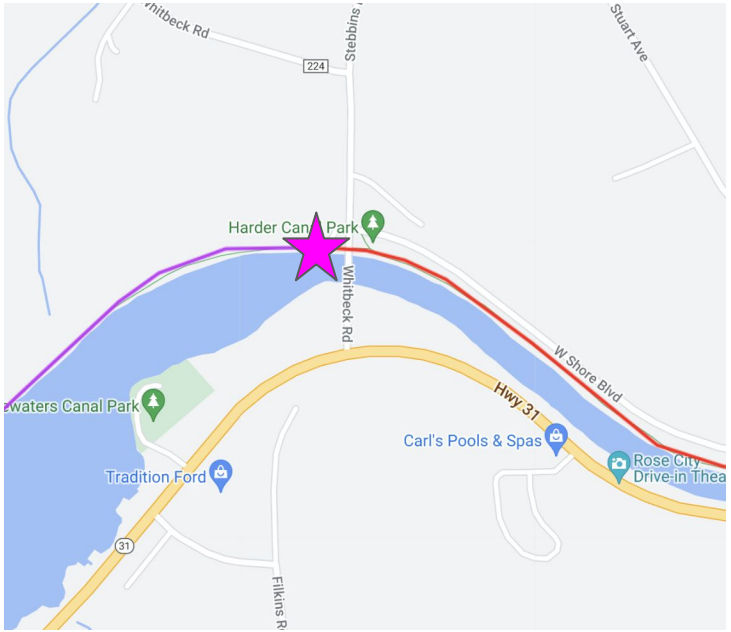


Suggested Locations: Newark

New location



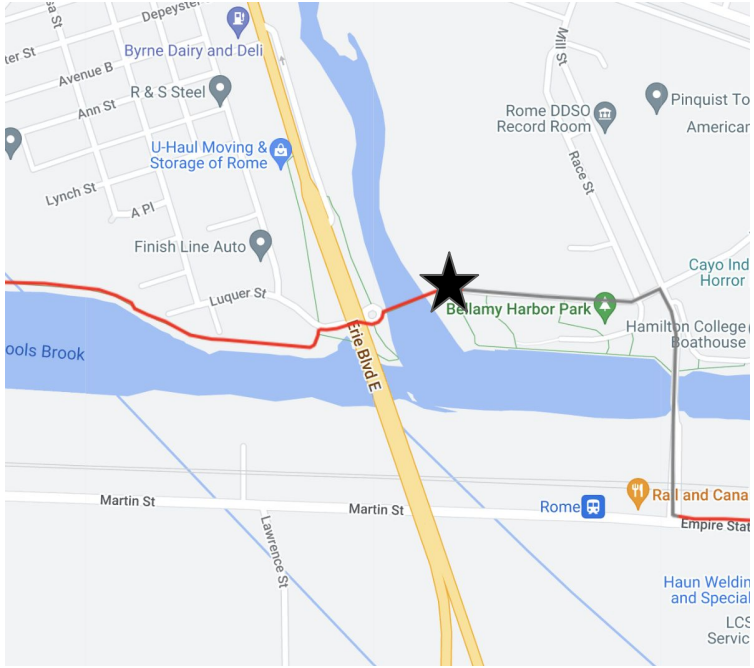
Verification count at electronic counter



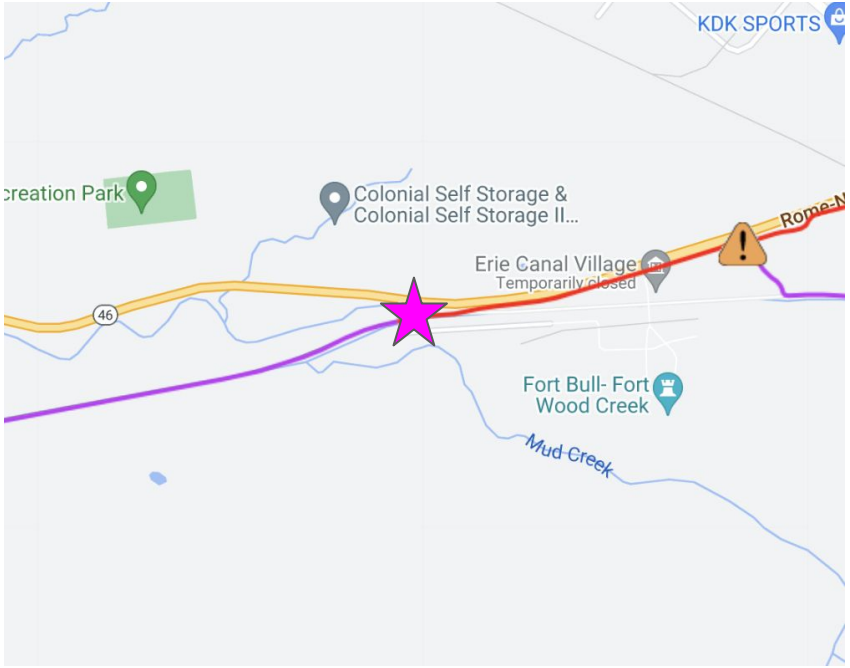
Suggested Locations: Rome

New location

Notes: May be good to hold off on this location until the electronic counter that Rome has ordered is installed. Other locations discussed included by the train station, near the Oriskany trailhead, and by Fort Stanwix. There are many good options.



Verification count at electronic counter



Conducting Counts

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Canal Corporation

Who's on the Trail?
Canalway Trail User Count – 2023

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Surveyor Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

Date: _____ **Time conducted:** _____ to_____. **Location:** _____ **Town/Village:** _____ **GPS Coordinates:** _____

Trail surface: asphalt stone dust natural sidewalk/roadway **Weather Conditions**: sunny partly cloudy cloudy partly rainy rain **Approximate temperature:** _____

Notes: Please take a picture each time you count!

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

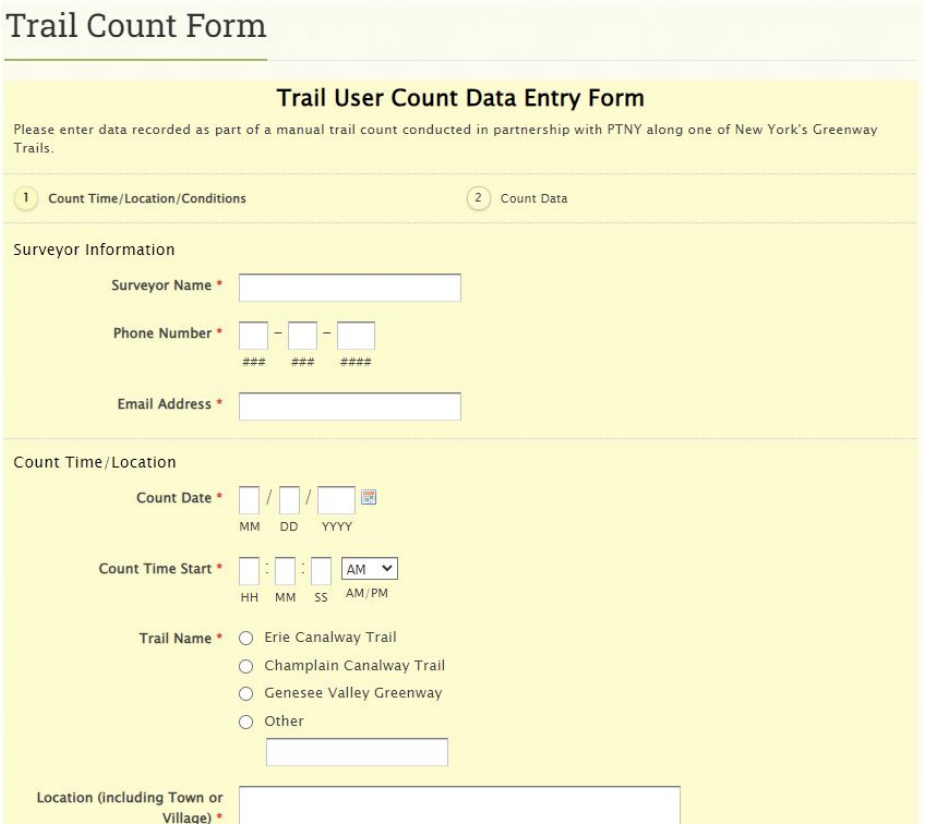
Conducting Counts

User Type	Counts		
Bicyclists (traditional or e-bikes)			
Human passenger in bike seat / trailer One tic for each person			
Tandem cyclists One tic for each person			
Recumbent cyclists			
Tricyclists			
Hand-powered cyclists			
Pedestrians Includes those pushing strollers or walking dogs as well as runners/joggers			
In-line/roller skaters		Electric/Razor Scooter	Note: this was changed to Electric scooters/Electric one-wheels
Passenger in Baby carriages/Strollers		Wheelchair users	
Equestrians		Other specify	

Submitting Data

1. Use web form at www.ptny.org/countform
2. Take photo or scan form and email to me at trails@ptny.org
3. By mail - send to:

   Parks & Trails New York
   33 Elk Street
   Albany, NY 12207



Questions?

Erica Schneider
eschneider@ptny.org

Dylan Carey
dcarey@ptny.org

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK