

# Who's on the Trail?

## The Canalway Trail User Count, 2005

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November, 2005

**Client:** New York State Canal Corporation



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## **Introduction**

The Trail user count survey was conducted in order to provide information on the number and types of trail users at several different locations in Monroe County. This area was selected because of its diverse rural, suburban and urban characteristics. The findings can be used to help establish strategies for trail and support facility development.

## **Acknowledgments**

Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation are grateful for excellent job done and the time and effort put in by the volunteers who went out on the trail to do the user counts. Additionally several members of the Board of Directors of the Canalway Trails Association of New York helped organize the volunteers and did some of the counts themselves. We thank all those involved.

## **Methodology**

### Introduction

This trail user count is designed to be a simple count of various categories of trail users. The count was conducted on Saturdays during the month of August 2005 along the Canalway Trail in western New York State. Volunteers, recruited by Parks & Trails New York through the directors of Canalway Trails Association of New York, did the actual on-location counts. The volunteers were given a pre-printed counting form with questions about the location and categories of trail users.

### Locations

The locations were chosen by Parks & Trails New York after consultation with staff at the New York State Canal Corporation. The locations were selected in order to obtain information on a mix of high, moderate and low trail use. Some of the exact locations were chosen by the volunteers in the field for ease of counting.

### Counting Form

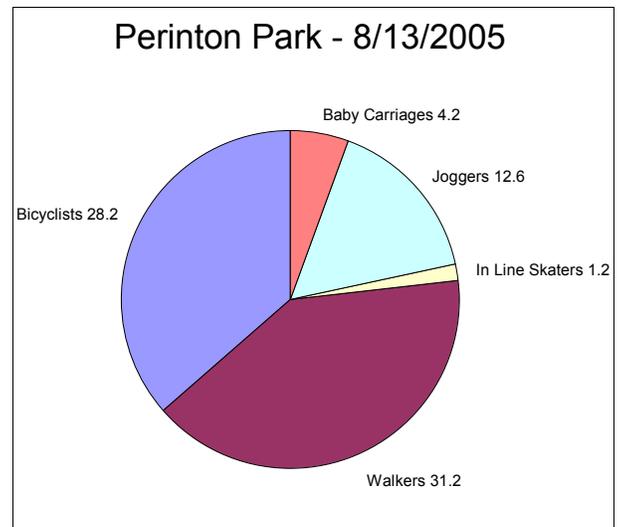
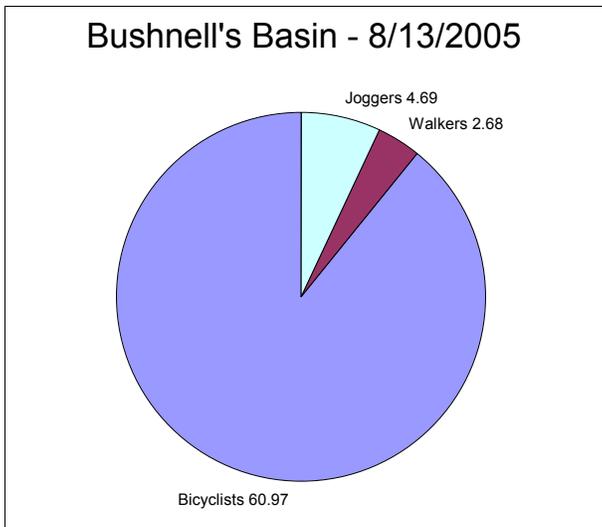
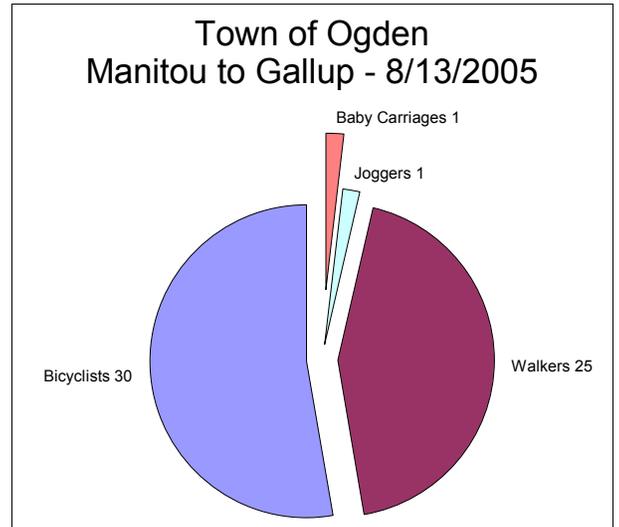
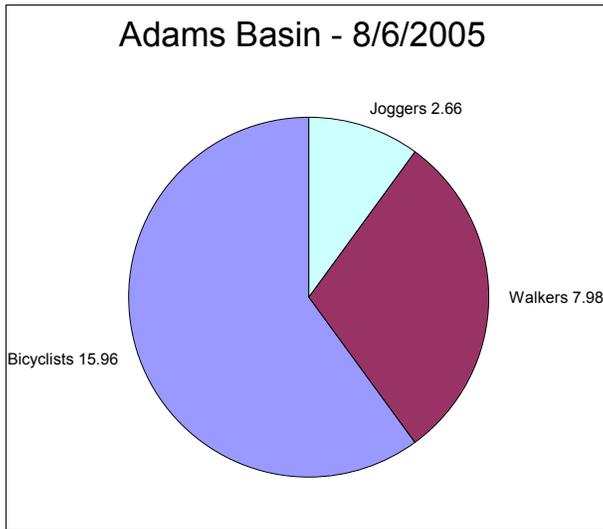
The volunteers doing the on-site counting were given standardized forms to use. This form is included in this report as Appendix I. The form includes areas for noting the date, time location and weather at the time of counting. The completed forms are included in this report as Appendix II.

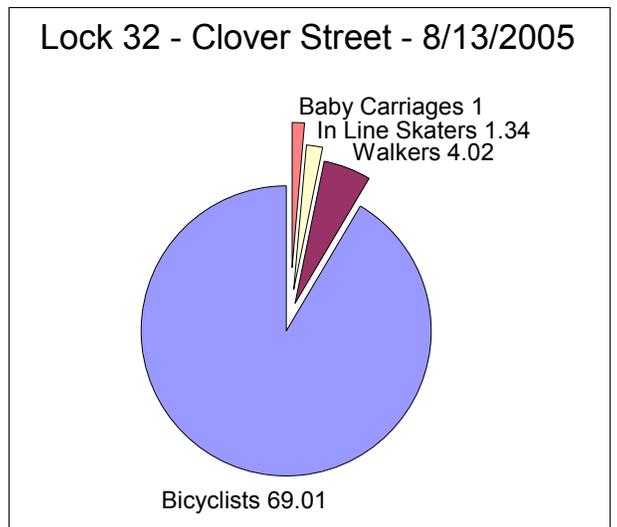
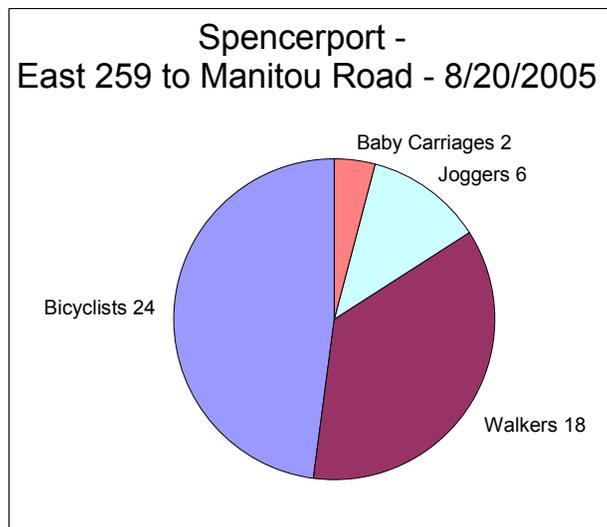
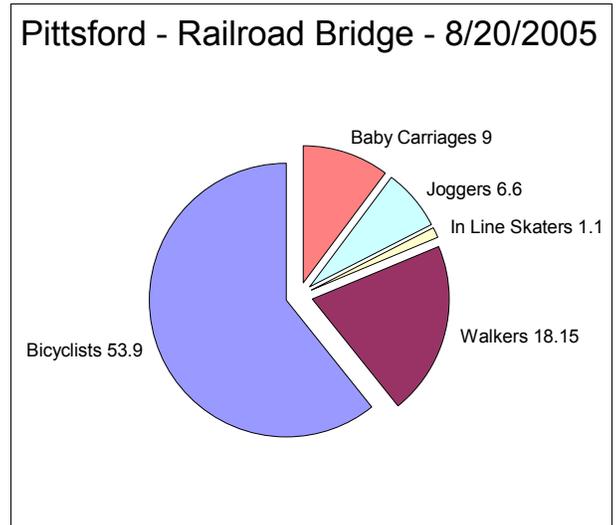
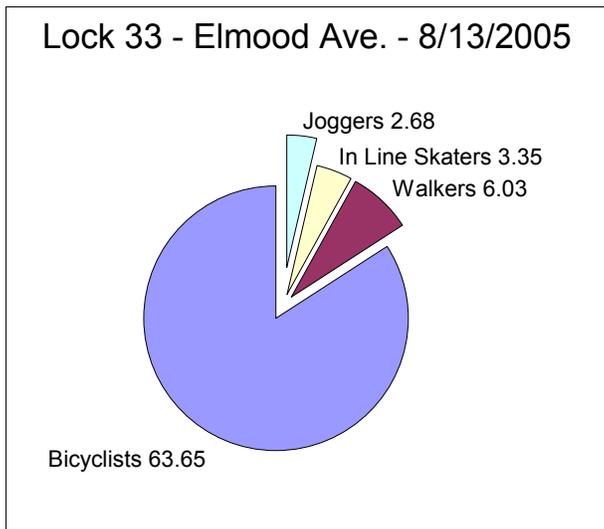
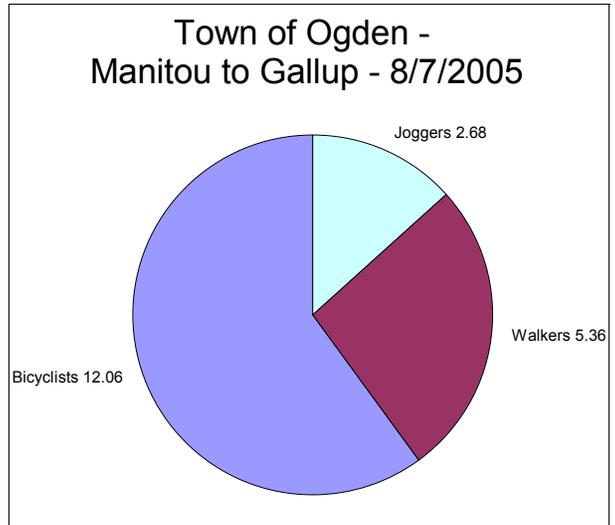
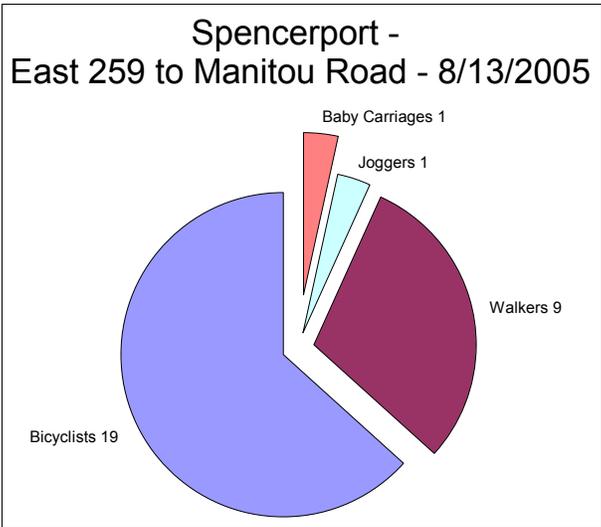
### Data Collected

The data indicate how many users in each category were on the trail at the time and date given. A simple mathematical reconciliation of these numbers to account for differences in the amount of time spent at each location is done in the results section. These results are then analyzed to determine the percentages and averages of these numbers and then presented in the pie charts in the results section. Trail user categories were Bicyclists, Walkers, Joggers, Baby Carriages and Horses.

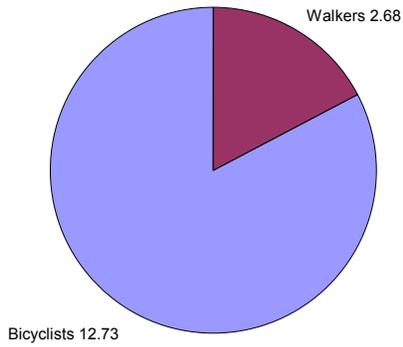
**Results**

**Charts of results** – The charts below have been standardized to one hour time blocks. For example, if a volunteer counted for 90 minutes at one location and counted 100 bicyclists then the number of minutes was reduced to 60 minutes or 66%. Therefore, the bicyclists counted is reduced to 66% of the raw count which in this example would be 66 bicyclists. The approximate times were 10-11 AM. The numbers have not been rounded off in the charts and zero counts have not been listed.

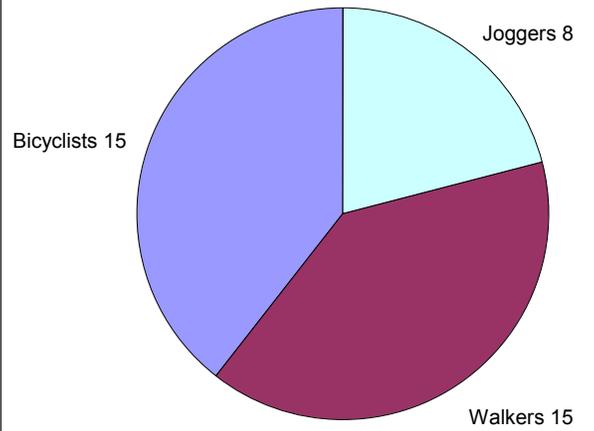




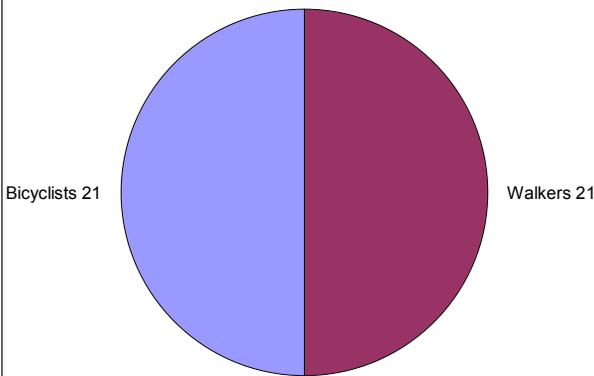
Town of Ogden -  
Washington to Gallup - 8/20/2005



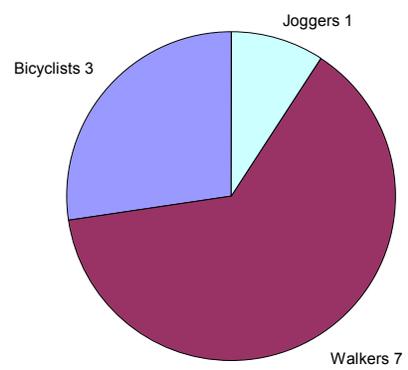
Greece - Henpeck Park - 8/20/2005



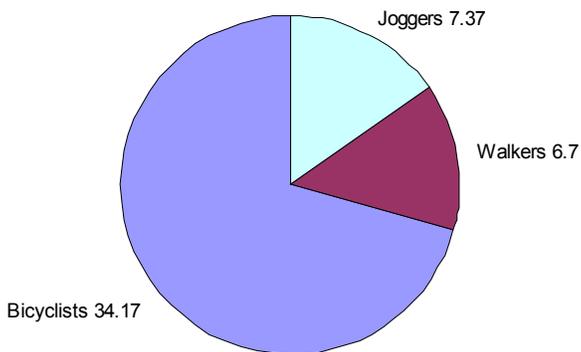
Brockport - North Main Street -  
8/20/2005



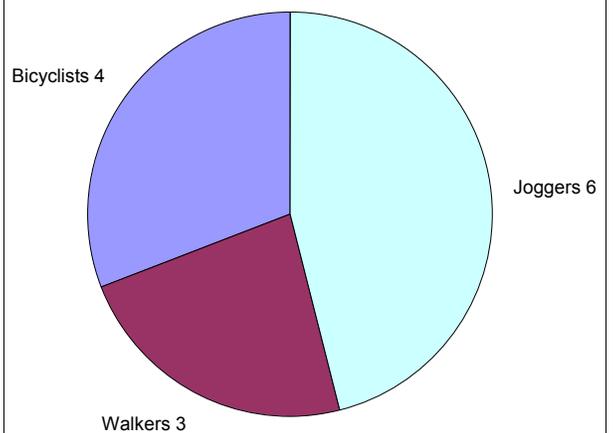
Adams Basin - 8/20/2005



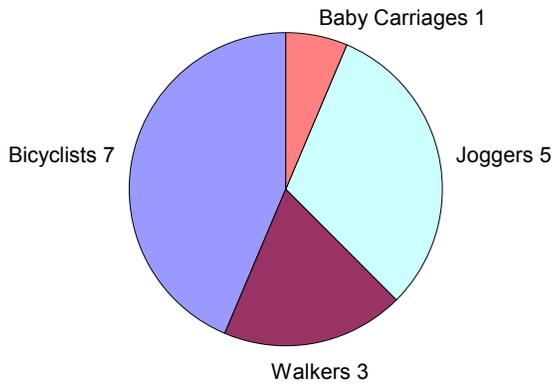
Rochester -  
East side of Genesee Valley Park at  
Moore Drive - 8/27/2005



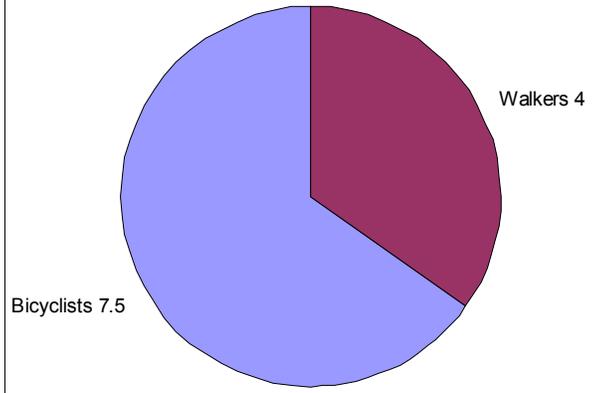
Adams Basin - 8/27/2005



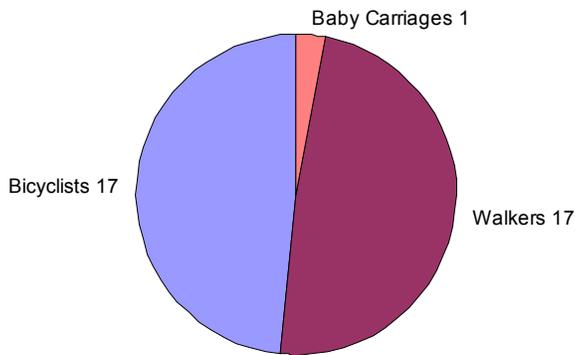
Town of Ogden -  
Washington to Gallup - 8/26/2005



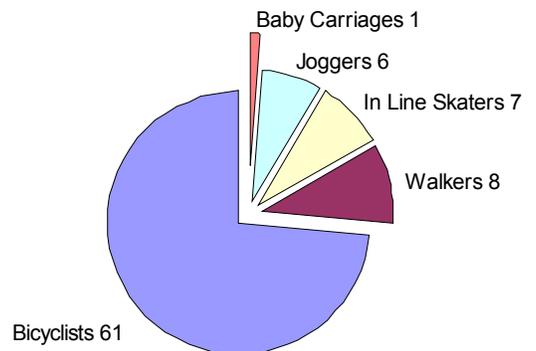
Gates - Between Long Pond Road  
and Lyell Ave - 8/27/2005



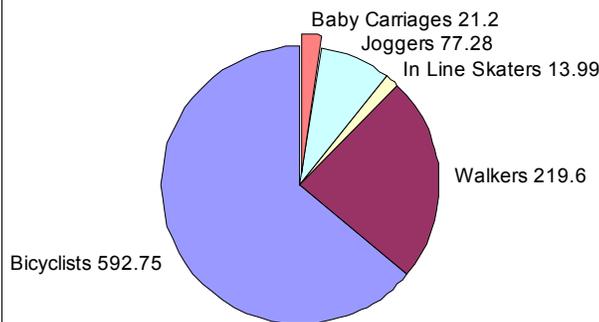
Brockport - North Main Street -  
8/27/2005



Brighton - Lock 33 - 8/27/2005



Totals



When these reconciled numbers are converted to percentages the following results are obtained given here as percentages:

Trail User Category	Percentage of Total
Bicyclists	64%
Walkers	24%
In Line Skaters	2%
Joggers	8%
Horses	0%
Baby Carriages	2%

And the hourly average is listed below:

Trail User Category	Average Users per hour counted
Bicyclists	27
Walkers	10
In Line Skaters	1
Joggers	4
Horses	0
Baby Carriages	1

It is important to remember that these are averages. Several of the locations that were close to park entrances or in paved urban areas resulted in almost equal numbers of bicyclists and walkers. However the total of these two categories are always the majority of users.

## Analysis

The findings in this report show that use during peak hours (approximately 11AM to 12 Noon) on higher use Canalway Trail segments such as the Village of Pittsford and Clover Street (Lock 32) exceeds 100 users per hour. Lesser used segments such as Adams Basin and Spencerport are around 20 users per hour. Well over half of the users are bicyclists and as much as 88% are either bicyclists or walkers. The numbers of in-line skaters and to some extent, carriage strollers, may be impacted by trail surface type.

It is likely that the majority of bicyclists are day users, traveling the trail to reach local destinations or for day use recreation. There was no attempt to interview bicyclists to determine where they were coming from or where they were going. Nor was there any distinction made in the count, as to long distance or local bicyclists. But the high numbers of cyclists on the trail at all locations, as a percentage of all users and on a per-hour basis, would justify recommending facilities that are bicycle friendly to the developers of the trail and to the counties, towns and villages on the trail.

## Next Steps

### Future Surveys

It is recommended that future trail counts should include information on the trail surface at the location being counted. This could be done by simply adding a trail surface question on the form. This information could be useful in analyzing the various uses in a trail segment.

It is also recommended that future trail counts include surveys of a sampling of the walkers and bicyclists to determine the nature of their trail use. Questions such as point of origin and destination, number of days out on the trail or frequency of use, among others would be of use to trail planners and localities. An even more detailed survey could be design which would also ask the users about what other activities they enjoy on the trail or what retail establishments, restaurants, ice cream shops or lodging they use while on the trail.

### Automatic Counters

It would be more accurate and efficient to do some future counts over a long term basis, covering not only more locations but longer time periods of counting that volunteers might not be willing to do. In this case a systematized count using automatic counting instruments would be advised. This method would provide information on total use, average use, peak hours, and types of usage on a much larger scale.

Appendix I Trail Count User Form

**Who's on the Trail?  
The Canalway Trail User Count – August 2005**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** (please indicate the town or village you are in and any additional information about where exactly you did the survey, for instance “at the intersection with Long Pond Road”):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Weather Conditions:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Count** (For each type of use make one “tic mark” for each person passing by in either direction engaged in that activity. Every 5<sup>th</sup> user in each type can be indicated by crossing the 4 marks before it, ie , this will make it easier to total the user numbers.)

<b>User Type</b>	<b>Tics</b>
Bicyclists	
Walkers	
In Line Skaters	
Joggers	
Horses	
Baby Carriages/Strollers	

**Please return the form(s) to:**

Salim Adler  
Parks & Trails New York  
29 Elk Street  
Albany, NY 12207

Appendix II Completed Forms