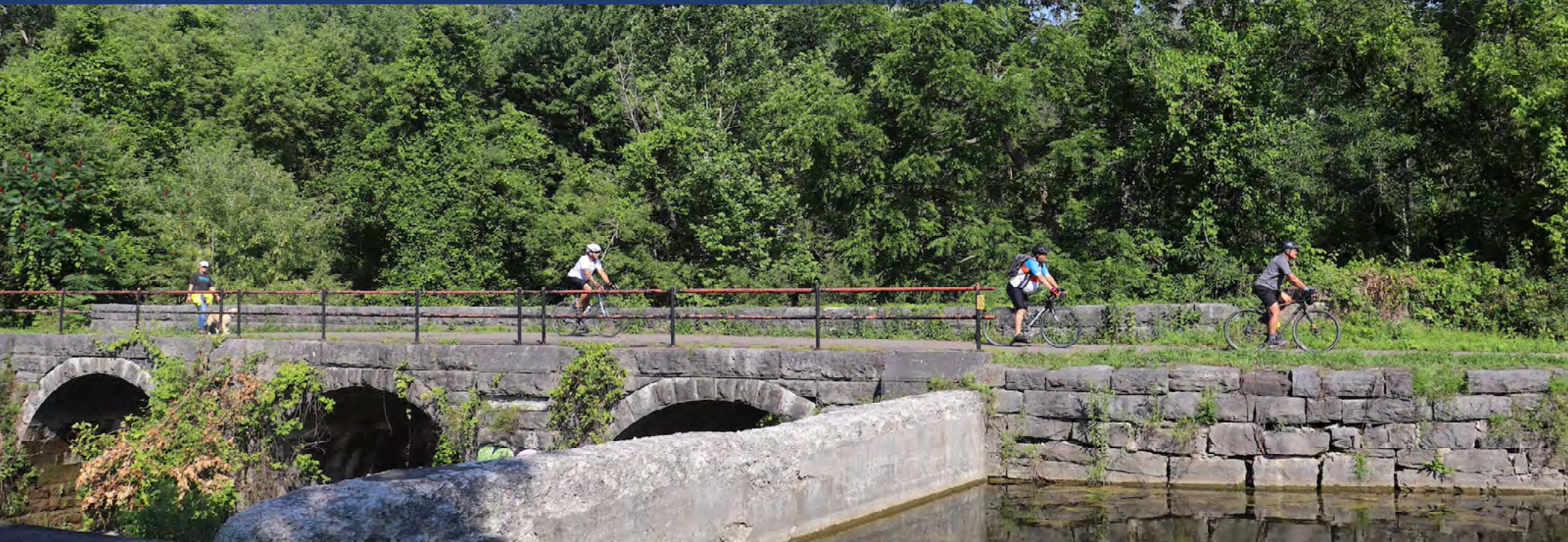


Who's on the Trail

Erie & Champlain Canalway Trails



2023 Trail Count Report

Published April 2024





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Introduction

The Canalway Trail system is one of New York State's premier outdoor destinations. The trail gives New Yorkers in more than 200 communities a dedicated place to walk, jog, and bike right from their doorsteps as well as drawing visitors from around the world. In 2020, the Canalway Trail was incorporated into New York's flagship Empire State Trail, part of a 750-mile trail network stretching from New York City north to the Canadian border and from Albany west to Buffalo.

Since 2005, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the New York State Canal Corporation (NYSCC) have monitored and measured the trail's popularity by conducting annual Canalway Trail counts. The count process utilizes electronic trail counters installed at selected locations. The counters use infrared pyroelectric technology to count people passing within range of the sensor by detecting body temperature.

In 2023, PTNY counted trail use at fifteen locations along the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails. These counts were augmented by manual counts conducted by volunteers at eight discrete locations within four communities along the Erie Canalway Trail. Additional electronic counts were also performed by three partners. The Genesee Transportation Council counted visitation at six locations and the City of Rome counted visitation at one location along the Erie Canalway Trail, with the Hudson River Valley Greenway counting trail use at one location on the Champlain Canalway Trail.

The counts analyzed in this Who's on the Trail report provide a snapshot of the immense popularity of the Canalway Trail. PTNY estimates that the Canalway Trail system receives roughly 3.947 million visits per year, including 3.835 million visits to the Erie Canalway Trail and 112,000 visits to the Champlain Canalway Trail. These estimates are based on longitudinal count data from electronic counters installed at 33 locations along the trail over the past five years.

Thanks to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, supporting data collected from 2023's Canalway Challenge finishers is also included to provide additional context to the numerical count data. Challenge finishers include those that complete mileage goals ranging from 1 mile to the full 360-mile trail. Data on Canalway Challenge participants provides information about the demographic composition of trail users as well as trip characteristics. These details provide insights about where visitors are coming from, what types of sites and overnight accommodations are being visited, and how these trail users are impacting the local economies of trailside communities.

Data documenting the popularity of the Canalway Trail system has underscored the significant value of millions of dollars in public investment for maintenance and construction across the state over the past two decades and is helping to guide future investments to optimize utilization and impact.

*Note: Additional information on the process used to gather data and standards used to estimate full-year trail use can be found in the companion to this report, *Who's on the Trail: Methodology*, and full data recorded at count locations can be downloaded from PTNY's website at www.ptny.org/trailcounts.*

2023 Counts Overview

Electronic counters recorded trail usage at fourteen locations along the Erie Canalway Trail and at two locations along the Champlain Canalway Trail during 2023. At four locations – Medina, Brockport, Pittsford and Kingsbury - counters were installed at different times in 2022 and remained installed into May 2023, when they were removed. Counters were installed at seven new locations in summer 2023 – Lockport, Newark, Jordan, Rome, Utica, Fort Plain, and Jordan. In fall 2023, the NYS Canal Corporation purchased five additional counters. These five counters were installed in October 2023 at four locations – Medina, Albion, Greece, Ilion, and Schuylerville. Eleven counters remain installed into 2024, with the exception being the counter in Jordan, which was removed in early 2024 due to malfunctioning equipment.

2023 Trail Count Locations Map



Trail Count Summary & Profiles

Data on the following pages summarizes trail use recorded at each of the count sites for 2023, including data available from 2022 where appropriate. Each page provides contextual information on timeframe, duration, and location of counter installation. The location maps show trail surface type (solid blue is paved, dashed blue is stone dust, and orange is on road), and provide additional geographic context for each location.

Count profiles show estimated annual and monthly uses, as well as daily average use by month and daily average use during summer (June 21st through September 20th). Estimated annual use was calculated using National Bicycle and Pedestrian Demonstration Project extrapolation criteria (see our accompanying [Who's on the Trail: Methodology](#) report for more information on how extrapolation calculations are conducted).

Due to the limited duration for which they were installed, data from four locations at which counters were installed in fall 2023—Albion, Greece, Ilion, and Schuylerville—is not shown in the table below as full-year extrapolations could not be confidently calculated. Profiles of these locations, however, are included in the following pages. More information on these count locations—and all locations that remain installed into 2024—will be included in 2025's report summarizing 2024 trail use.

2023 Trail Use Summary

Electronic Count Locations	Days Installed	Total Observed Use	Average Use by Day	Estimated Annual Use	Summer			Fall/Winter/Spring		
					Daily average	Weekday average	Weekend average	Daily average	Weekday average	Weekend average
Lockport (May-December 2023)	230	27,157	118	38,420	165	136	229	47	46	50
Medina (July 2022-May 2023, October-December 2023)	374	23,552	63	27,094	159	158	161	31	29	36
Brockport ((May 2022-May 2023)	350	46,767	134	49,341	237	221	275	66	60	79
Pittsford (May 2022-May 2023)	352	159,267	452	167,040	751	647	994	255	229	309
Newark (May-December 2023)	235	28,427	121	39,074	157	147	179	65	64	65
Jordan (May-December 2023)	233	13,656	59	18,824	77	69	96	28	25	34
Rome - Old Erie Canal SHP (May-December 2023)	236	10,368	44	14,227	61	60	62	18	17	19
Rome - Martin Street (July-December 2023)	174	7,212	41	14,778	64	68	55	21	25	14
Utica (May-December 2023)	236	24,276	103	33,287	127	130	120	66	77	42
Fort Plain (May-December 2023)	236	20,532	87	28,175	117	115	122	40	42	36
Albany (August-December 2023)	145	53,053	366	145,161	543	464	726	264	230	335
Kingsbury (June 2022-May 2023)	337	19,526	58	21,643	88	77	114	40	37	47

Lockport

Niagara County

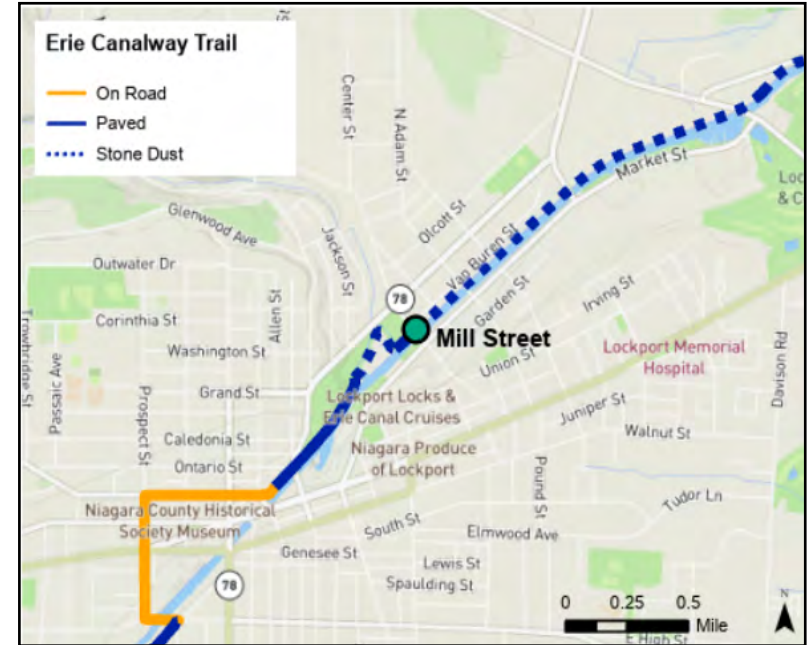
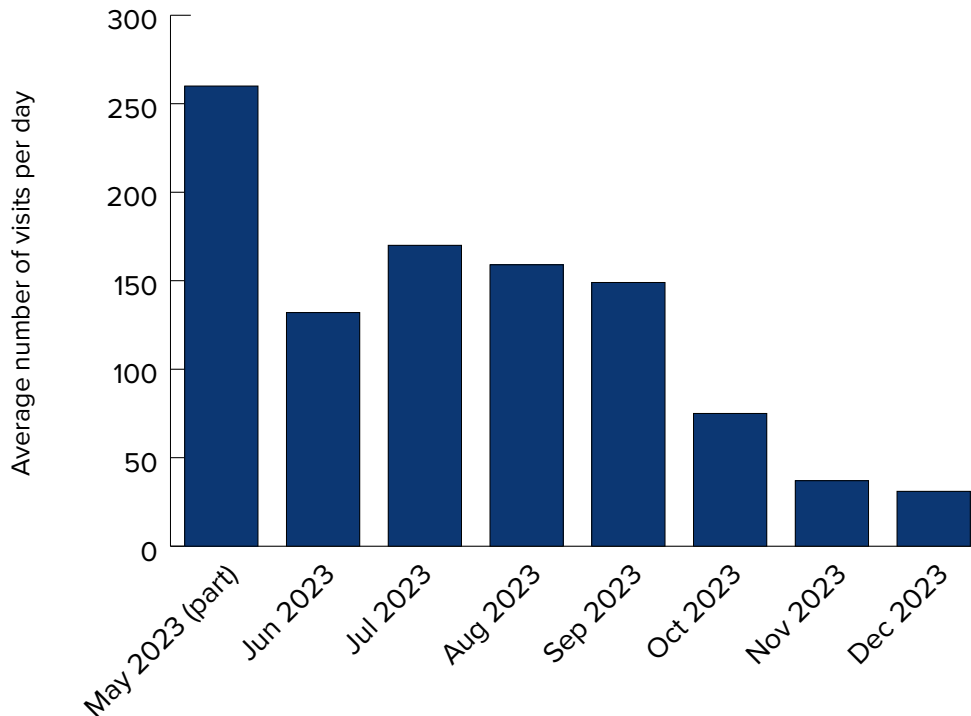
Installed May 16, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed just east of the Mill Street trail crossing on the east side of Lockport as part of the 2023 Empire State Trail Town program. This stone dust surface section of trail is proximate to the west end of a 90-mile continuous stretch of off-road trail running from Lockport east past Rochester to Buffalo which features few, minor on-road segments.

Estimated
Annual Use
38,420

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
165

Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2023 (part)	4,158	260
June 2023	3,962	132
July 2023	5,277	170
August 2023	4,928	159
September 2023	4,466	149
October 2023	2,312	75
November 2023	1,102	37
December 2023	952	31
Recorded	27,157	118
Estimated Annual Use	38,420	105

Medina

Orleans County

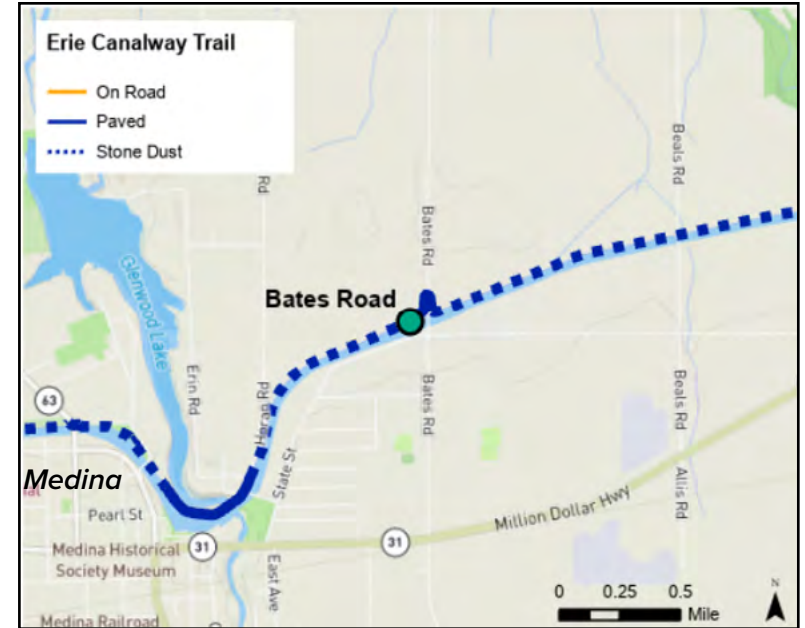
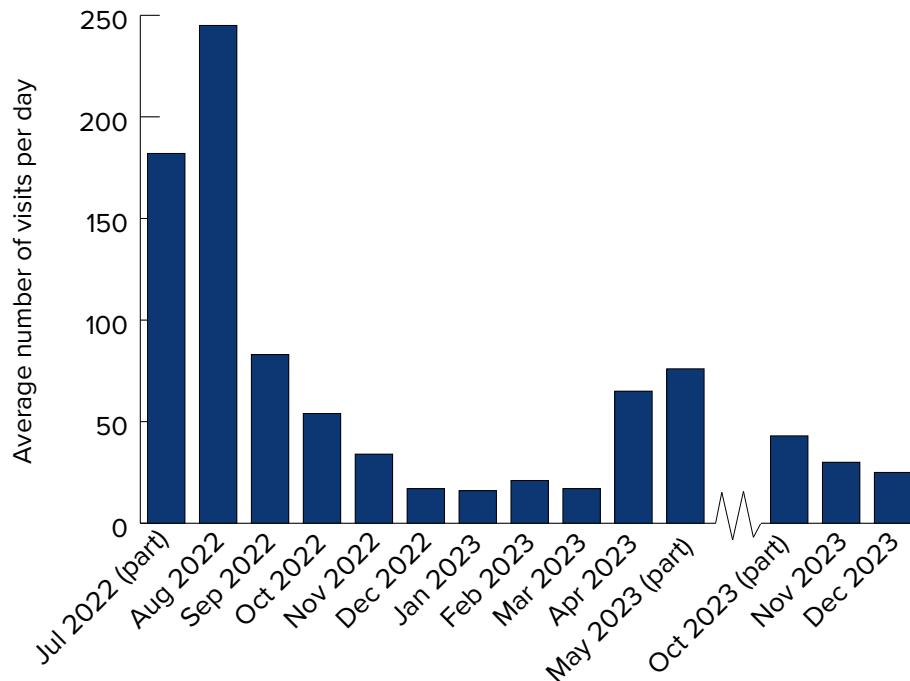
Installed July 11, 2022 - May 11, 2023 and October 24, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed to the east of the Medina Aqueduct and Medina's downtown, directly to the west of Bates Road. This trail section is primarily stone dust surface. The surrounding area is rural, with the village located about halfway between the urban centers of Buffalo and Rochester.

Estimated
Annual Use
27,094

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
159

Daily Average Use by Month (July 2022-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
July 2022 (part)	3,821	182
August 2022	7,603	245
September 2022	2,504	83
October 2022	1,660	54
November 2022	1,020	34
December 2022	538	17
January 2023	504	16
February 2023	578	21
March 2023	527	17
April 2023	1,936	65
May 2023 (part)	839	76
October 2023 (part)	347	43
November 2023	905	30
December 2023	770	25
Recorded	23,552	63
Estimated Annual Use	27,094	74

Albion

Orleans County

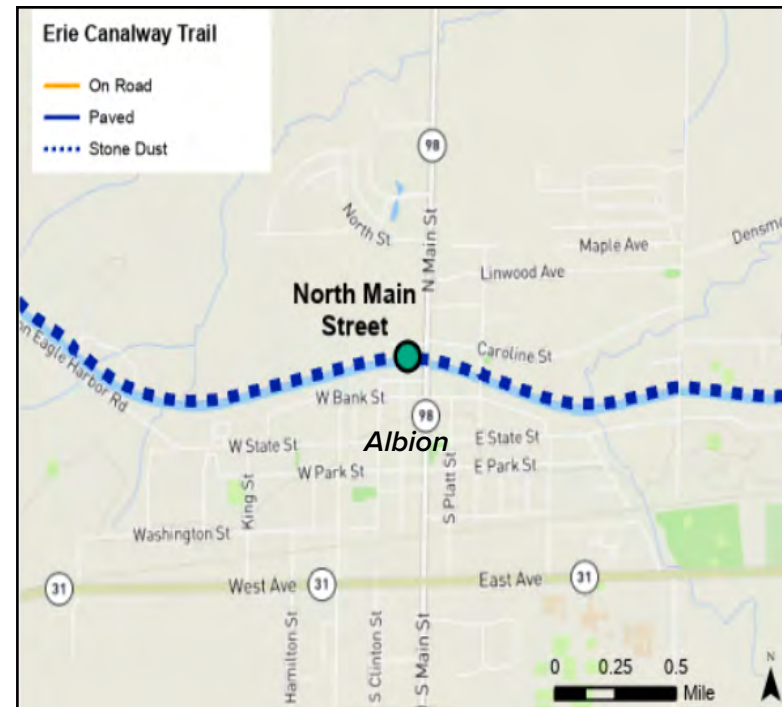
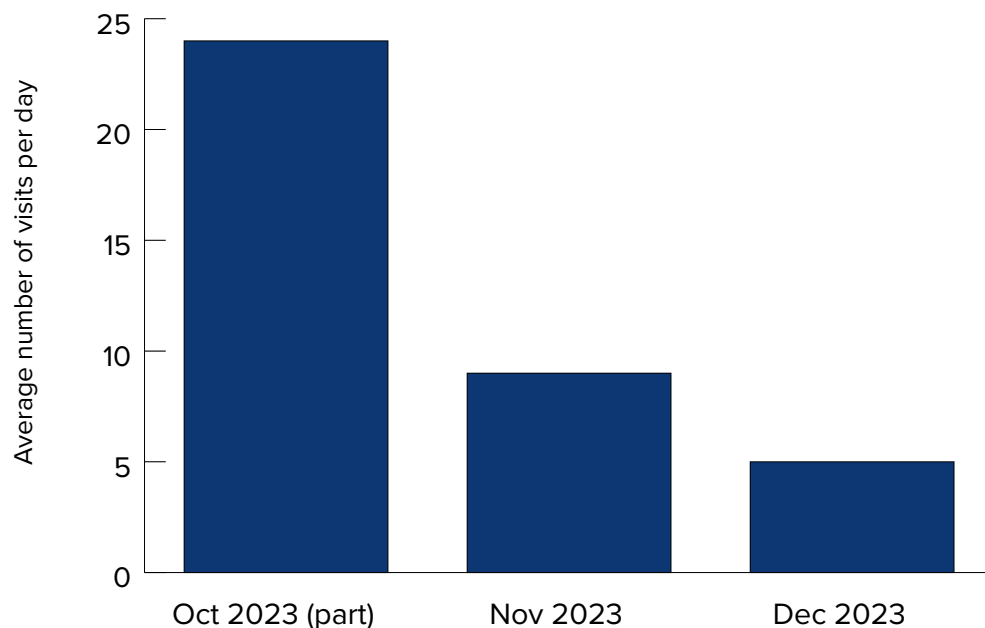
Installed October 24, 2023 to December 31, 2023

The counter was installed just west of Main Street. East of this point, the Main Street Lift Bridge (closed for reconstruction in 2023) crosses the canal. The trail surface through this section is primarily stone dust. The surrounding area is rural, with the village located about halfway between the urban centers of Buffalo and Rochester. The counter was installed in this location in October 2023, so sufficient data has not yet been gathered to accurately estimate full-year trail use.

Estimated
Annual Use
6,012

Daily Average Use
9

Daily Average Use by Month
(October 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
October 2023 (part)	194	24
November 2023	274	9
December 2023	168	5
Recorded	636	9
Estimated Annual Use	6,012	16

Brockport

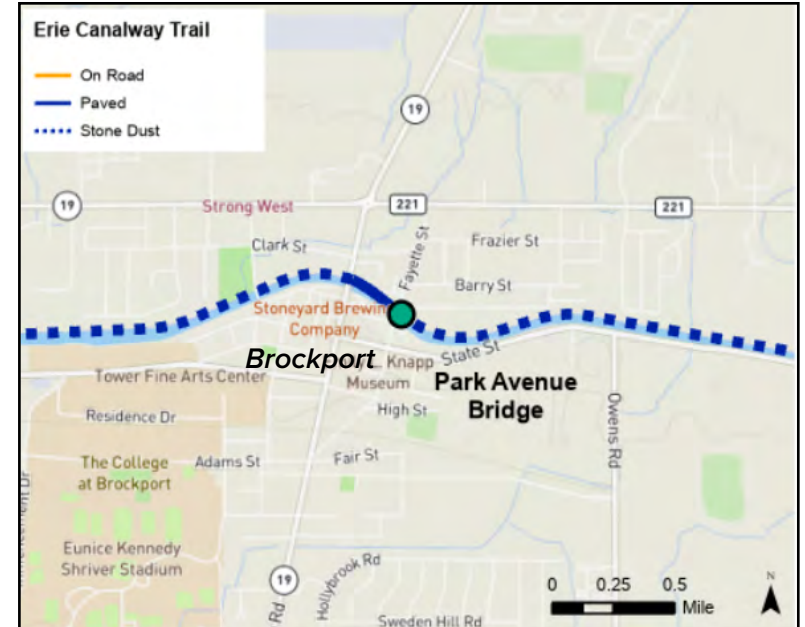
Monroe County

Installed May 25, 2022 - May 9, 2023

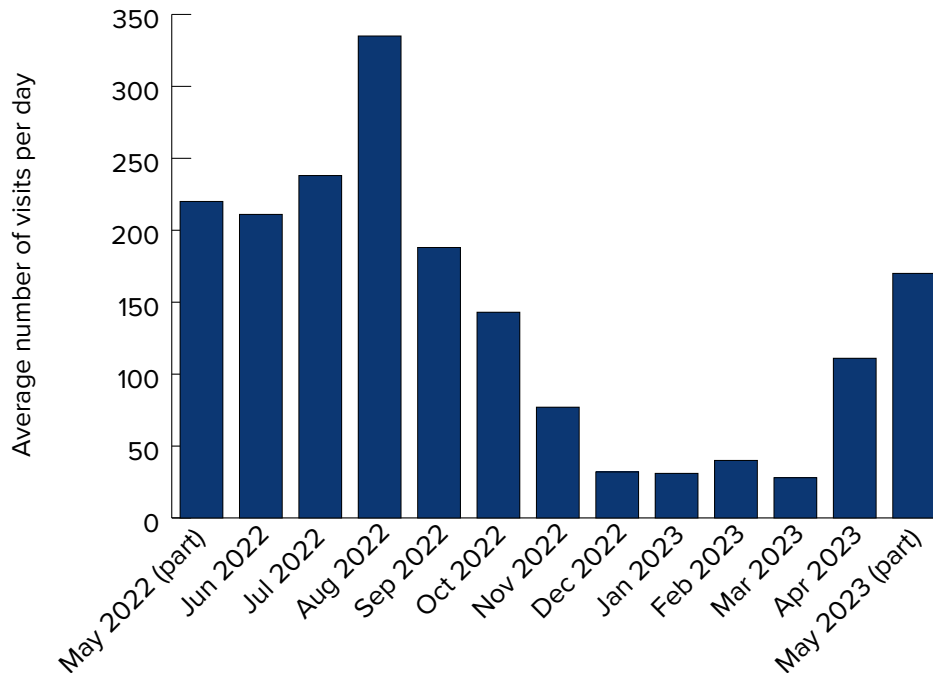
The counter was installed just east of the Park Avenue Lift Bridge as part of the Empire State Trail Town program in 2022. With the closure of Brockport's Main Street Lift Bridge in 2023 for reconstruction, the Park Avenue Bridge became one of the primary connections between the trail and Brockport's business district. The surface of the trail is mostly stone dust through the entire section save a short, paved segment to the west of the installed counter, between Park Avenue and Main Street.

Estimated
Annual Use
49,341

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
237



**Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2022-May 2023)**



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2022 (part)	1,539	220
June 2022	6,320	211
July 2022	7,363	238
August 2022	10,386	335
September 2022	5,635	188
October 2022	4,426	143
November 2022	2,308	77
December 2022	980	32
January 2023	967	31
February 2023	1,107	40
March 2023	878	28
April 2023	3,328	111
May 2023 (part)	1,530	170
Recorded	46,767	134
Estimated Annual Use	49,341	135

Greece

Monroe County

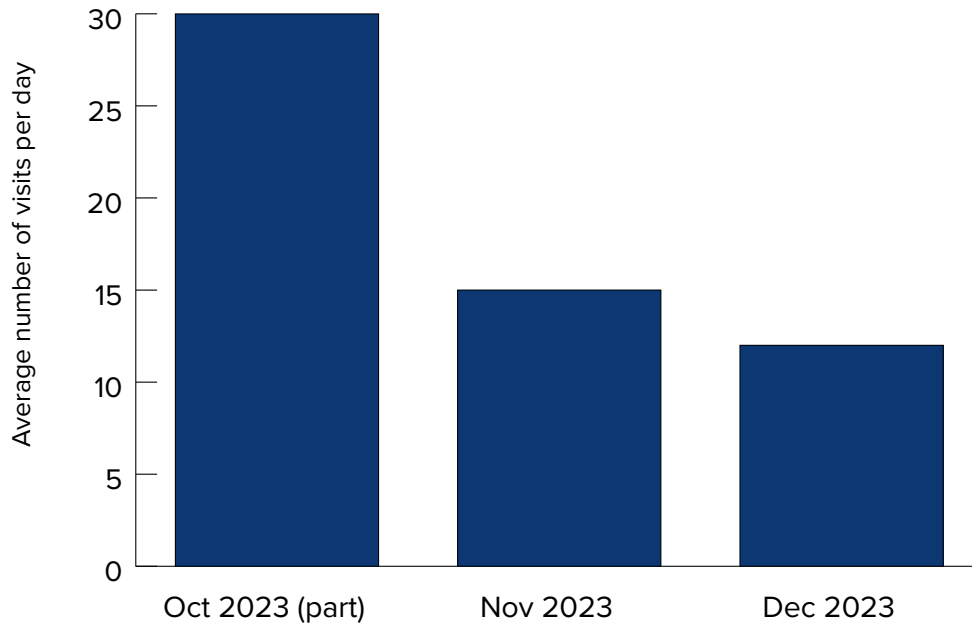
Installed October 24, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed on one of the approach ramps leading from the trail on the canal's south side to Long Pond Road, which carries the trail over the canal to the north side where it continues to the west. The trail in this section is paved from Long Pond Road east into the city of Rochester. As there are two usable approaches from the trail to Long Pond Road, the counter is likely only capturing a portion of total trail users at this location. The counter was installed in this location in October 2023, so sufficient data has not yet been gathered to accurately estimate full-year trail use.

Estimated
Annual Use
9,753

Daily Average Use
16

**Daily Average Use by Month
(October 2023-December 2023)**



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
October 2023 (part)	242	30
November 2023	456	15
December 2023	380	12
Recorded	1,078	16
Estimated Annual Use	9,753	27

Pittsford

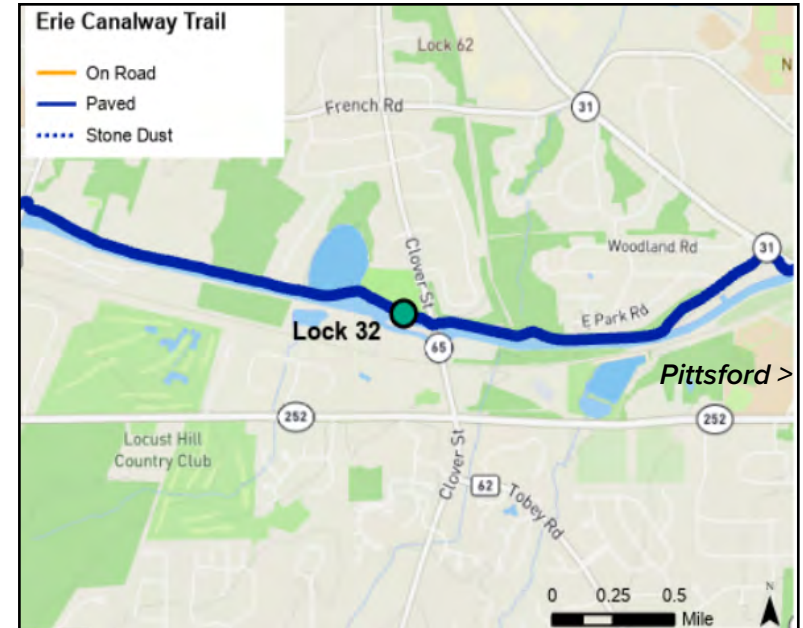
Monroe County

Installed May 25, 2022 - May 11, 2023

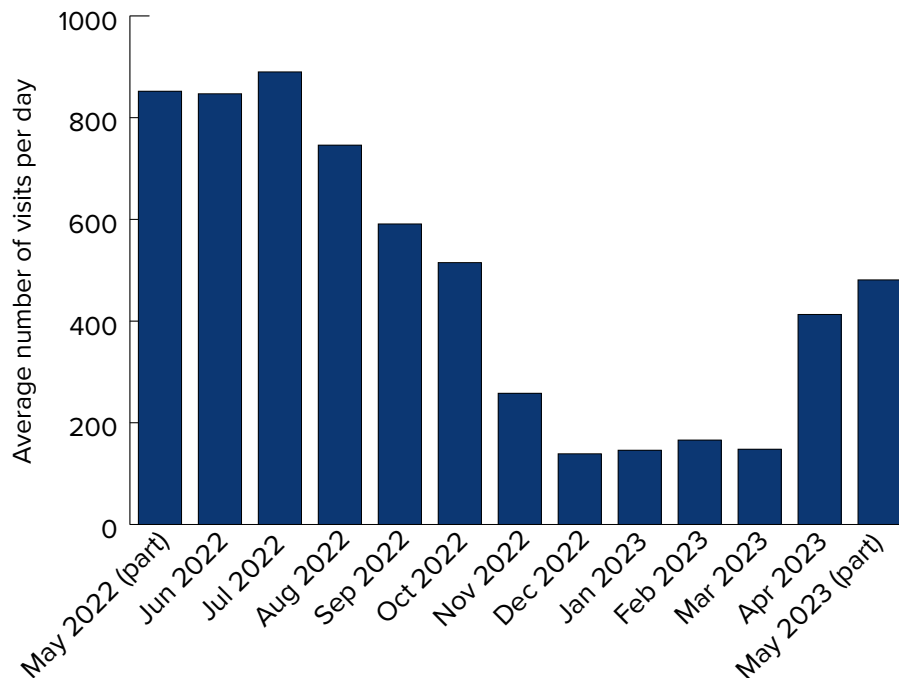
The counter was installed at Lock 32, west of the village of Pittsford. The surface through this section is paved. The trail is easily accessed by the large population of Rochester and its surrounding suburbs.

Estimated
Annual Use
167,040

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
751



**Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2022-May 2023)**



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2022 (part)	5,964	852
June 2022	25,412	847
July 2022	27,601	890
August 2022	23,134	746
September 2022	17,737	591
October 2022	15,960	515
November 2022	7,745	258
December 2022	4,295	139
January 2023	4,520	146
February 2023	4,650	166
March 2023	4,578	148
April 2023	12,380	413
May 2023 (part)	5,291	481
Recorded	159,267	452
Estimated Annual Use	167,040	458

Newark

Wayne County

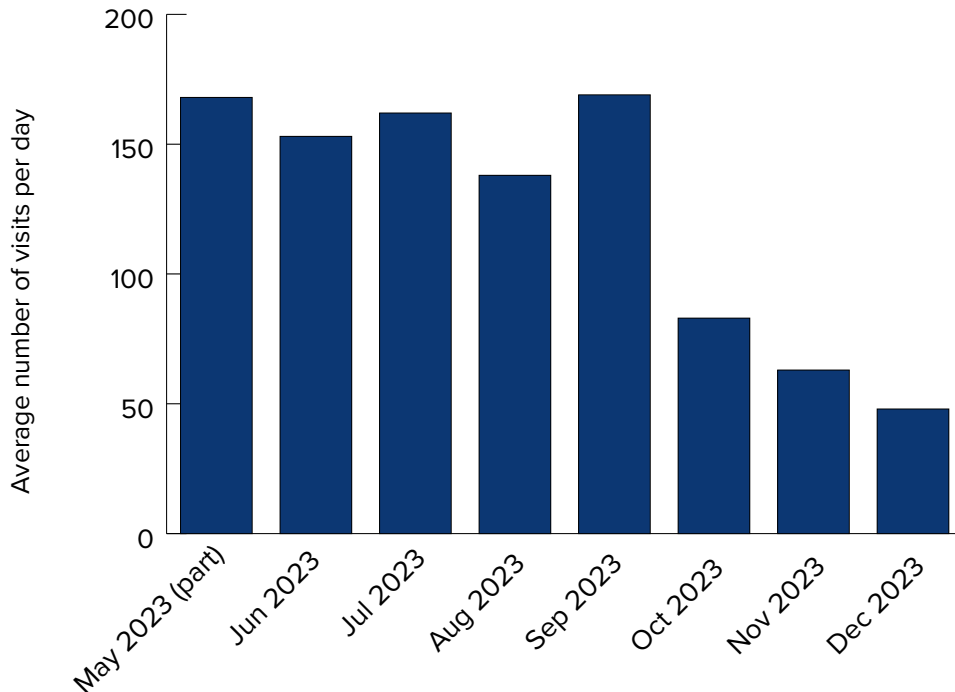
Installed May 11, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed west of Newark in Harder Canal Park as part of the 2023 Empire State Trail Town program. The specific location is under the bridge carrying Whitbeck Road over the Canal. The trail section is paved from Harder Canal Park east into Newark, and is stone dust west to Palmyra towards Rochester.

Estimated
Annual Use
39,074

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
157

Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2023-September 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2023 (part)	3,522	168
June 2023	4,591	153
July 2023	5,037	162
August 2023	4,272	138
September 2023	5,071	169
October 2023	2,572	83
November 2023	1,883	63
December 2023	1,479	48
Recorded	28,427	121
Estimated Annual Use	39,074	107

Jordan

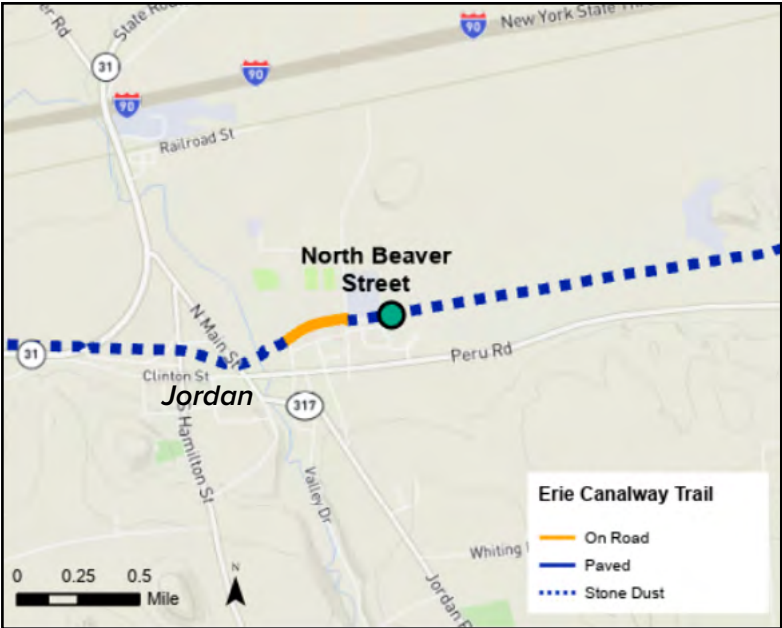
Onondaga County

Installed May 10, 2023 - December 28, 2023

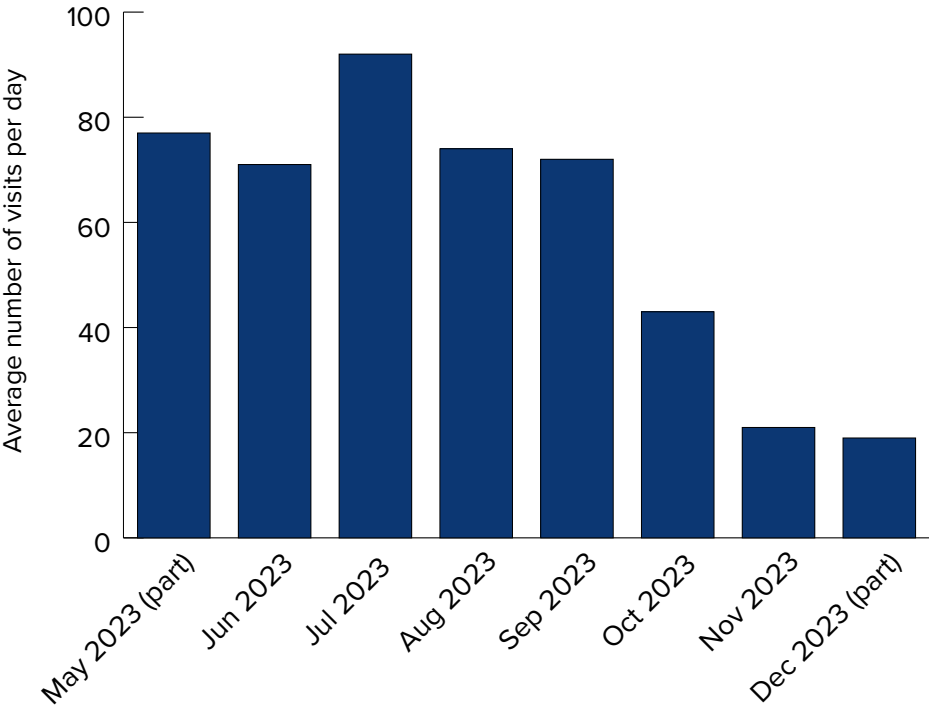
The counter was installed just east of the trailhead off North Beaver Street in the village of Jordan. The trail surface is stone dust through this section. The village of Jordan is a small community, with the closest large population center being Syracuse, about 20 miles away to the east.

Estimated
Annual Use
18,824

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
77



Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2023-December 2023)



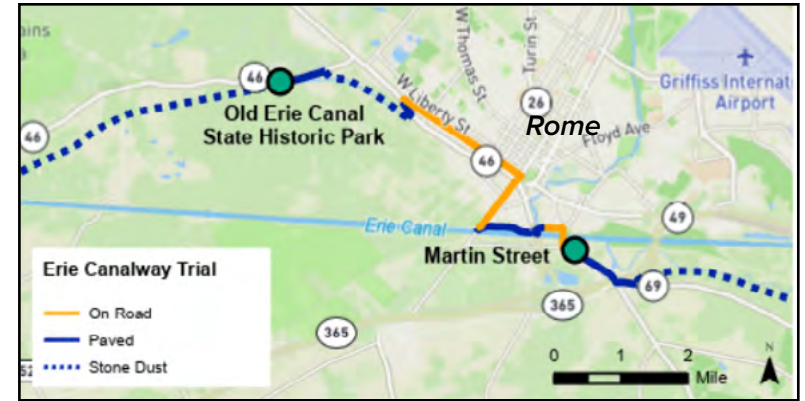
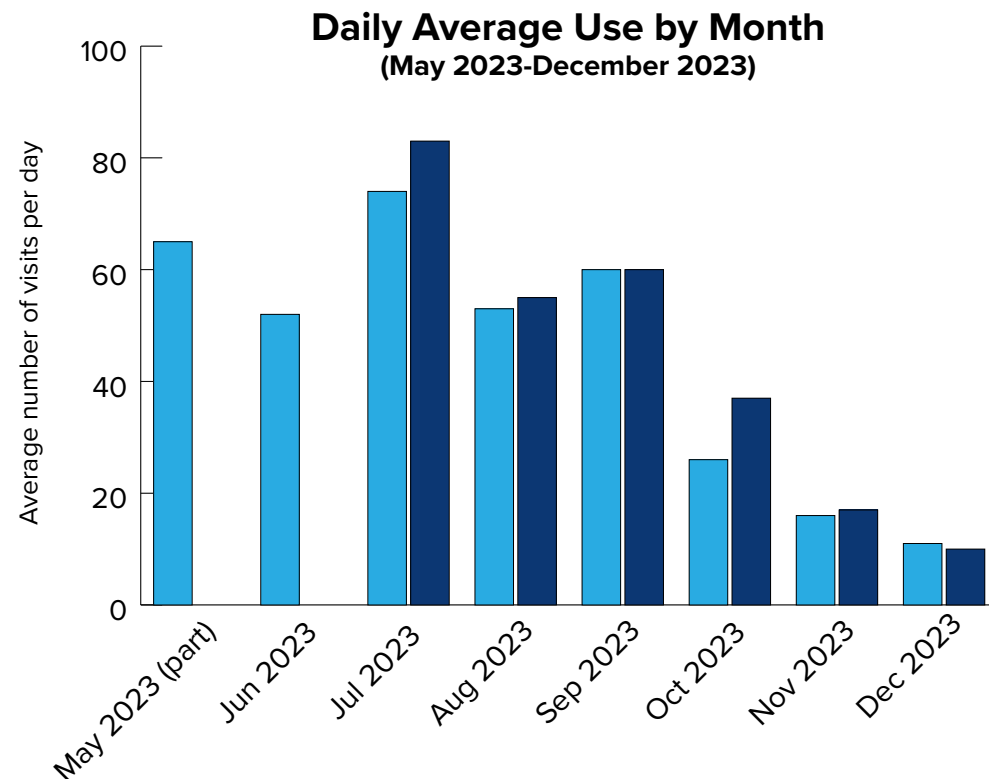
Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2023 (part)	1,701	77
June 2023	2,131	71
July 2023	2,854	92
August 2023	2,298	74
September 2023	2,167	72
October 2023	1,344	43
November 2023	625	21
December 2023 (part)	536	19
Recorded	13,656	59
Estimated Annual Use	18,824	52

Rome

Oneida County

*Installed at Old Erie Canal SHP May 10, 2023 - December 31, 2023;
Installed at Martin Street July 11, 2023 - December 31, 2023*

Two counters were installed in Rome as part of the Empire State Trail Town program in 2023. The first counter was installed at the eastern end of Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, on the west side of Rome. Old Erie Canal State Historic Park features a stone dust surface for most of its 32 miles between Syracuse and Rome. The trail from the counter's location east into the city of Rome was in poor condition throughout 2023, but is slated for resurfacing in 2024. The second counter was purchased and installed by the city of Rome in July 2023 along Martin Street on the east side of the city. The trail in this section is paved and connects to a mostly continuous, off-road, stone dust stretch between Rome's south side and the City of Utica.



	Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
Old Erie Canal SHP	May 2023 (part)	1,439	65
	June 2023	1,550	52
	July 2023	2,286	74
	August 2023	1,657	53
	September 2023	1,800	60
	October 2023	810	26
	November 2023	482	16
	December 2023	344	11
	Recorded	10,368	44
	Estimated Annual Use	14,227	39
Martin Street	July 2023 (part)	1,750	83
	August 2023	1,708	55
	September 2023	1,794	60
	October 2023	1,146	37
	November 2023	515	17
	December 2023	299	10
	Recorded	7,212	41
	Estimated Annual Use	14,778	40

	Old Erie Canal	Martin St
Estimated Annual Use	14,227	14,778
Daily Average Use during the Summer	61	64

Utica

Oneida County

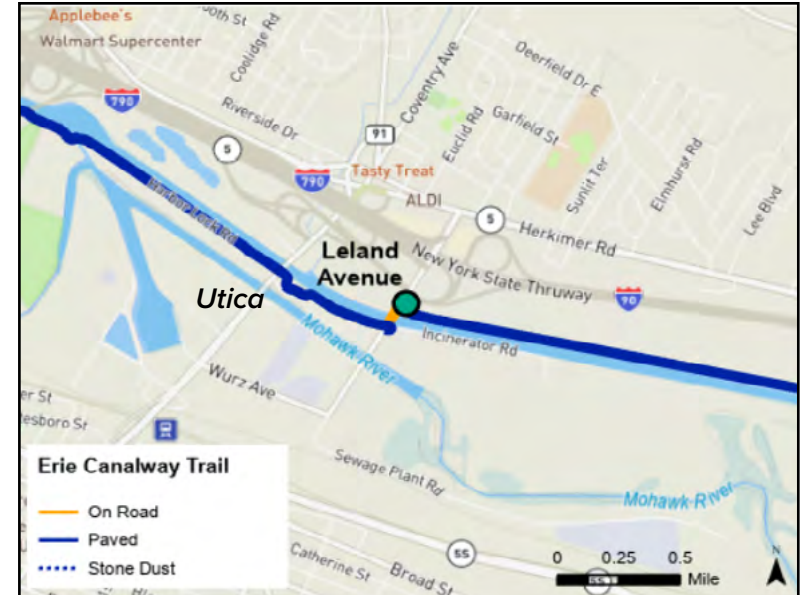
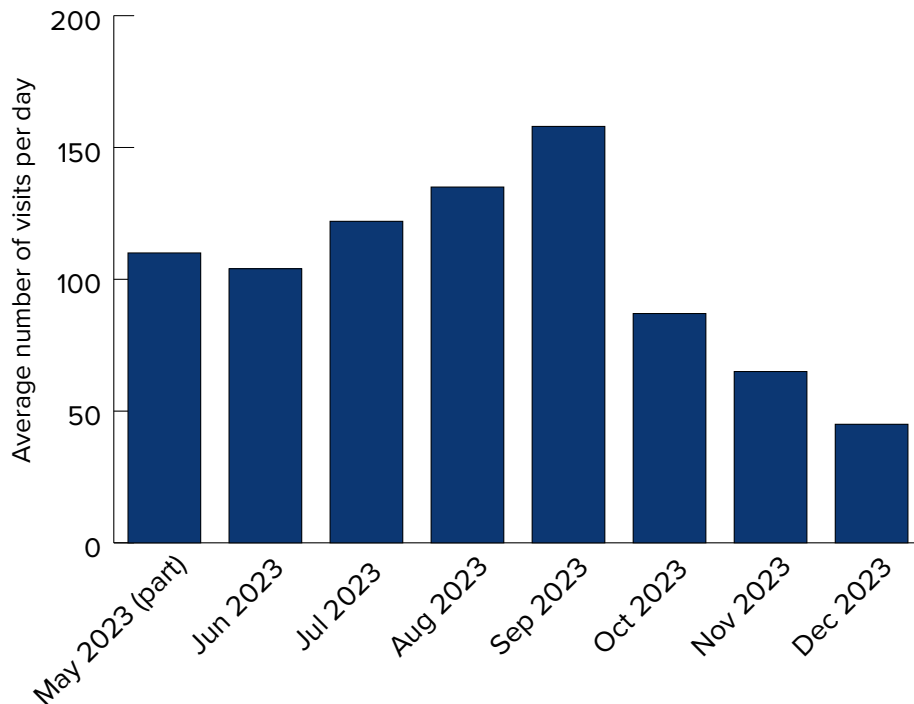
Installed May 10, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed east of Leland Avenue in Utica on the paved section of trail on the north side of the canal. The trail route is on-road on Leland Avenue between the south side of the Canal, where it heads west, and the north side, where it proceeds east. The paved trail on the north side of the canal was constructed in 2020 as part of the Empire State Trail project.

Estimated
Annual Use
33,287

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
127

Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2023 (part)	2,425	110
June 2023	3,117	104
July 2023	3,776	122
August 2023	4,188	135
September 2023	4,734	158
October 2023	2,711	87
November 2023	1,940	65
December 2023	1,385	45
Recorded	24,276	103
Estimated Annual Use	33,287	91

Ilion

Herkimer County

Installed October 23, 2023 - December 31, 2023

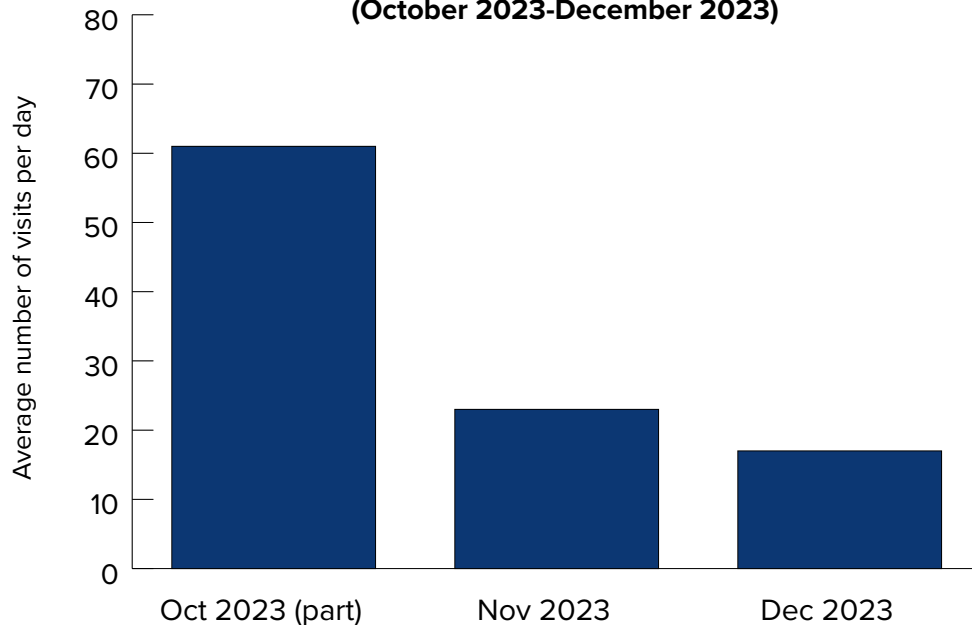
This counter was installed just east of Ilion Marina, located off Central Avenue/NYS Route 51 in the Village of Ilion. The paved trail in this location was constructed in 2020 as part of the Empire State Trail project, and is approximately one mile from the western end of a 70-mile continuous stretch of off-road trail with only a few minor on-road segments that runs from Frankfort east to Schenectady. The counter was installed in this location in October 2023, so sufficient data has not yet been gathered to accurately estimate full-year trail use.

Estimated
Annual Use
16,498

Daily Average Use
25



Daily Average Use by Month
(October 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
October 2023 (part)	553	61
November 2023	696	23
December 2023	530	17
Recorded	1,779	25
Estimated Annual Use	16,498	45

Fort Plain

Montgomery County

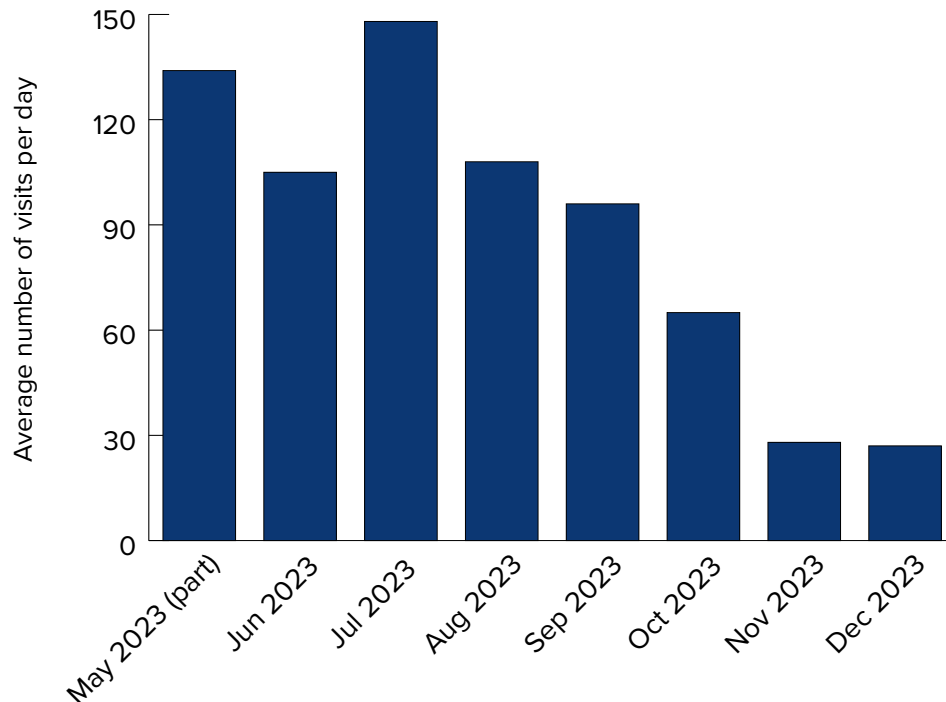
Installed May 10, 2023 - December 31, 2023

This counter was installed at the trail bridge that travels over Otsquago Creek in the village of Fort Plain, just east of the crossing of River Street/NYS Route 80. The paved trail in this location is part of the 70-mile continuous stretch from Frankfort to Schenectady.

Estimated
Annual Use
28,175

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
117

Daily Average Use by Month
(May 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
May 2023 (part)	2,941	134
June 2023	3,141	105
July 2023	4,579	148
August 2023	3,333	108
September 2023	2,866	96
October 2023	2,004	65
November 2023	845	28
December 2023	823	27
Recorded	20,532	87
Estimated Annual Use	28,175	77

Albany

Albany County

Installed August 9, 2023 to December 31, 2023

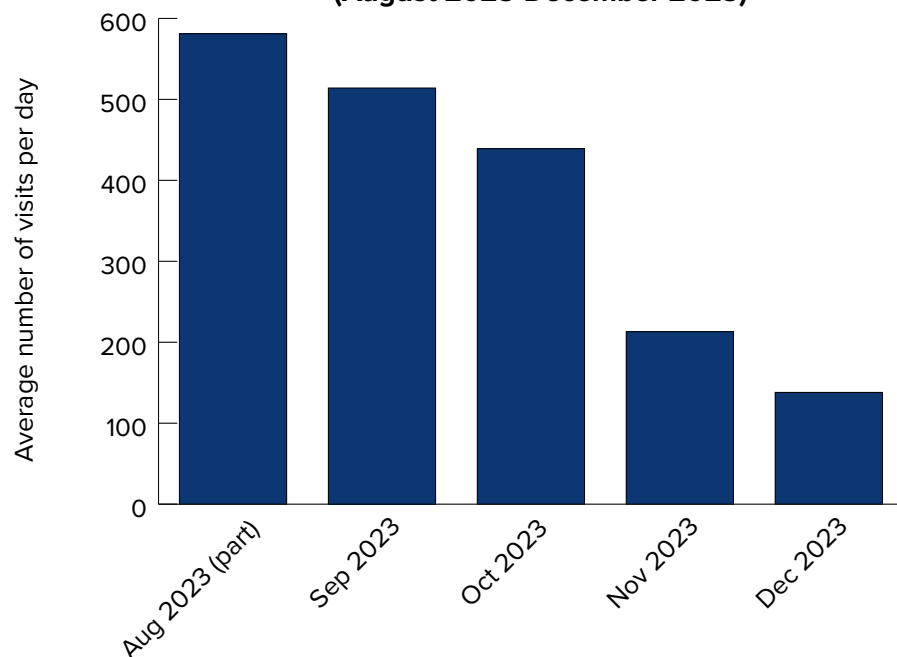
The counter was installed just north of Corning Preserve in the city of Albany, near the eastern terminus of the Erie Canalway Trail. The trail in this location is paved and runs north along the Hudson River to 4th Avenue in Watervliet. The trail was resurfaced with asphalt in 2021. Traveling south, the trail runs through Corning Preserve, Albany's waterfront park, and continues as part of the Empire State Trail across the river to Rensselaer and the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, leading south to New York City.

Estimated
Annual Use
145,161

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
543



Daily Average Use by Month
(August 2023-December 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
August 2023 (part)	13,352	581
September 2023	15,417	514
October 2023	13,610	439
November 2023	6,392	213
December 2023	4,282	138
Recorded	53,053	366
Estimated Annual Use	145,161	398

Schuylerville

Saratoga County

Installed November 2, 2023 - December 31, 2023

The counter was installed along the Champlain Canalway Trail between Fort Hardy Park and Hudson Crossing Park in Schuylerville. The trail in this location has a stone dust surface, and is part of a roughly one-mile-long stretch of off-road trail bounded on either end by lengthy on-road segments. The counter was installed in this location in November 2023, so sufficient data has not yet been gathered to accurately estimate full-year trail use.

Estimated
Annual Use

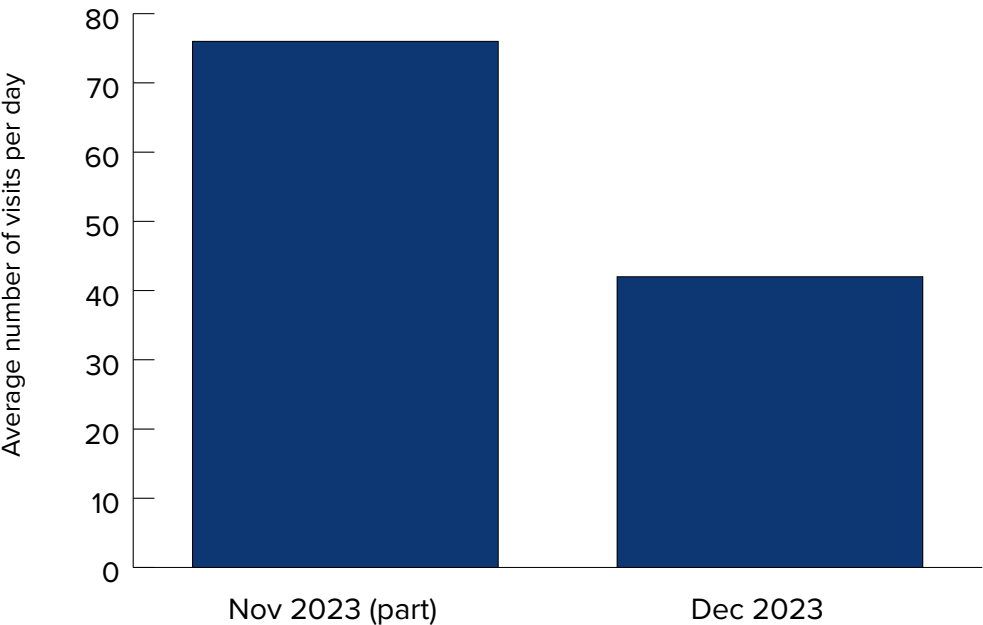
39,504

Daily Average Use

58



Daily Average Use by Month
(November 2023-Decemeber 2023)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
November 2023 (part)	2,190	76
December 2023	1,298	42
Recorded	3,488	58
Estimated Annual Use	39,504	108

Kingsbury

Washington County

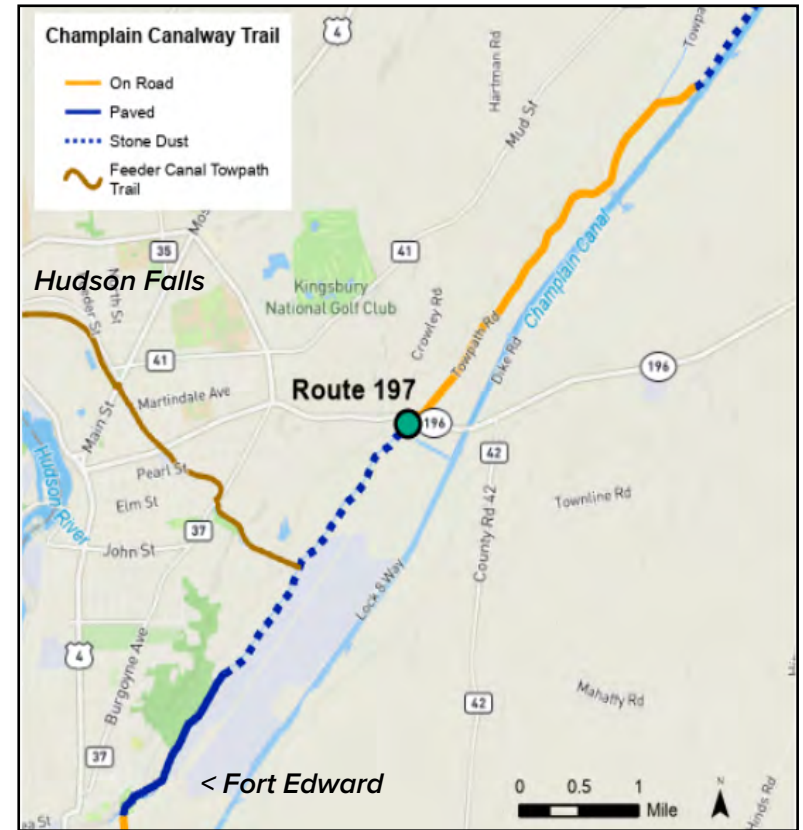
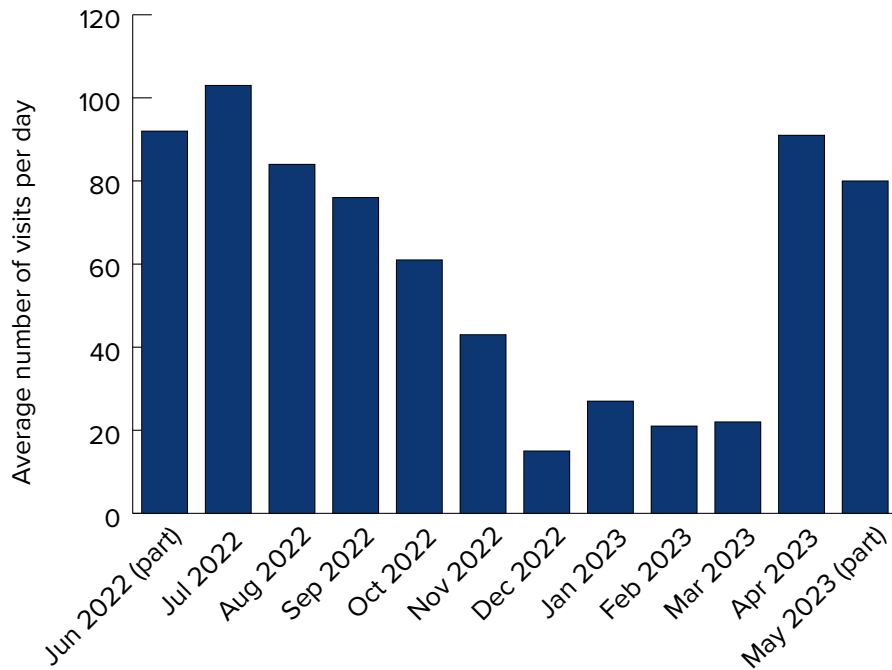
Installed June 4, 2022 - May 6, 2023

The counter was installed in Kingsbury on the Champlain Canalway Trail, just south of NYS Route 196. This section of trail was constructed in 2020 as part of the Empire State Trail project. The trail here is paved and is easily accessible from the small conurbation of Glens Falls, Fort Edward, and Hudson Falls.

Estimated
Annual Use
21,643

Daily Average Use
during the Summer
88

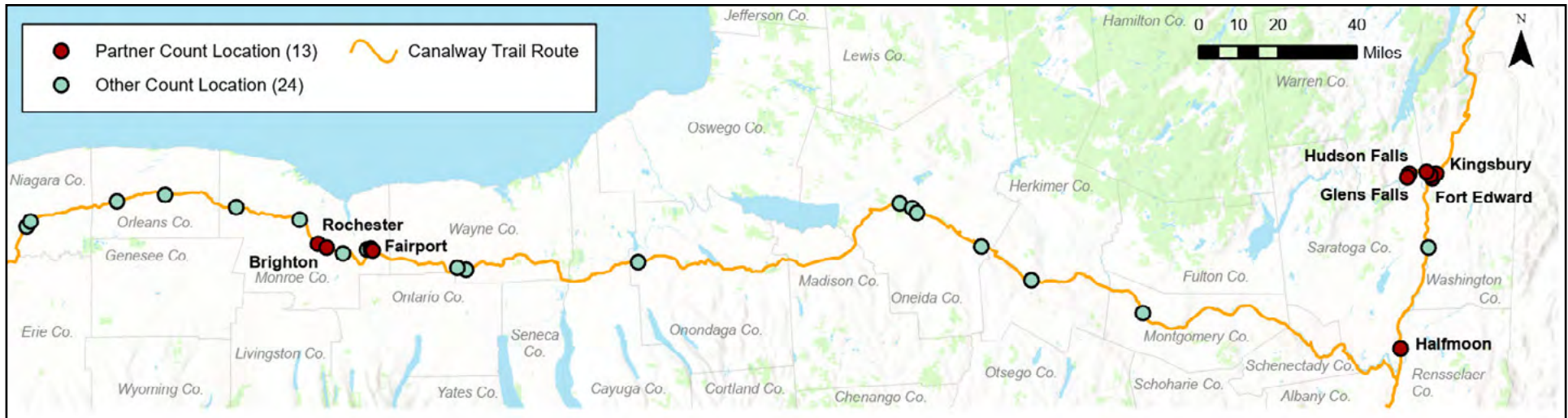
Daily Average Use by Month
(June 2022-December 2022)



Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
June 2022 (part)	2,487	92
July 2022	3,188	103
August 2022	2,612	84
September 2022	2,275	76
October 2022	1,897	61
November 2022	1,287	43
December 2022	460	15
January 2023	843	27
February 2023	596	21
March 2023	685	22
April 2023	2,718	91
May 2023 (part)	478	80
Recorded	19,526	58
Estimated Annual Use	21,643	59

Partner Counts

PTNY partner organizations conducted counts at thirteen additional locations along the Canalway Trail System in 2023. The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) performed counts for two- to four-month stretches at a total of six locations: Gates; Rochester; and a cluster of four locations in Fairport. The Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) installed a counter for one year in Halfmoon along the Champlain Canalway Trail. Warren County Planning conducted trail counts at six locations along the Champlain Canalway Trail and Feeder Canal Trail. PTNY conducted analysis on these additional count sites.



Genesee Transportation Council

Monroe County

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rochester area, the Genesee Transportation Council performs counts on trails and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout their service area. As part of this work, counters were installed along the trail at four locations in the Village of Fairport from June 2023 through November 2023 (actual count periods for each of the four locations varied). Counters were also installed at the junction with the Lehigh Valley in Rochester, and in the town of Brighton at the I-390 bridge, from October through November 2023.



	Rochester <i>Installed October 11, 2023 - November 16, 2023</i>	Brighton <i>Installed October 10, 2023 - November 16, 2023</i>
Estimated Annual Use	145,955	137,781
Daily Recorded Average	286	273

Rochester		
Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
October 2023 (part)	6,786	323
November 2023 (part)	4,930	247
Recorded	11,716	286
Estimated Annual Use	145,955	400

Brighton		
Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average
October 2023 (part)	7,152	311
November 2023 (part)	4,598	230
Recorded	11,750	273
Estimated Annual Use	137,781	377

Fairport Cluster <i>Installed July 14, 2023 - November 3, 2023</i>	
Estimated Annual Use	173,345
Daily Average Use during the Summer	681

	Fairport		Rochester Boat Club		Public Restrooms		Thomas Creek Jct Ped Path		Thomas Creek Jct Shared Use Path	
Month	Monthly Use	Daily Average	Monthly Use	Daily Average	Monthly Use	Daily Average	Monthly Use	Daily Average	Monthly Use	Daily Average
July 2023 (part)	12,730	707	25,452	1,414	8,855	492	11,040	613	5,573	310
August 2023	23,039	743	45,779	1,477	17,984	580	19,161	618	9,231	298
September 2023	18,047	602	36,280	1,209	14,282	476	15,023	501	6,601	220
October 2023*	13,067	422	25,024	807	2,558	640	10,600	342	3,838	124
November 2023 (part)	767	256	1,353	451			672	224	277	92
Recorded	67,650	599	133,888	1,185	43,679	526	56,496	500	25,520	226
Estimated Annual Use	173,199	475	342,532	938	129,910	356	144,236	395	64,928	178

Hudson River Valley Greenway

Saratoga County

The Hudson River Valley Greenway, a New York State Agency, directly supervised the completion of the Empire State Trail. Since the trail's completion, HRVG has counted use at various locations along the full north-south leg of the Empire State Trail, which runs from New York City to Rouses Point. In 2023, HRVG counted data at one location along the Champlain Canalway Trail. This counter was installed in the town of Halfmoon in November 2022 and recorded data for a full year. The counter was located along a stone dust section of trail in a suburban area close to the more heavily populated centers in Albany, Troy, and Saratoga County.

Halfmoon

Installed November 2, 2022 - November 7, 2023

Estimated
Annual Use

11,640

Daily Average
Use during the
Summer

48

Month	Monthly Use	Daily Avg
November 2022 (part)	658	23
December 2022	332	11
January 2023	343	11
February 2023	355	13
March 2023	477	15
April 2023	1,113	37
May 2023	1,619	52
June 2023	1,335	45
July 2023	1,752	57
August 2023	1,553	50
September 2023	1,102	37
October 2023	945	30
November 2023 (part)	191	27
Recorded	11,775	32
Estimated Annual Use	11,640	32

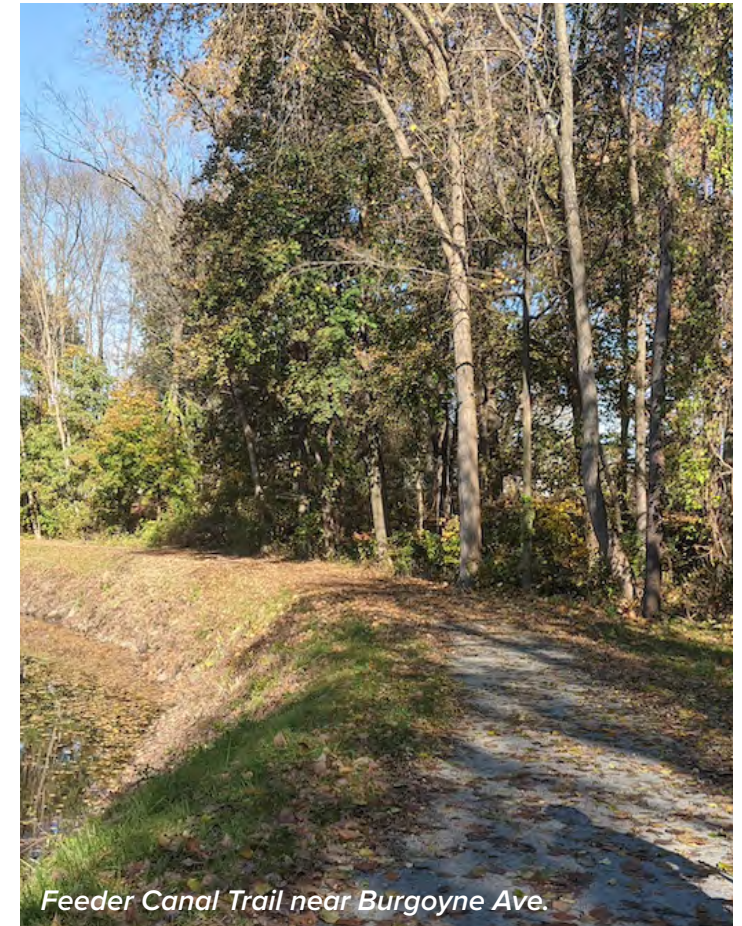
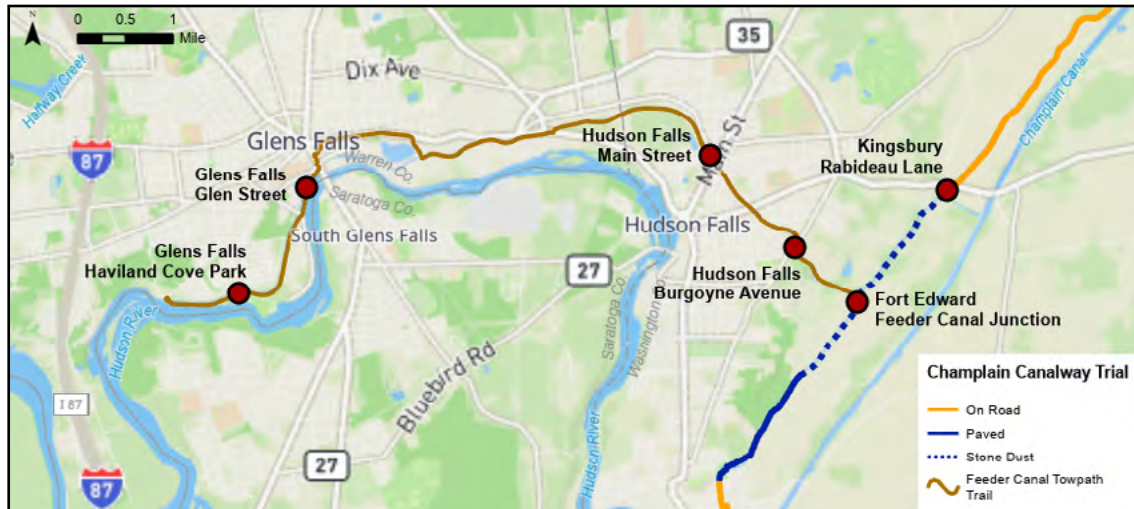


Warren County

Warren & Washington County

In June 2023, the NYS Department of Transportation conducted trail counts for the Warren County Planning Department as part of a large-scale trail improvement plan. Counts were conducted using a video-based counting system at six locations, including two along the Champlain Canalway Trail between Fort Edward and Kingsbury, and four along the Feeder Canal Trail in Hudson Falls and Glens Falls. Counts were also conducted along the Warren County Bikeway, but are not included in this report as the trail is not considered part of the Canalway Trail system. At each location, trail use was counted from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM for the week of June 15 to June 21, 2023. The data also provide a breakdown by direction of travel along the trail and the mode of travel (pedestrian or bicycle).

<i>All Locations recorded in June 2023 only</i>	Recorded		Estimated	
Electronic Count Locations	Total	Daily Average	Estimated Annual Use	Daily Average
Fort Edward - Feeder Canal Junction	776	111	26,623	73
Kingsbury - Rabideau Lane	644	107	26,694	73
Hudson Falls - Burgoyne Avenue	1,196	171	41,019	112
Hudson Falls - Main Street	591	118	27,117	74
Glens Falls - Glen Street	607	87	23,626	65
Glens Falls - Haviland Cove Park	1,663	238	57,985	159



Feeder Canal Trail near Burgoyne Ave.

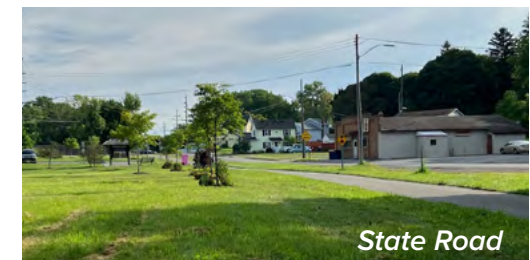
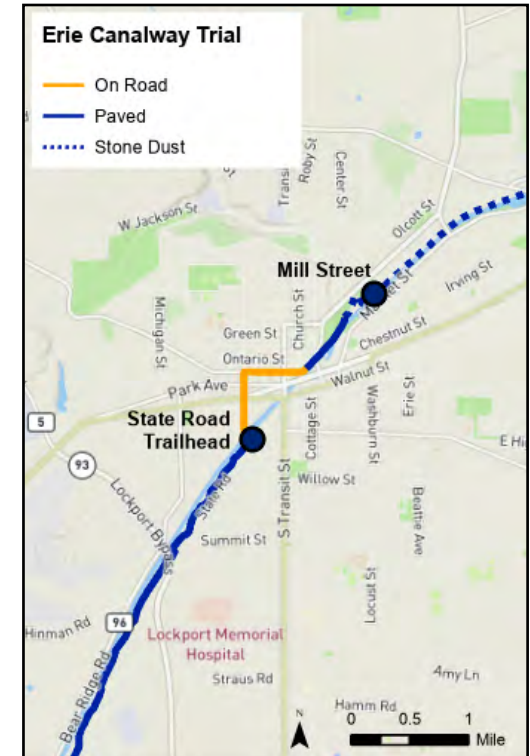
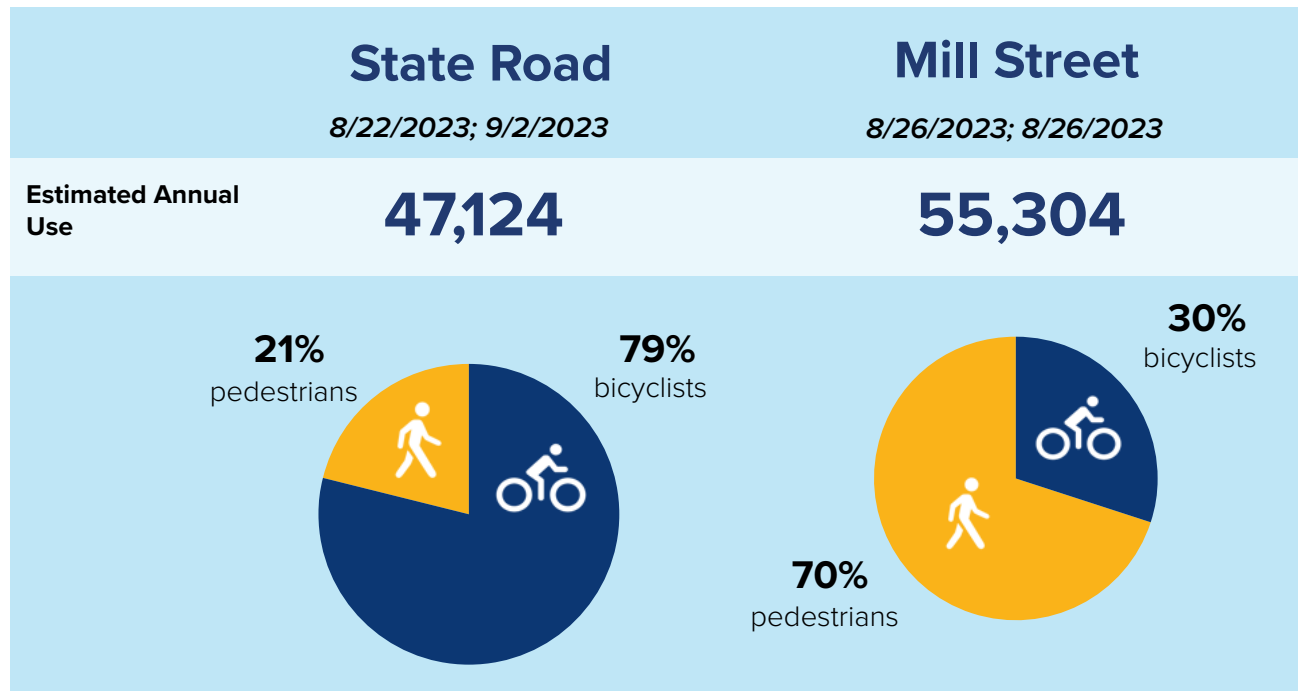
Manual Counts

In addition to electronic counters, PTNY recruited volunteers to collect trail use data manually. Manual counts were primarily conducted by volunteers associated with the Empire State Trail Town program, with additional manual counts conducted in the town of Perinton. Manual counts offer the opportunity to collect more information on the types of visitors using the trail at each location. In addition, manual counts were intended to provide insight into the accuracy of counts conducted by electronic counters, but insufficient data was collected to yield any reliable conclusions. Manual counts followed the counting methodology inspired by the NBPd count methodology included in the Who's on the Trail 2023: Methodology document.

Lockport

State Road Trailhead and Mill Street intersection

Volunteers counted trail use at two locations in the City of Lockport. Counts were conducted at the trailhead off State Road on the west side of the community, along a paved trail heading west towards Tonawanda and Buffalo, and at the location where the counter was installed at the Mill Street bridge (see page 6).

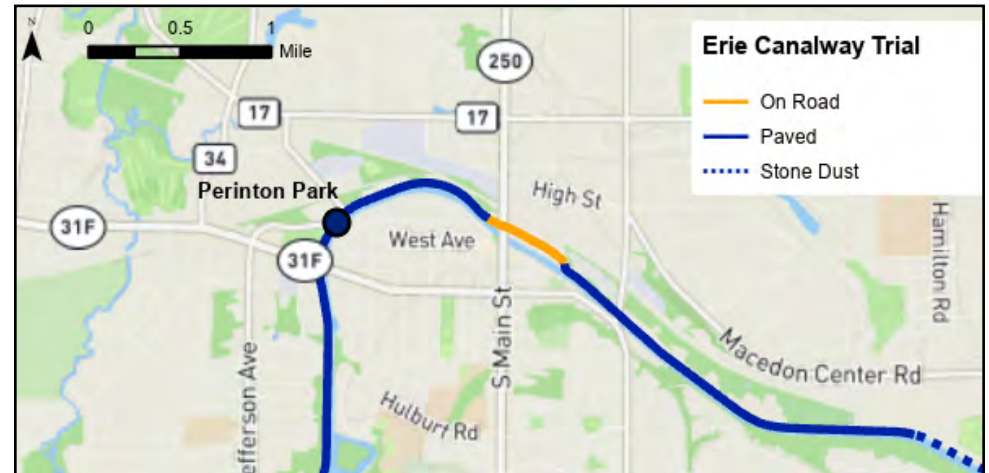


Perinton

East end of Perinton Park

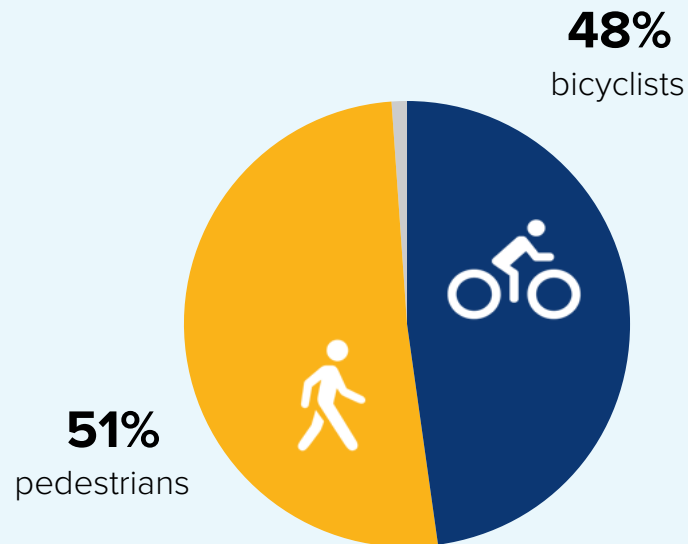
8/9/2023; 8/13/2023; 8/16/2023; 8/20/23

Volunteers counted trail use at the east end of Perinton Park in the town of Perinton, a suburban town located to the east of Rochester and west of the village of Fairport. The trail through this area is paved and is a popular recreational resource for locals and visitors alike.



Estimated Annual Use

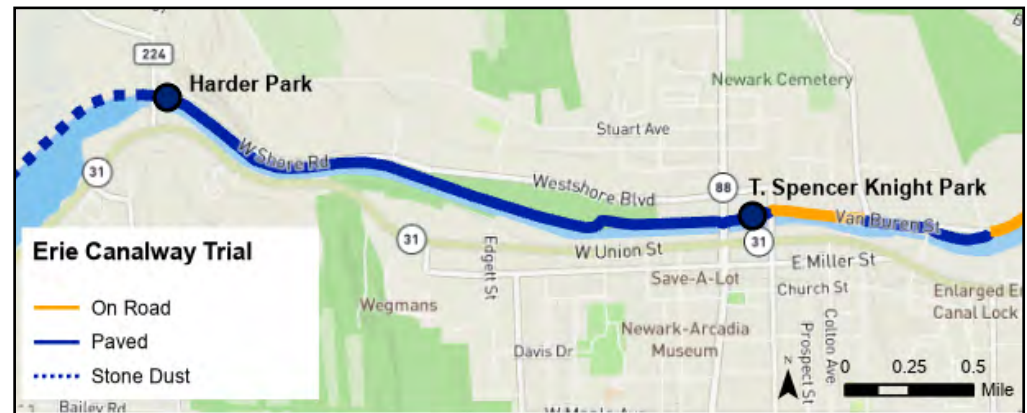
165,256



Newark

Harder Park and T. Spencer Knight Park

Volunteers counted trail use at two locations in the Village of Newark. Counts were conducted at Harder Park, where the counter was installed (see page 12), and at T. Spencer Knight Park in downtown Newark. The trail is paved and travels diagonally through Knight Park to the newly rebranded Newark Welcome Center.



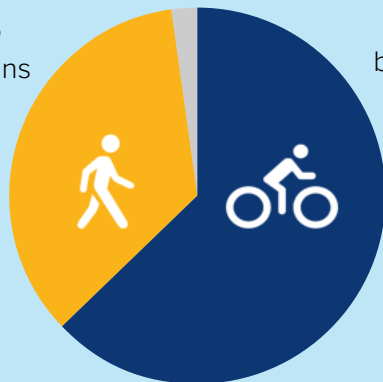
Harder Park

8/15/2023; 8/19/2023;
8/22/2023; 8/26/2023

Estimated Annual
Use

36,402

35%
pedestrians



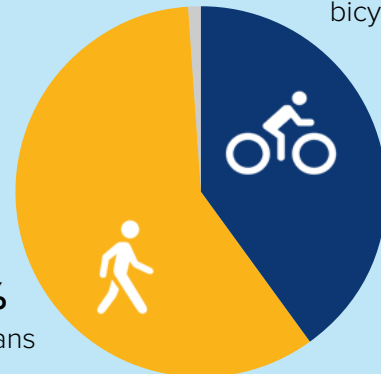
63%
bicyclists

T. Spencer Knight Park

8/15/2023; 8/19/2023;
8/22/2023; 8/26/2023

36,733

59%
pedestrians



40%
bicyclists

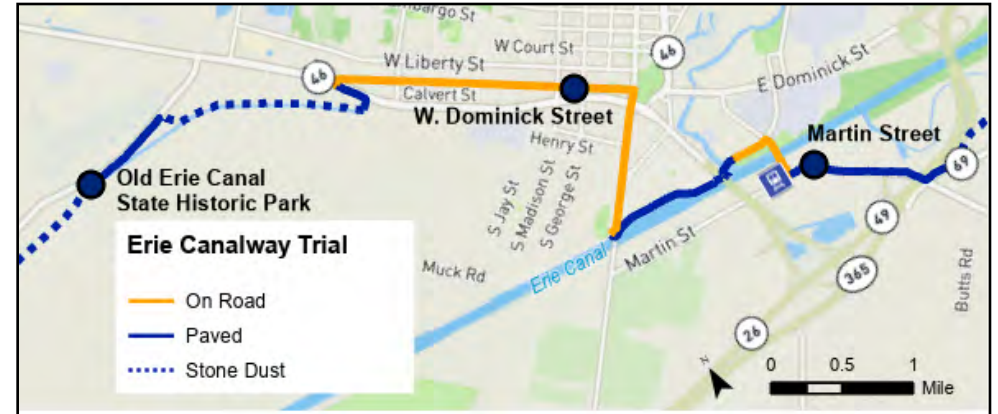
Harder Canal Park



Rome

Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, West Dominick Street, and Martin Street

Volunteers counted trail users at three locations in the City of Rome. Counts were conducted at the counter locations in Old Erie Canal State Historic Park and along Martin Street (see page 14). Manual counts were also conducted along an on-road segment of the trail on West Dominick Street between Madison Street and George Street. Through this section, a sidewalk serves as the Erie Canalway Trail for pedestrians, whereas cyclists must ride in the road.



Old Erie Canal

8/2/2023; 8/5/2023; 8/9/2023; 8/12/2023

W. Dominick St.

8/1/2023; 8/5/2023; 8/8/2023; 8/12/2023

Martin St.

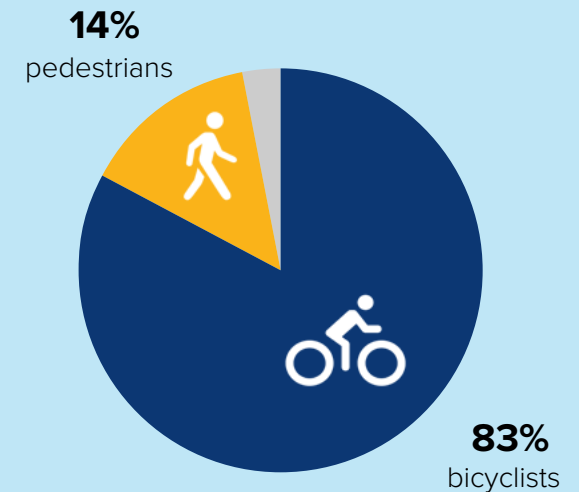
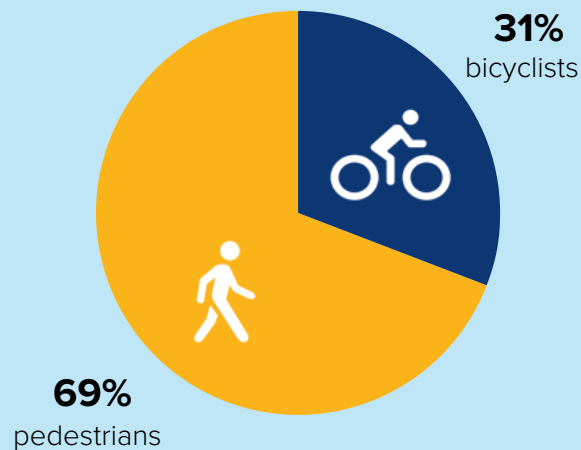
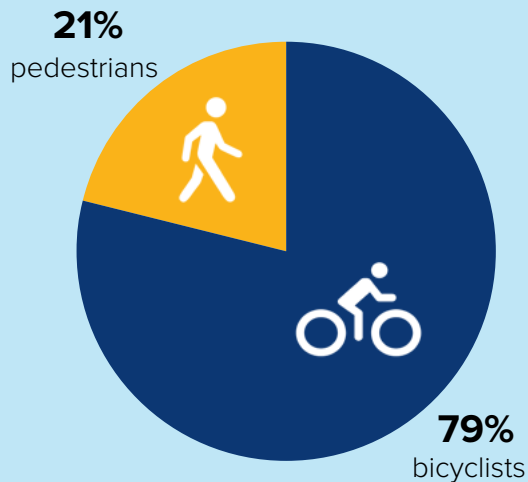
8/3/2023; 8/6/2023; 8/10/2023; 8/13/2023

Estimated
Annual
Use

13,320

77,547

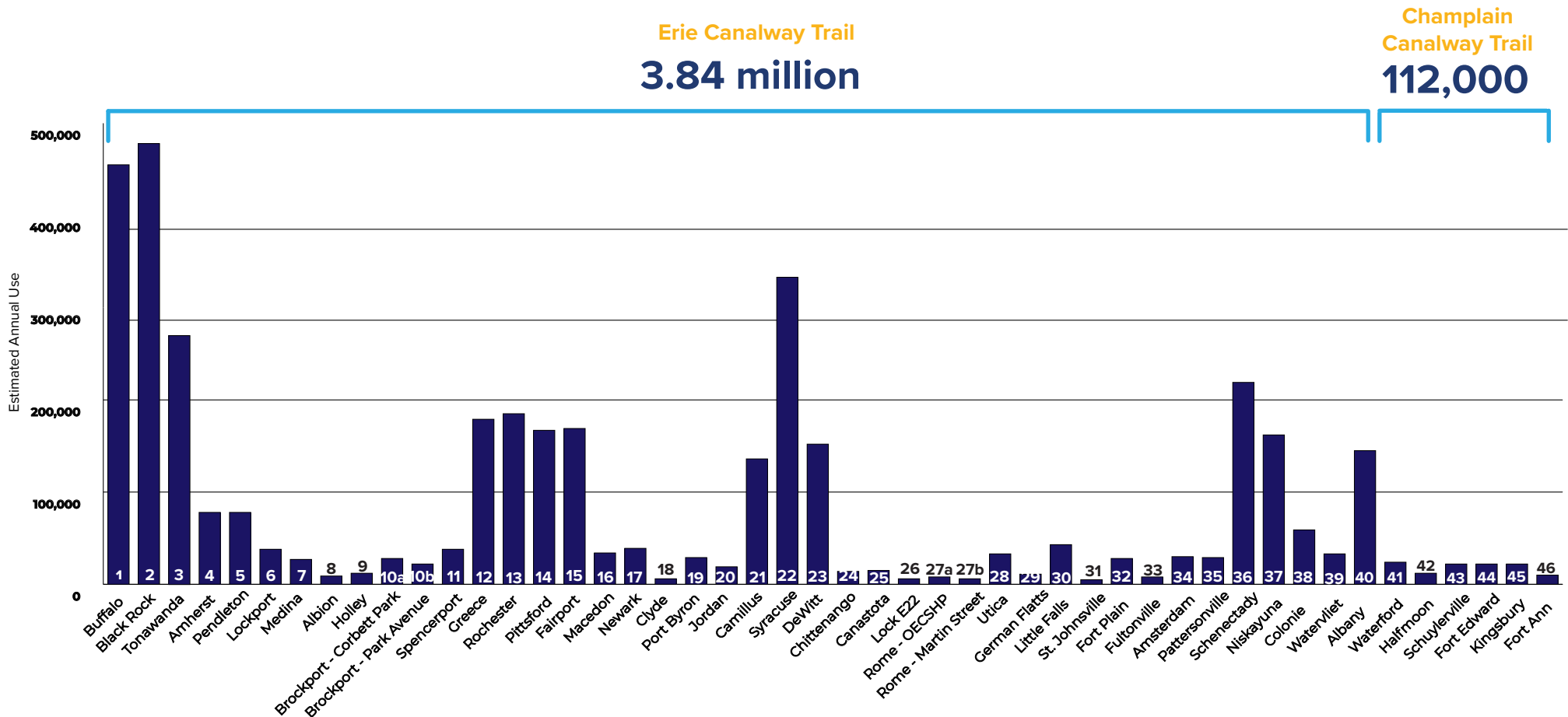
23,501



Annual Trail Use Estimate: 3.95 million

Since 2019, PTNY or its partners have conducted long-term electronic trail counts at 33 locations along the Canalway Trail. Each of these count sites has produced an annual trail use estimate; taken together, the sites recorded a total of 1,812,731 visits per year across the state. The site data affirm a correlation between trail use and the population density of the surrounding area, which can be used to estimate trail uses at locations where counts have not yet been performed.

Using figures from these additional locations, an estimated annual Canalway Trail visitation figure of 3,947,000 can be calculated, including 3,835,000 visits along the Erie Canalway Trail and 112,000 along the Champlain Canalway Trail. This figure is a rough estimate, and does not represent the use for any specific year. Rather, the figure is an estimated average use figure for annual visitation based on the last five years of data. For more information on the methodology used to calculate this annual trail use estimate and a map of the sample locations corresponding to each number, please see the accompanying *Who's on the Trail 2023: Methodology* document available at www.ptny.org/trailcounts.



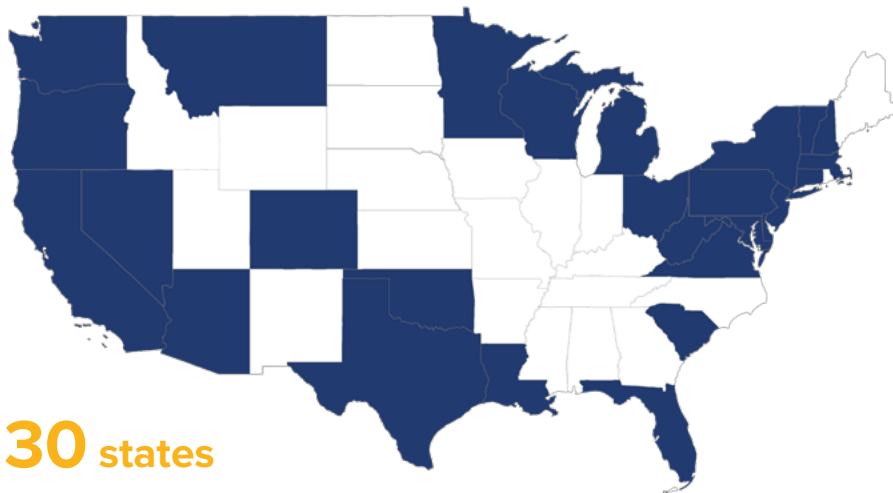
Canalway Challenge Finisher Statistics

Since 2019, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor has encouraged New Yorkers and visitors to explore the Canalway Trail and state Canal Waterways through the Canalway Challenge. Challenge options include 1, 15, 90, 180, and 360-mile goals. To complete the 360 mile “end-to-end” challenge, the participant must walk, ride, or paddle their miles in each region. In 2023, over 450 challenges were completed, with 81% of finishers submitting a “finisher survey.” This survey—which gathered information on where finishers are from, what types of destinations they visited, if they stayed overnight and where, and how much they spent while completing their challenge—augments the numerical data included in the rest of this report, providing a more comprehensive picture of who is using the trail and how.

Origins

Canalway Challenge finishers hailed from thirty U.S. states and two Canadian provinces, with 27% of finishers coming from outside of New York State.

They came from...

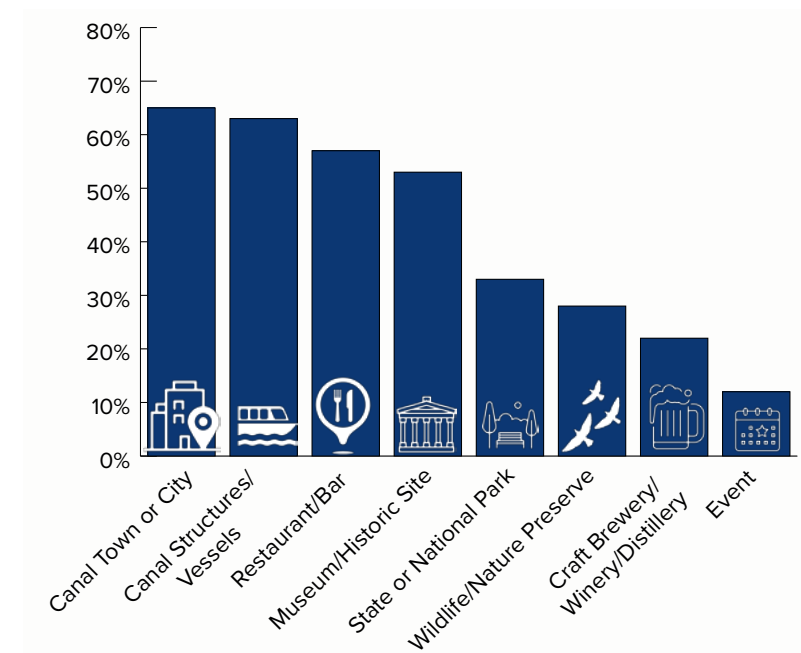


30 states

2 Canadian Provinces

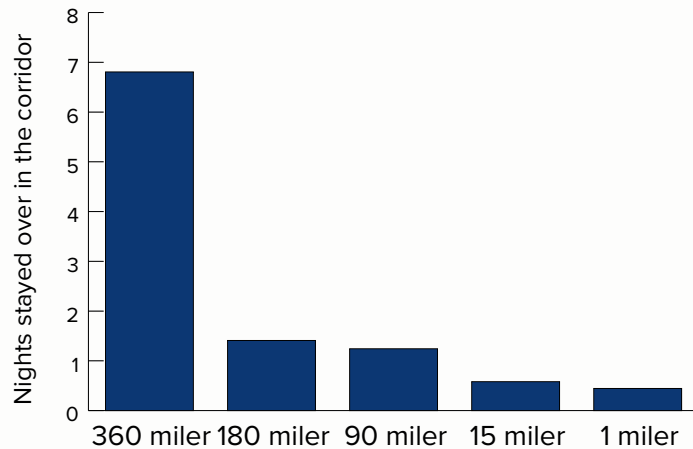
Attractions & Sites Visited

Canal Towns and Cities were cited as the most visited destinations, followed by canal structures and vessels like locks and historic canal boats. Next were restaurants and bars. Visiting local eateries is a very popular way to add a destination to an out-and-back trip on the trail, and for long-distance travelers these establishments are essential places to refuel after a long day out on the trail. Museums and historic sites were also popular attractions, demonstrating that trail travelers place importance on learning about the history and heritage of the waterway and region.



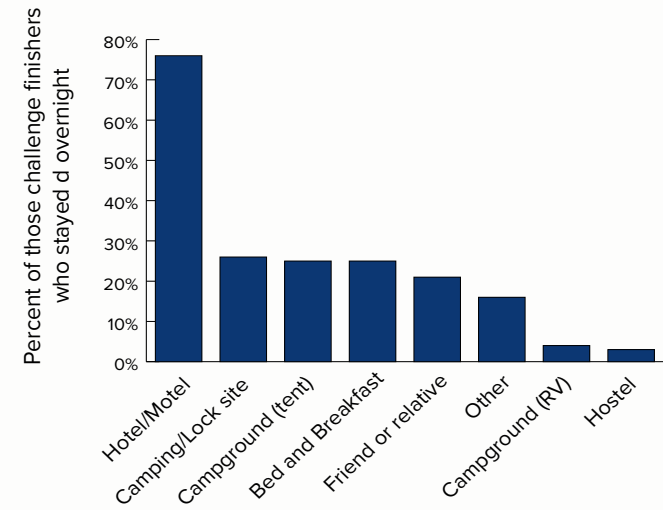
Nights Stayed Over

Those completing longer mileage challenges stayed overnight more evenings while working toward their goal. End-to-enders spent the greatest number of nights on the trail, averaging just under seven overnight stays. Other challenges did not require cross-region exploration, and thus reflected fewer overnight stays.



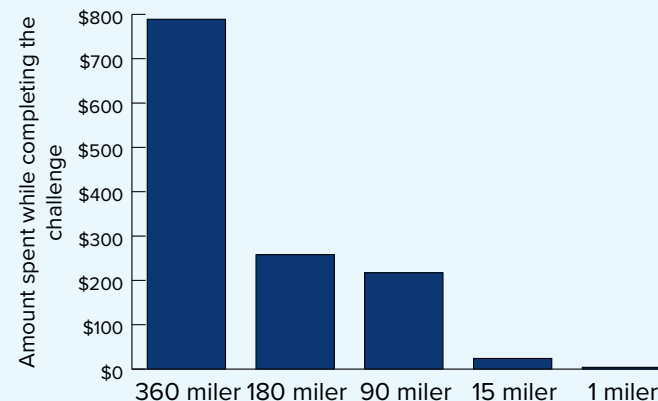
Accommodations

About half of the finishers who completed the survey indicated they stayed over at least one night while completing their challenge. Of those who stayed overnight, about three quarters chose to stay in a hotel or motel for at least one of their nights. Camping at a lock site and at campgrounds were the next most popular ways to spend the night, showcasing the adventurous nature of trail travelers. Bed & Breakfasts were as popular as camping facilities.



Average Spending

On average, challenge finishers spent \$420 while completing their challenge. As might be expected, challengers who took on the most miles spent the most money, with end-to-enders spending the most during the course of completing their challenge.



Conclusion

The 2023 Who's on the Trail report is the 18th edition of this report. Once again, trail counts and analysis reveal the statewide popularity of the Canalway Trail System, totaling an estimated 3.9 million visits per year. Investments to the trail including gap closures and resurfacing projects continue to drive visitation. Used heavily by both walkers and bicyclists, and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, the trail system is clearly a major recreational asset for communities across the canal corridor. The strong causal relationship between trail improvement and resultant economic value underscore the need to continue promotion, investment and maintenance.

The 2024 Who's on the Trail report will include some significant changes. Additional counters acquired during 2023 will provide data for additional sites, and counters installed in early 2023 will be moved to new sites for 2024. PTNY continues to work with metropolitan planning organizations to assess local trail use, following best practices from Rochester's Genesee Transportation Council.

Two major changes are expected for 2024. First, thanks to an upcoming joint effort with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, PTNY will work toward updating NBPD Extrapolation Factors, which provide the basis of trail use estimates used throughout this report. Current NBPD Factors are nearly 15 years old. While they are the best resource currently available, they are increasingly inconsistent with observed data collected around the state. Updated, New York State-specific extrapolation factors will better align trail use estimates and observed data. Second, PTNY will use groundbreaking AI technology through Placer.ai, a web-based location data analytics company, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the overall use of the Canalway Trail. The Placer.ai datasets will also provide greater detail about trail users, including demographic and other social characteristics. The update of NBPD factors coupled with Placer.ai data will provide a greater and more accurate understanding of Canalway Trail use, the benefits the trail system provides local residents, and the degree to which trail users provide an economic benefit to canal corridor communities. Continuing to expand the availability of data for the Canalway Trail will provide trail managers with the information needed to spur continued growth in usage and drive improvements that continually increase the quality of experience for all trail users.

Acknowledgements

Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation thank the volunteers who visited the trail to conduct manual trail user counts:

Aden Benson, Ryan Fisk, Grace Platt, and Laura Wright in Lockport

Reinald Smith in Perinton

Lisa Butterfield, Emily Howard, Dawn Jendrick, Dave Johnson, Mark Peake, Mitchell Ruffalo, and John Vair in Newark

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