

Connecticut Trail Census

Statewide multi-use trail user study



Photo: Visit CT

2019 International Trails Symposium, Syracuse, New York

April 28-May 1 * Tuesday- April 30, 1-2:15 pm

Kristina Kelly - Statewide Coordinator, Connecticut Trail Census & Laura Brown, Community & Economic Development Educator, University of Connecticut Extension

**A statewide
volunteer-based
data collection &
education program
on multi-use trails**

*To encourage data
informed
decision-making &
promote resident
participation in
trail monitoring &
advocacy*





STATEWIDE

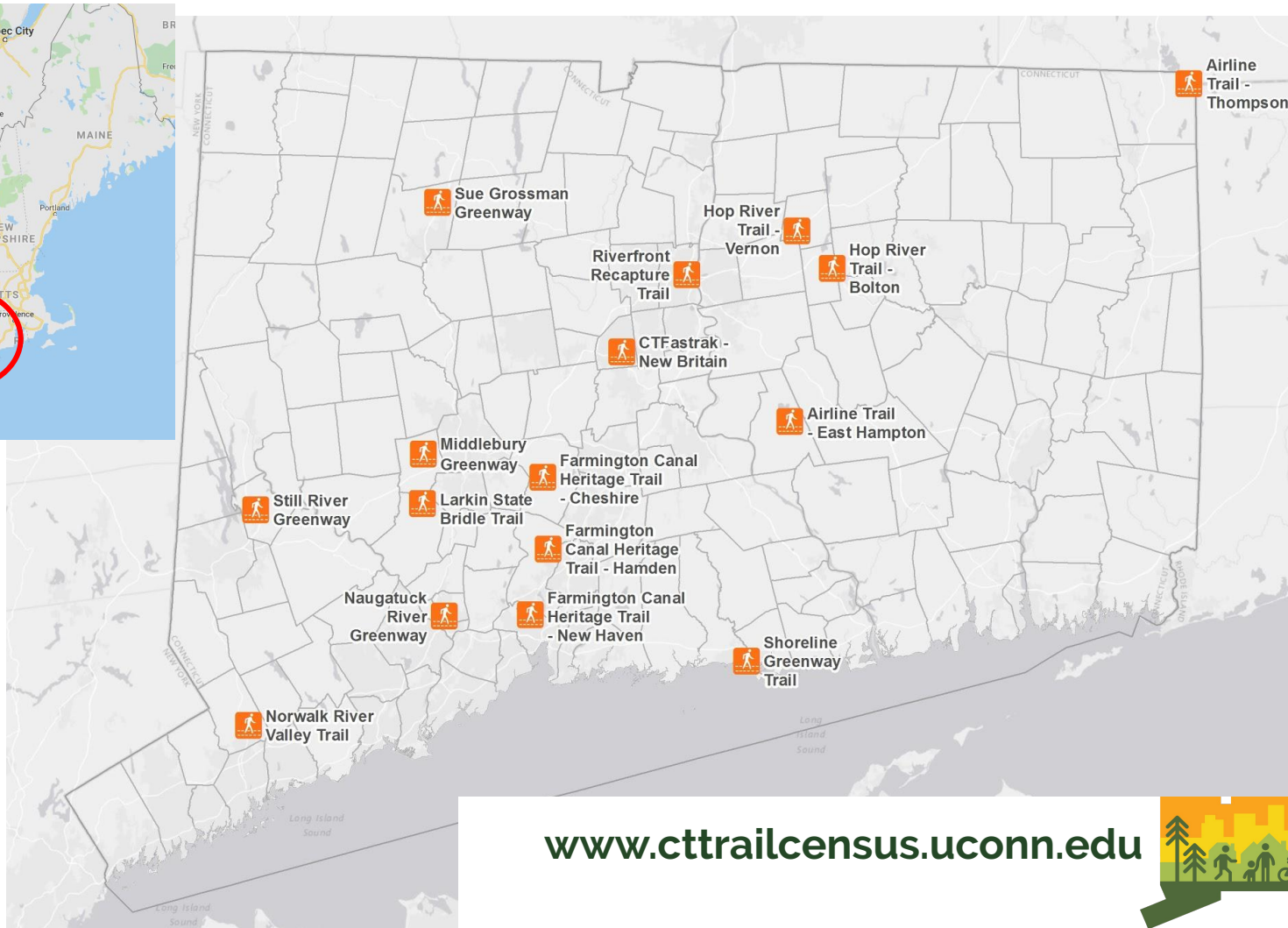
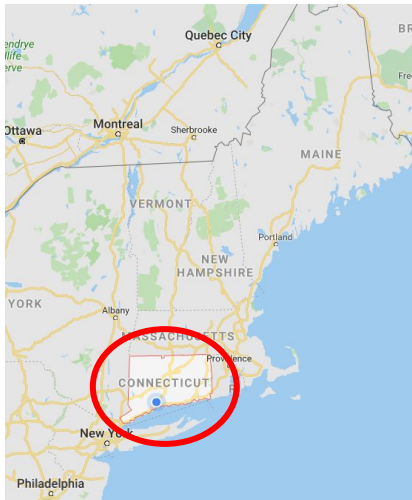
Urban, rural and suburban multi-use trails - 20 sites in 2019

MULTI-YEAR

Multi-year information about trail use, user demographics, economic impacts, and trail amenities
Identification of patterns and trends

VOLUNTEER - BASED

Active community participation
Data informed decision-making



www.cttrailcensus.uconn.edu





Infrared Counters

TRAFx Counters

Estimate uses and use patterns

24/7 permanent counters

Jan 1-Dec 31 data analysis

Calibrated with manual counts



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Date 6/2/2019

Location Hop River - Bolton

Name Aaron Budris

Time Start 11:00^{am} Count 1 Hour

Weather 75 degrees, sunny

All times Eastern Daylight Saving
Record groups on the same line
Record strollers, skateboards, w
Record additional activity in com
Estimate the number of children
(note that children should be in
Send scanned completed forms

#	Time	Ped	Bike	Other	Comment	# <18
1	11:04	3			walking	
2	11:11	1			running	
3	11:15	1		1	walking with stroller	1
4	11:17	1			walking dog	
5	11:18		1			
6	11:23		4		group of cyclists	
7	11:26	1			walking	
8	11:33	2	2		adults with kids on bikes	2
9	11:40	2			running	
10	11:42		1		teen on bike	1
11	11:45	1		2	walking w/double stroller	2
12	11:45	1			walking	
13	11:49	3		1	walking, 1 in wheelchair	
14	11:51	1		1	walking, scooter	1
15	11:55	1			running	
16	11:57			1	teen on skateboard	1
17	11:59	2		2	2 adults, 2 strollers	2
18						
19						

Calibrating the IR Counters: Manual Counts

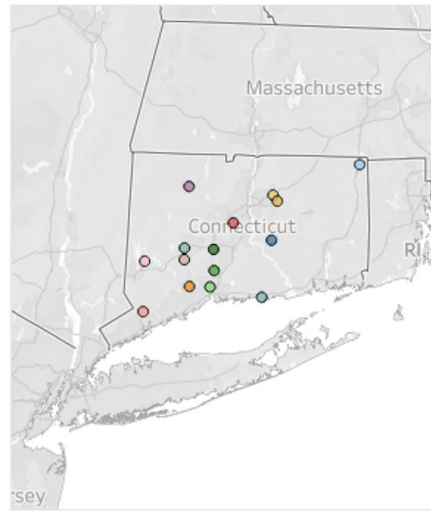
Trail	# Manual Counts	Calibration Factor
CT FasTrack New Britain	9	2.653846154
Hop River Trail Bolton	10	2.363057325
Larkin Trail Oxford	8	1.847457627
Naugatuck River Greenway Derby	8	1.839464883
Shoreline Trail Madison	8	1.81372549
Hop River Trail Vernon	10	1.614973262
Still River Greenway Brookfield	5	1.55
Sue Grossman Trail Torrington	10	1.544354839
Norwalk River Valley Trail Wilton	5	1.291262136
Middlebury Greenway	0	1.291262136
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Cheshire	0	1.291262136
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Hamden	0	1.291262136
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail New Haven	0	1.291262136
Air Line Trail East Hampton	1	1.291262136
Air Line Trail Thompson	0	1.291262136



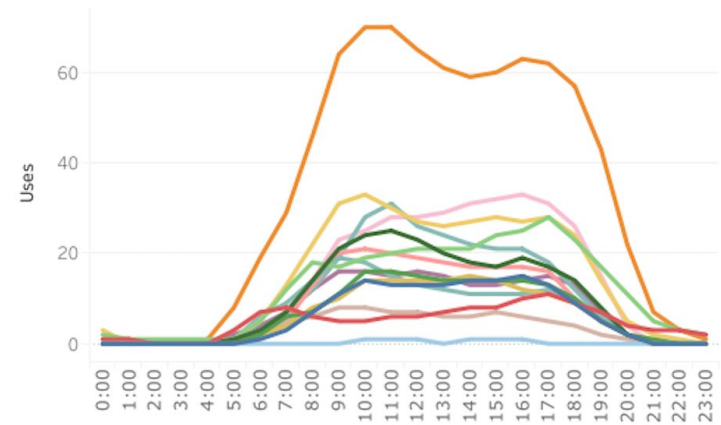
Manual counts used to develop calibration factors are used to estimate annual use estimates for each site

Select a Trail

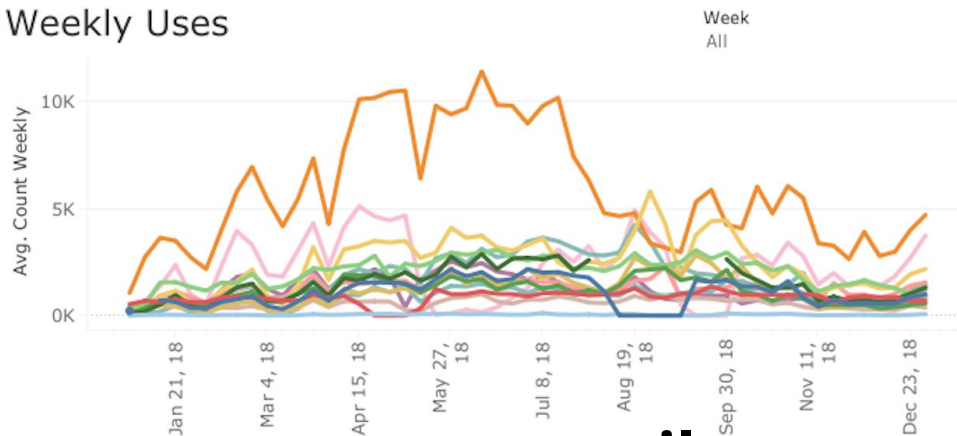
- Airline Trail East Hampton
- Airline Trail Thompson
- CTfastrak Trail New Britain
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Cheshire
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Hamden
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail New Haven
- Hop River Trail Bolton
- Hop River Trail Vernon
- Larkin Trail Oxford
- Middlebury Greenway
- Naugatuck River Greenway Derby
- Norwalk River Valley Trail Wilton
- Shoreline Trail Madison
- Still River Greenway Brookfield
- Sue Grossman Trail Torrington



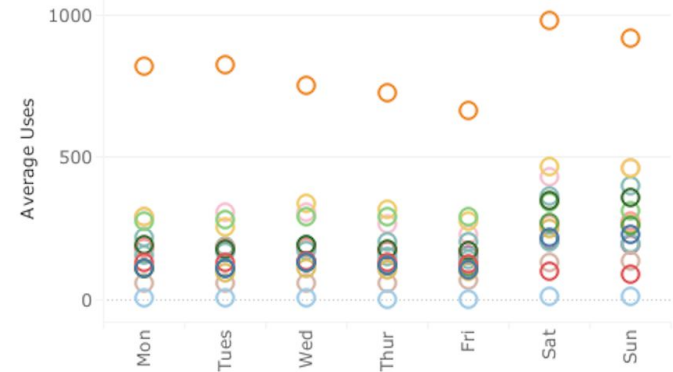
Average Uses by Hour of the Day



Weekly Uses



Average Uses by Day of Week



Reflections on Statewide Counts

- Uniform data
- Substantial data set (hourly)
- Technology failures
- Substantial volunteer commitment (10 hours)
- Data cleaning and management

Intercept Surveys

Volunteer assessed
Standardized paper survey
Why and how are trails used
Demographics, spending & health



Trail Census User Survey

None of the information gathered will be used to identify you individually. All data will be kept confidential and will be aggregated for analysis.

1. What is your home ZIP code? _____
2. How are you traveling on the trail today?
 Walk Wheelchair or mobility aid
 Run/Jog Other _____
 Bike
3. Approximately how many minutes do you plan to spend on the trail today? _____ minutes
4. During your visit to the trail today do you anticipate crossing this point on the trail again?
____ Yes ____ No
5. What is your purpose? (select all that apply)
 Recreation Exercise - Prescribed
 Relaxation Family time
 Dog walking Socializing
 Travel to school Group activity
 Travel to shopping Event
 Travel to work Tourism
 Exercise Other _____
6. How did you get to the trail today?
 Car or Motorcycle (alone)
 Car or Motorcycle (with others)
 Public Transit (bus/train)
 Bicycle Run/Jog
 Walk Other _____
7. How often do you use the trail at this location?
 First time Once a week
 5 or more times/week Once a month
 2-4 times/week Every few months

8. Which seasons do you generally use the trail? (Select all that apply)
 Summer Winter
 Fall Spring
9. On this trip to the trail only, how much have you spent or do you plan to spend on each of the following? (If nothing write "0"):
Beverages \$ _____
Snack foods \$ _____
Full meals at a restaurant \$ _____
Gas \$ _____
Retail (gifts, clothing, etc.) \$ _____
Equipment rental \$ _____
Lodging \$ _____
Nearby activities for recreation or amusements \$ _____
Other _____ \$ _____
10. Did your use of this trail influence your purchase of gear, supplies, equipment, clothing or rentals in the past year? ____ Yes ____ No
11. If you answered yes above, approximately how much did you spend in the past year on gear, supplies, equipment, clothing or rentals related to your use of this trail: \$ _____
12. What are your favorite things about this trail?

13. What would improve your experience on this trail? _____

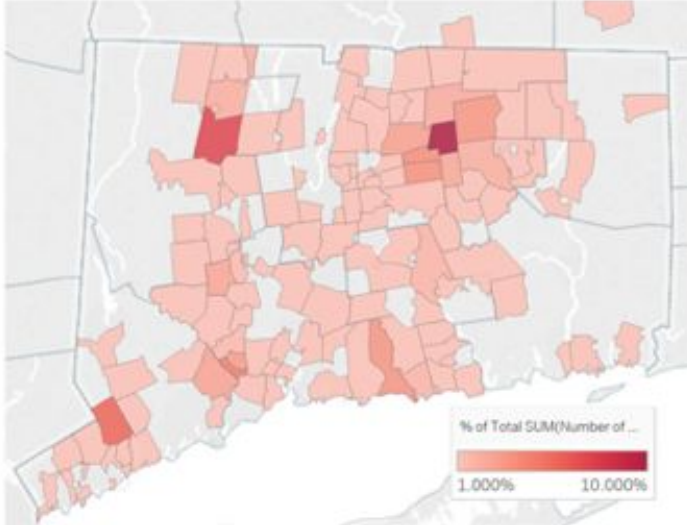
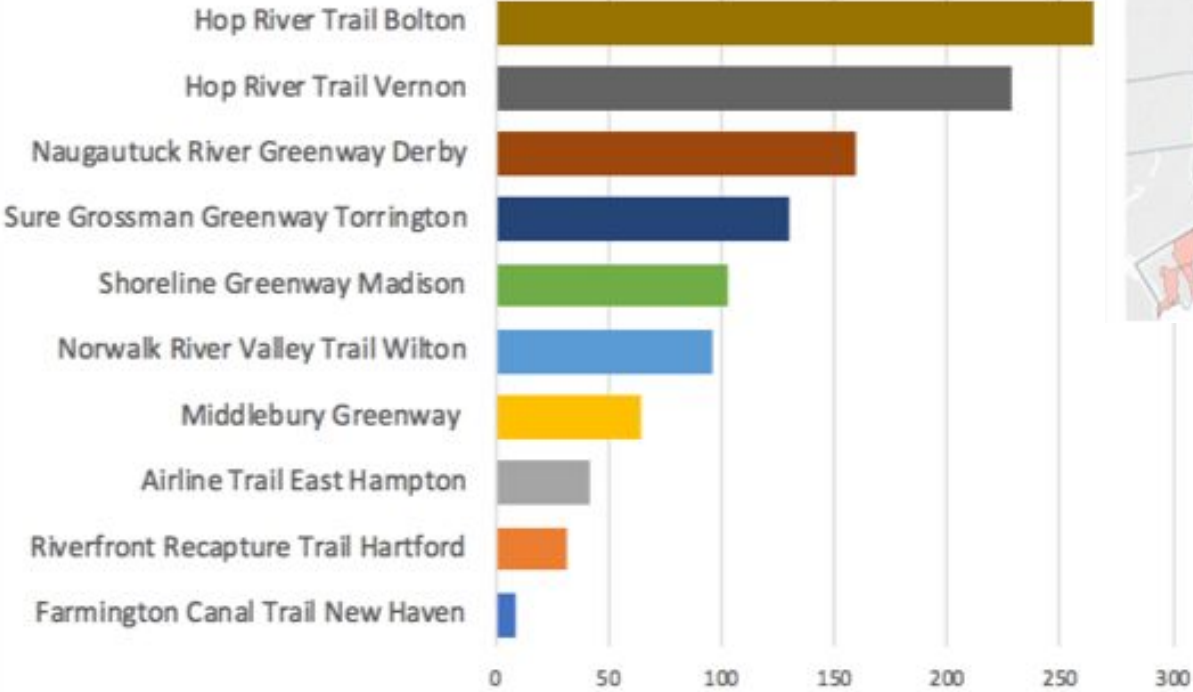
14. During an average week, how many days do you complete at least 30 minutes of physical activity? _____ # days/week
15. How many of these days include activity that causes an increase in breathing or heart rate? _____ # days/week
16. During an average week, what percent of your physical activity do you complete using this trail? _____ %
17. What is your age range?
 Under 18 45-54
 18-24 55-64
 25-34 65-74
 35-44 75 or over
18. What best represents your household income?
 Under \$24,999
 \$25,000 - \$49,999 \$100,000 - \$199,999
 \$50,000 - \$99,999 Over \$200,000
19. What is your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)
 White Asian
 Black or African American Pacific Islander
 American Indian Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
 Other _____
20. What is your sex?
 Female Male
 Prefer to self-describe _____

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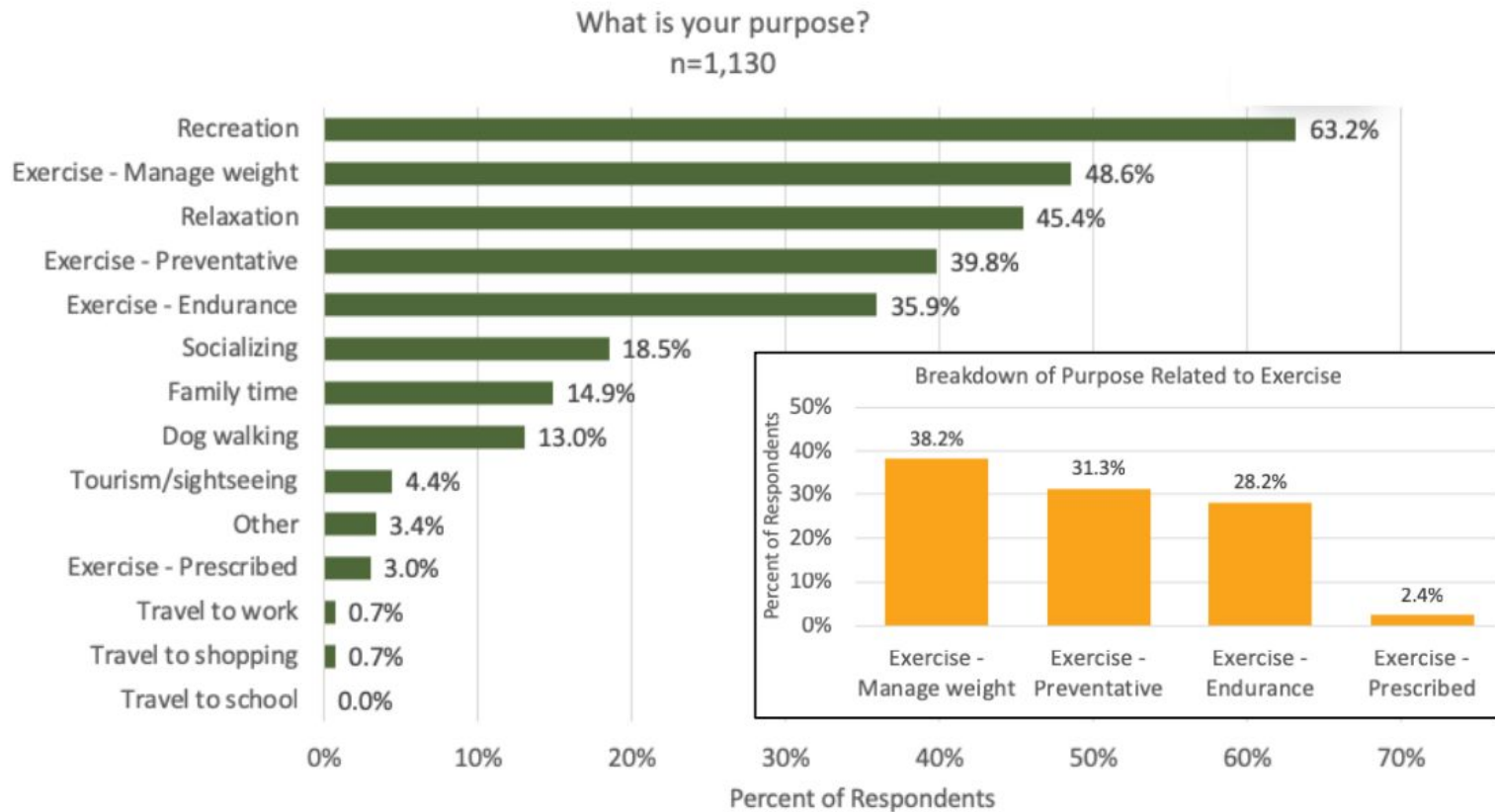
Survey Data

Total Number of Surveys Received by Location
2018 Survey Data
n = 1,131



Survey Data

Chart 10: Purpose on the Trail



Reflections on Statewide Surveying

Accommodates local needs

Local partners own the data

Volunteers are inconsistent

Partner capacity varies significantly

Not statistically rigorous

Natural outreach builds program recognition



A Statewide Volunteer Based Program

Requires a wide range of technical, administrative, outreach skills and broad partnerships

- Dedicated volunteers with diverse skills
- Emerging opportunities for partnership with unusual suspects - public health, arts, sustainability, economic development, planners & businesses
- Funding- 2019 . \$206,049 to continue to the program, \$5,000 Innovation Project
- Next steps: Hire staff, Improve education programs, advisory committee and partnership building, develop research partnerships, tailor programming to local needs and capacity



Program Evaluation

“Used [the Trail Census data] as part of town’s branding committee efforts to get more/better access to downtown from the trails.”

“It is important when promoting the trails, especially the building/improvement of them, that we have statistics supporting their use [and] to counter the "I never see anyone using the trails" argument.”

Thank you:

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*Visit us on the web: cttrailcensus.uconn.edu
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CLEAR

