

Connecticut Trail Census
Statewide multi-use trail user study



2025 Trail Use Count Data Report

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Acknowledgements

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Volunteers

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Overview

This report includes the final adjusted infrared (IR) counter data from 27 multi-use path, long-term locations in Connecticut at which counts were conducted throughout 2025, as well as from three short-term locations at which counts were conducted for between two weeks and several months in 2025 (Figure 1).

This use count summary is part of a multi-use trail data collection effort, the Connecticut Trail Census (CTTC), which is a statewide volunteer data collection program intended to inform understanding of multi-use trail use and to make the information available to trail user groups, administrators, government agencies, and the public. In addition to this report, the Trail Census counts are published on an online data dashboard that allows users to explore count data across sites and years. The dashboard is accessible through UConn's CT Trails Program website¹.

The project is currently funded by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Recreational Trails Program. Project partners include the Connecticut Greenways Council and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

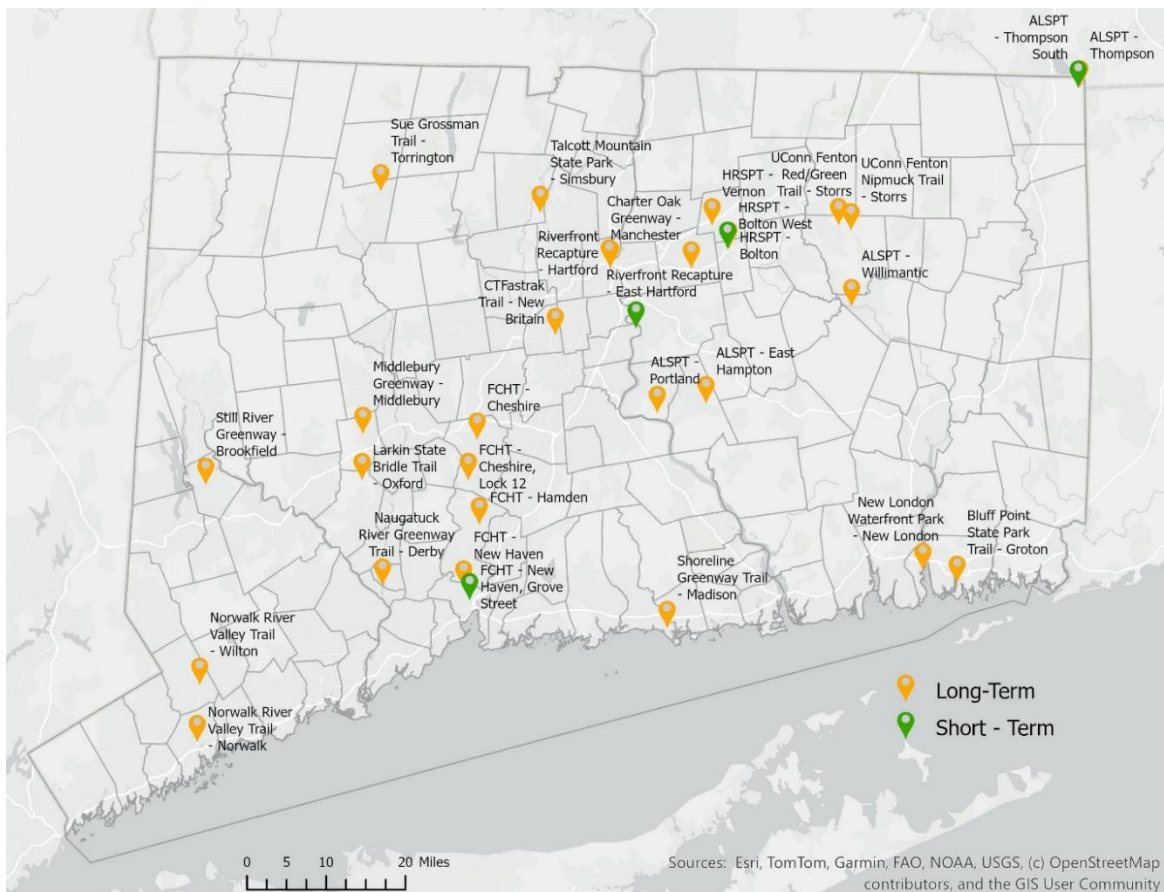


Figure 1. Long-term and short-term counter sites in 2025. ALSPT = Air Line State Park Trail, FCHT = Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, HRSPT = Hop River State Park Trail.

¹ The trail census website is part of UConn's CT Trails Program website <https://s.uconn.edu/cttc> and the CT Trail Census Data Dashboard can be accessed at https://s.uconn.edu/cttc_dataportal

Connecticut Trail Census Goals

1. Understand when, who, how, and why people use Connecticut's trails.
2. Inform trail user groups, administrators, state and local government agencies, and the public about trails and their impacts.
3. Obtain multi-year information about trail use, user demographics, economic impacts, and trail amenities for identification of patterns and trends.
4. Promote citizen participation in monitoring and understanding of the value of trails.
5. Encourage data-based trail design, construction, and management.

Understanding the Data

TRAFx Infrared Counters

The CT Trail Census employs TRAFx brand infrared (IR) pedestrian counters to track trail use. The IR counters register a temperature differential between background levels and that of a person or object passing by the IR scope and compiles these “hits” into hourly totals. The counters collect data 24 hours per day for as long as they are installed. While they generally work well, the counters do have some limitations. They cannot distinguish between types of users (e.g., pedestrians vs. cyclists), nor can they determine direction of travel. Two or more individuals passing the counter simultaneously or in rapid succession may only register as one “hit” by the counter, referred to as “occlusion error.” Fast moving cyclists might not be registered by the counter. Overcounting may occur in certain instances such as when pets or wild animals pass the counter, but typically, TRAFx IR pedestrian counters undercount.

Calibration Factors

To account for typical undercounting and to provide more accurate use figures, the raw count data are adjusted, or calibrated, using manual counts conducted by volunteers and CT Trail Census staff. The person is stationed at the counter location for a full hour and counts trail users as they pass by. The manual counts conducted at the trail counter location are then compared to the counts registered by the IR counter at that location for the same hour. Previously, annual correction factors were developed from manual counts conducted each year and a minimal factor was applied to trail locations where manual counts were not conducted during that year. Since 2022, the CT Trail Census team has developed calibration factors differently. To maximize the number of manual counts included in the calculation and to eliminate the application of an arbitrary minimal factor, calibration factors were developed from *all* previous manual counts conducted on each trail going back, in some cases, to 2017. This approach more accurately corrects for undercounting and helps to avoid swings in estimates caused by shifts in calibration factors from year to year.

Uses vs. Users

The counts presented in this report show the number of *uses*, not individual visits or visitors. Trail users who travel out and back on the same route will pass the counter twice and two uses will be counted. For trails with primarily out-and-back traffic, trail visits can be estimated at half of the count total. The counts in this report only reflect uses at the point on a trail where the counter is installed. The figures are not indicative of use of an entire trail or trail network.

Missing Data

Multiple counters had issues that resulted in missing or corrupted data and therefore incomplete datasets for the year. Common causes of missing or corrupted data are moisture in the IR scope, solar-heated vegetation within view of the IR scope, nesting insects or vegetation obstructing the IR scope, counter malfunction, or vandalism. The issues are usually very apparent in the data with either zeroes, no data, or wildly high or inconsistent numbers being recorded by the counter. In these cases, incongruous data were eliminated from the dataset. To account for missing data on annual use estimates, the annual totals were calculated by multiplying the average daily use for days with valid data on each trail by 365.

Short Term Count Data

In 2025, two short-term counters were deployed: one in July on the Air Line State Park Trail in Thompson, and one in December on the Hop River State Park Trail in Bolton (Figure 2). Both locations also have permanent counters. In Thompson, there are two trailheads connected to a parking area with recent improvements; the permanent counter is installed at the trailhead north of the parking lot, and the short-term counter was installed near the south trailhead. In Bolton, there are also two trailheads connected to the parking area. The permanent counter is installed at the trailhead east of the parking area, near the end of the tunnel where daytime lighting was recently installed; the short-term counter was installed near the western trailhead. There was also one new installation in May on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in New Haven on a newly opened segment between Temple Street and the Canal Dock Boathouse. This mid-year installation effectively plays the role of a short-term counter (Figure 2).

Counter Location	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven Grove					5/13-12/31							
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson South							7/19-12/31					
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton West												12/16-12/31

Figure 2. Deployment periods for 2025 short-term counters. The dates where counts were recorded are shown in green for each location.

A minimum of four weeks of recording is a reasonable duration that provides enough data for each location to gain an initial understanding of trail use; however, one counter that was deployed for just over two weeks was still included. To account for seasonal factors, the counts were not simply multiplied, but instead the short-term counts were extrapolated to estimate annual counts at each location. Extrapolation was done by first identifying a similar “comparison trail” location from the long-term counter locations considering trail type, surface, geographic location and use patterns and then comparing them for the same period to develop an extrapolation factor. The extrapolation factor was then applied to the annual total of the comparison trail to arrive at an estimate of annual trail use for the temporary count location.

2025 Trail Use Key Takeaways

- **Summary.** Overall, across 27 trails with consistent data, average daily trail use in 2025 was slightly lower than in 2024 (average daily total: 286 across 23 trails), but higher than 2019 pre-COVID levels (average daily total: 238 across 20 trails).
- **Trail Specific Trail Use Patterns.** 2025 Monthly, Day of Week, and Hour of Day trail use patterns vary between trails.
- **Weather Still Rules!** Weather appears to have a major influence on the volume of trail use as in past years. On days with mild to warm temperatures and clear conditions, trails see higher use volumes overall. Most of the trail use occurs in the spring, summer and fall, especially when weather is warm and dry. However, 2025 also saw 11% of yearly use in the winter months of January, February, and December.
- **Monitoring.** The counters experienced few and relatively short lapses in data collection caused by counter malfunction and other issues, thanks to regular checking and monitoring by volunteers. Volunteer trail coordinators are asked to make regular checks of the counter to ensure that it is working properly and to report any issues so that the CT Trail Census team can fix the problem. This is crucial to consistent data collection and in 2025 this helped to prevent missing data.

2025 Yearly Count Estimate by Trail

Of the trails with permanently installed long-term trail use counters, the most heavily used trails during 2025 were the Bluff Point State Park Trail in Groton (308,074 uses), Naugatuck River Greenway Trail in Derby (218,309 uses), and the Still River Greenway in Brookfield (215,051 estimated uses). Counters on the UConn Fenton Tract section of the Nipmuck Trail in Storrs, the UConn Fenton Tract Red/Green Trail in Storrs, and the Air Line State Park Trail in Portland recorded the lowest number of uses. A total of 2,681,604 counts were recorded in 2025 across the 27 permanent sites included in the report. Filling in average daily counts to account for missing data, the 27 sites had an estimated **2,700,749 total uses in 2025** (Table 1). For comparison, 2024 had an estimated 2,409,248 uses over 23 trails.

Several counters missed data due to malfunction and vandalism. The Air Line State Park Trail counter in Willimantic had a sensor malfunction in the summer that was discovered during the fall quarterly download. Lengthy periods of lost data show the importance of regular counter monitoring by volunteers. CTTC staff visit counters quarterly and rely on local coordinators to report issues in the interim so that they can be remedied. The Hop River counter in Bolton malfunctioned during the summer and was able to be replaced more promptly due to volunteer monitoring and reporting. Other counters had corrupted data removed due to counts well outside the normal range. The Portland counter had several days of unreasonably high counts, which were removed as outliers; this coincided with especially hot and humid weather in late spring. Finally, the UConn Fenton Tract Nipmuck Trail counter is missing more than one month of data because of vandalism. Equipment was recovered and replaced in a different location nearby.

Among the short-term counters, New Haven's Grove Street section of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail recorded a total of 93,792 counts over a duration of 233 days with 196,336

extrapolated total uses in 2025, while the counter on the Air Line State Park Trail in Thompson south of the trailhead recorded 9,196 counts over 166 days with 23,840 extrapolated total uses (Table 2). The Hop River State Park Trail counter in Bolton west of the trailhead recorded 1,177 counts over 16 days with 60,648 extrapolated total uses (Table 2). The comparison trail for the Hop River State Park Trail temporary counter was the permanent counter on the Hop River Trail in Vernon, rather than in Bolton, due to several weeks of missing data from the Bolton permanent counter.

Table 1: Counts and estimated yearly use - permanent counters. A summary of total IR counts, days with data available, daily averages and estimated annual use by trail location for 27 permanently installed counters in 2025. Total counts are adjusted with trail specific calibration factors. Red values indicate sites where fewer than 365 days of data were collected so that the annual estimate is derived.

Counter location	Total Count (adjusted)	Days with Data	Average Daily Total	Estimated Total 2025 Use
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	90,411	365	247.7	90,411
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	17,094	356	48.0	17,526
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	24,130	365	66.1	24,130
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	20,421	285	71.7	26,153
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	308,074	365	844.0	308,074
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	62,512	365	171.3	62,512
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	26,699	365	73.1	26,699
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	155,215	365	425.2	155,215
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire, Lock 12	213,937	365	586.1	213,937
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	143,487	365	393.1	143,487
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	48,904	365	134.0	48,904
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	59,623	327	182.3	66,552
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	137,064	365	375.5	137,064
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	19,046	365	52.2	19,046
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	72,523	365	198.7	72,523
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	218,309	365	598.1	218,309
New London Waterfront Park - New London	110,390	365	302.4	110,390
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	37,524	365	102.8	37,524
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	113,819	365	311.8	113,819
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	62,129	365	170.2	62,129
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	138,849	358	387.8	141,564
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	88,343	355	248.9	90,832
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	215,051	365	589.2	215,051
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	105,097	365	287.9	105,097
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	181,051	365	496.0	181,051

UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	4,678	309	15.1	5,526
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	7,224	365	19.8	7,224
Total Use (27 trails) in 2025	2,681,604		274.0	2,700,749

Table 2: Counts and estimated yearly use - short-term counters. Trail use counts for short-term counters, along with the number of days with data, daily average uses, the comparison trail used for extrapolation, and extrapolated annual total use.

Counter Location	Total Short-Term Count	Days with data	Average Daily Uses	Comparison Trail	Total Use (extrapolated)
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven Grove	93,792	233	403	Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	196,336
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson South	9,196	166	55	Air Line State Park Trail -Thompson	23,840
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton West**	1,177	16	74	Hop River State Park Trail -Vernon	60,648

**No manual counts available, and no adjustment factor applied.

2025 Yearly Counts Compared to Previous Years

Fifteen trail counter locations have had consistent data recorded since 2019. Their monthly trail use counts each year since 2019 are shown in Figure 3, and average daily trail use is shown in Figure 4. The fifteen trails counter locations are: the Air Line State Park Trail in East Hampton, the CTFastrack Trail in New Britain, the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Cheshire, Hamden, and New Haven, the Hop River Trail in Bolton and Vernon, the Larkin State Bridle Trail in Oxford, the Middlebury Greenway Trail in Middlebury, the Norwalk River Valley Trail in Wilton, the Riverfront Recapture Trail in Hartford and East Hartford, the Shoreline Greenway Trail in Madison, the Still River Greenway Trail in Brookfield, and the Sue Grossman Trail in Torrington. For a yearly comparison of trail counts between pre-pandemic levels and recent years for individual trails, visit the online CT Trail Census Data Dashboard².

Key Takeaways

- **Compared to previous years**, monthly use in 2025 followed the general curve of most years; unlike in 2024 when use peaked in October, 2025 use peaked in August (Figure 3).
- **There was a slight decrease in average daily trail use in 2025 compared to 2024.** The average daily total of counts in 2025 for 15 trails with continuous data was slightly lower than in 2024 (Figure 4).

² https://s.uconn.edu/cttc_dataportal

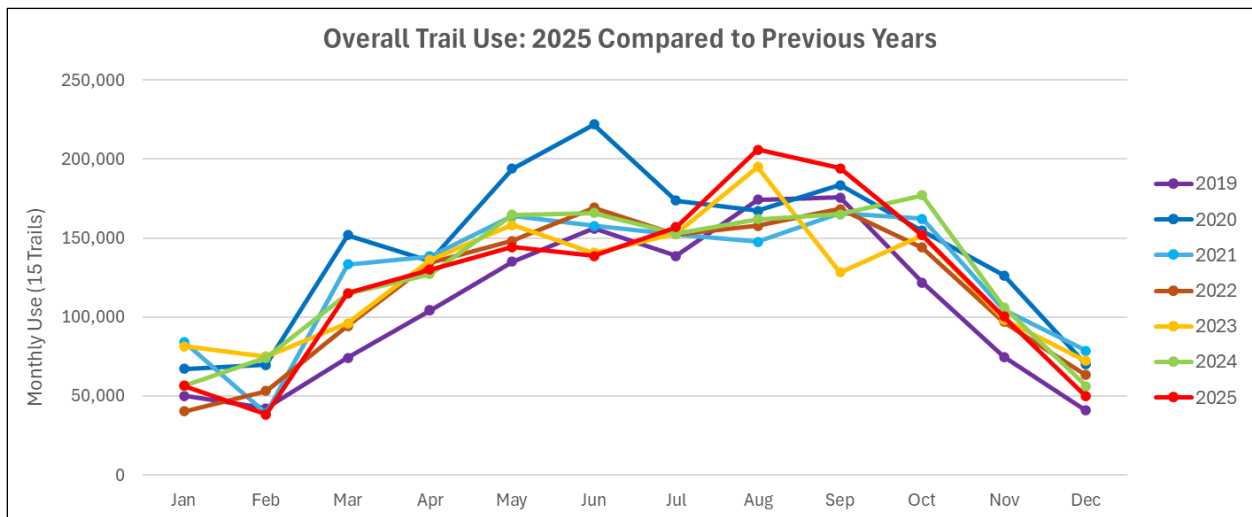


Figure 3. Aggregated trail use comparison by month for 2019-2025. Total trail use across fifteen trails is based on adjusted counts collected from trail sites with data available consistently from 2019 through 2025.

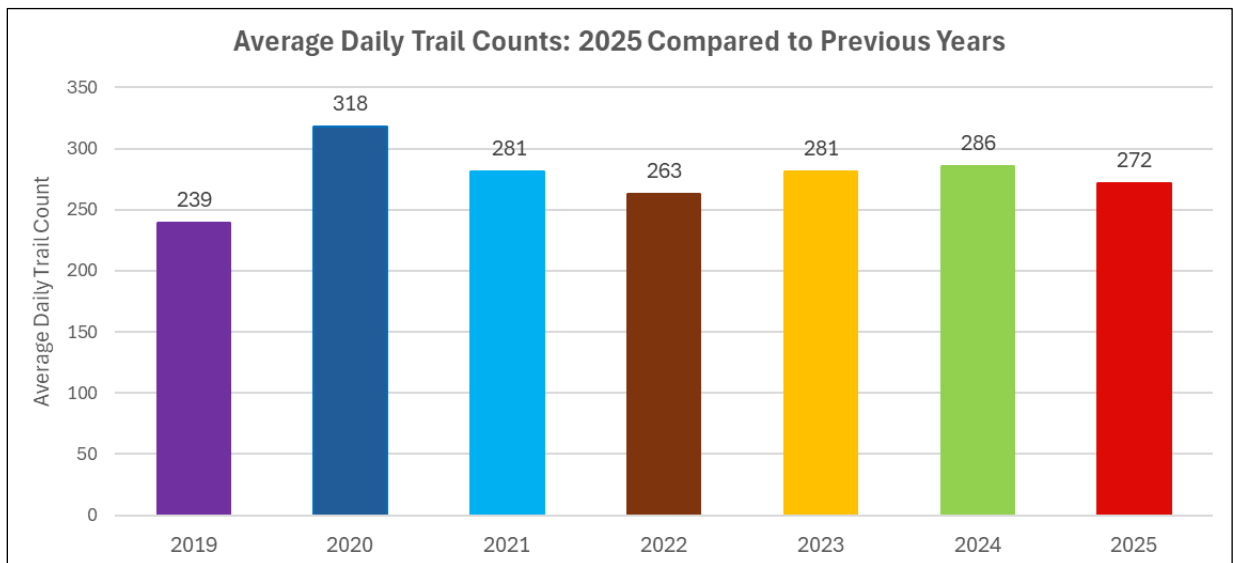


Figure 4. Aggregated trail use comparison by average daily trail counts for 2019-2025. Yearly averages are based on adjusted counts collected from fifteen sites with complete count data from 2019 to 2025.

2025 Counts by Month

The 2025 CT Trail Census count data and percentages by month are shown in Tables 3 and 4 for the 27 permanently installed trail counters. Due to the short recording windows, monthly counts and percentages for short-term locations are not summarized.

Key Takeaways

- **Year-round trail use.** While trails were more heavily used in the warmer months, all trails were also used in the winter.

- **Summer peak.** As observed in previous years, the heaviest trail use during 2025 occurred, in general, between the months of March and October. August had the highest total recorded trail use statewide with 13% in 2025 followed by September with 12% and July with 11%.
- **Patterns are trail specific.** The percent of total annual trail use by month (Table 4) shows that trail use patterns varied by trail in 2025. Exceptionally high counts typically coincided with trail-specific events like Celebrate New London on July 12 where 8,122 counts were recorded at the Waterfront Park location on a single day. Other examples are the Dragon Boat Festival on August 16 (6,326 counts), the Head of the Riverfront Regatta event on October 5 (7,049 counts), and the Run for the Riverfront 5k and Panda Fest both on September 27 (5,636 counts) at the Riverfront Recapture Trail in Hartford. Additionally, while most counter locations saw peak use in the summer, counters on University of Connecticut Forest trails did not show this trend. Specifically, the UConn Forest Red/Green Trail counter showed peak use in spring and fall, coinciding with the University’s semester schedule.
- **In 2025, there were unusually high trail uses in August.** For 14 out of 27 trails, August showed the highest or one of the highest percentages of monthly use (Table 4). A potential reason could be that the month had consistent milder, warm temperatures and less rainy conditions than both June and July (see Figures 5 and 6 on pages 20 and 21).

Table 3. Counts by month - permanent counters. Pink shading and red numbers indicate months with some missing data. Monthly totals are calculated by “filling in” missing days with daily averages for that month. Red shading indicates months with no data due to counter malfunction.

Counter location	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	3,274	1,427	6,242	7,841	8,642	9,692	10,287	12,511	11,171	9,592	6,743	2,989
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	810	572	1,561	1,548	1,521	1,883	1,815	2,038	2,073	1,617	1,412	781
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	1,174	1,103	2,535	2,454	2,745	3,182	2,093	1,802	1,978	2,130	2,040	894
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	1,079	457	2,599	3,132	3,083	1,643	2,751			3,530	2,977	1,208
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	13,967	10,891	28,575	21,843	25,052	28,936	34,328	49,442	36,005	29,888	19,233	9,914
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	1,043	300	4,418	5,786	5,045	5,843	7,175	8,793	10,207	7,782	4,596	1,524
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	1,546	1,466	2,170	2,294	2,521	2,871	2,619	2,765	2,580	2,651	1,745	1,471
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	4,520	2,150	12,218	14,426	18,457	13,717	17,311	24,131	19,624	15,020	9,357	4,284
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – Cheshire, Lock 12	6,284	5,638	16,293	19,692	23,087	24,186	25,742	30,655	23,224	18,892	13,639	6,605

Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	4,097	4,558	10,570	12,549	17,111	16,176	13,800	19,106	19,195	13,802	8,751	3,772
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	4,979	5,007	6,868	6,493	5,274	3,059	1,844	5,415	2,353	2,043	2,583	2,986
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	2,556	1,146	4,992	5,020	6,643	6,808	8,826		11,189	6,089	4,178	2,930
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	6,285	1,897	10,756	12,984	15,728	12,073	14,781	19,763	16,187	12,916	8,959	4,735
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	903	384	1,218	1,430	1,794	1,574	1,591	2,408	2,426	2,217	1,822	1,279
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	1,891	438	5,336	5,893	6,071	5,434	8,399	11,749	10,538	8,508	6,299	1,967
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	9,984	10,127	20,658	23,848	25,425	27,250	26,746	15,136	19,656	18,275	13,233	7,971
New London Waterfront Park – New London	3,004	2,761	4,808	6,987	11,557	9,797	20,945	15,989	16,617	10,502	4,662	2,761
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	1,371	1,392	3,001	3,742	4,110	4,111	4,201	4,414	4,274	3,272	2,370	1,266
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	5,931	2,805	9,479	9,937	11,346	10,772	11,665	14,175	12,180	11,106	9,517	4,906
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	2,157	1,853	4,385	5,226	3,707	6,511	6,604	9,285	8,574	7,913	4,102	1,812
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	3,741	2,837	5,452	10,124	8,447	12,890	17,724	24,829	24,845	19,385	6,604	2,816
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	2,855	1,760	5,413	5,966	7,498	9,239	8,257	17,365	14,357	9,317	7,049	3,400
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	7,634	7,388	20,016	19,617	20,750	17,021	21,688	28,224	27,026	22,466	16,114	7,107
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	4,108	3,079	10,104	10,260	10,328	10,728	11,497	14,231	12,005	8,749	6,562	3,446
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	5,348	2,382	11,199	12,931	16,668	16,366	17,788	23,555	21,842	32,289	16,197	4,486
UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	361	170	493	490	503	568	527	470	563	550		345
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	261	281	652	1,099	507	379	243	487	1,204	1,155	699	257
Total per month (27 trails) in 2025	101,163	74,269	212,011	233,612	263,620	262,709	301,247	358,738	331,893	281,656	181,443	87,912
Percentage of yearly use	4%	3%	8%	9%	10%	10%	11%	13%	12%	10%	7%	3%

Table 4. Percent of counts by month - permanent counters. Darker greens indicate higher percentage. Red text and frames indicate months with some missing data. Monthly totals are calculated by “filling in” missing days with daily averages for that month. Red shading indicates months without data.

Counter location	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	4%	2%	7%	9%	10%	11%	11%	14%	12%	11%	7%	3%
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	5%	3%	9%	9%	9%	11%	10%	12%	12%	9%	8%	4%
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	5%	5%	11%	10%	11%	13%	9%	7%	8%	9%	8%	4%
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	5%	2%	12%	14%	14%	7%	12%			16%	13%	5%
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	5%	4%	9%	7%	8%	9%	11%	16%	12%	10%	6%	3%
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	2%	0%	7%	9%	8%	9%	11%	14%	16%	12%	7%	2%
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	6%	5%	8%	9%	9%	11%	10%	10%	10%	10%	7%	6%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	3%	1%	8%	9%	12%	9%	11%	16%	13%	10%	6%	3%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – Cheshire, Lock 12	3%	3%	8%	9%	11%	11%	12%	14%	11%	9%	6%	3%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	3%	3%	7%	9%	12%	11%	10%	13%	13%	10%	6%	3%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	10%	10%	14%	13%	11%	6%	4%	11%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	4%	2%	8%	8%	11%	11%	15%		19%	10%	7%	5%
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	5%	1%	8%	9%	11%	9%	11%	14%	12%	9%	7%	3%
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	5%	2%	6%	8%	9%	8%	8%	13%	13%	12%	10%	7%
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	3%	1%	7%	8%	8%	7%	12%	16%	15%	12%	9%	3%
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	5%	5%	9%	11%	12%	12%	12%	7%	9%	8%	6%	4%
New London Waterfront Park – New London	3%	3%	4%	6%	10%	9%	19%	14%	15%	10%	4%	3%
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	4%	4%	8%	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	11%	9%	6%	3%

Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	5%	2%	8%	9%	10%	9%	10%	12%	11%	10%	8%	4%
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	3%	3%	7%	8%	6%	10%	11%	15%	14%	13%	7%	3%
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	3%	2%	4%	7%	6%	9%	13%	18%	18%	14%	5%	2%
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	3%	2%	6%	6%	8%	10%	9%	19%	16%	10%	8%	4%
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	4%	3%	9%	9%	10%	8%	10%	13%	13%	10%	7%	3%
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	4%	3%	10%	10%	10%	10%	11%	14%	11%	8%	6%	3%
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	3%	1%	6%	7%	9%	9%	10%	13%	12%	18%	9%	2%
UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	7%	3%	10%	10%	10%	11%	10%	9%	11%	11%	7%	7%
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	4%	4%	9%	15%	7%	5%	3%	7%	17%	16%	10%	4%

2025 Counts by Day of Week

The weekly summary presents trail use by day of the week, averaged over all weeks in 2025 for permanent counters (Table 5, counts and Table 6, percentages) and for short-term counters (Table 7, counts and Table 8, percentages).

Key Takeaways

- **Overall, studied trails saw heavier use on weekends.** This trend has been consistent every year since 2017. In 2025, Saturdays and Sundays each accounted for approximately 19% of use on trails statewide, followed by Monday, Tuesday, and Friday with 13% each, and Wednesday and Thursday with 12% each (Table 5). Talcott Mountain State Park in Simsbury saw the highest proportional weekend use with 26% on both days.
- **Some trails saw heavier use during the week than on weekends.** Most notably, the CTFastrak trail which runs parallel to the CTFastrak Bus Rapid Transit line saw heavier use on weekdays than on weekends likely indicating higher levels of commuter use relative to recreational use on those days. Similarly, the Riverfront Recapture Trail in East Hartford saw its highest use of the week on Tuesdays.
- **For short-term counters,** it is more difficult to draw conclusions due to shorter recording periods, meaning that in some cases, a couple of rainy days could disproportionately affect the weekly patterns. Thursdays and weekends had the highest use in general among the three short-term locations, although the counter on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in New Haven saw much more uniform use throughout the week than the other two (Tables 7 and 8).

Table 5. Average counts by day of week in 2025 - permanent counters, rounded to the nearest whole number. Day-of-week counts per counter are summed for each day over the entire year and divided by 52 (the number of weeks in a year) to reveal the pattern of average day-of-week count per trail and in total. The percentage of weekly use is the total average count of each day-of-week divided by the total average count of all days.

Counter Location	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	224	218	195	197	232	335	333
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	43	43	47	42	37	57	65
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	49	46	48	48	61	101	110
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	64	65	68	65	67	85	88
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	708	683	655	627	764	1230	1245
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	168	150	158	141	159	226	197
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	87	81	75	73	77	63	56
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	390	366	358	326	405	572	562
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – Cheshire, Lock 12	513	496	472	438	538	810	839
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	327	317	315	309	359	580	547
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	123	131	137	126	141	147	135
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	150	125	131	127	155	287	302
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	365	324	338	301	369	451	481
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	49	44	45	43	47	68	70
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	200	199	182	187	185	212	227
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	629	599	579	546	583	654	598
New London Waterfront Park – New London	245	236	237	222	319	503	356
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	103	108	100	97	102	101	109
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	267	283	268	255	294	392	424
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	176	199	179	168	154	177	139
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	297	346	304	341	276	656	497
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	201	199	201	189	231	348	374
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	576	597	586	524	569	643	629
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	299	310	298	266	287	280	277
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	378	309	282	301	423	896	887
UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	14	12	13	14	13	18	23
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	16	20	21	18	22	22	21
Total average count by day-of-week over 27 trails	6,660	6,503	6,291	5,990	6,866	9,915	9,591
Percentage of weekly use	13%	13%	12%	12%	13%	19%	19%

Table 6. Percentage of counts by day of week in 2025 - permanent counters. Darker green indicates a higher percentage. The percentages are the average counts by day of week (Table 5) divided by each trail's total across all days of the week.

Counter Location	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	13%	13%	11%	11%	13%	19%	19%
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	13%	13%	14%	13%	11%	17%	19%
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	11%	10%	10%	10%	13%	22%	24%
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	13%	13%	14%	13%	13%	17%	18%
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	21%	21%
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	14%	12%	13%	12%	13%	19%	16%
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	17%	16%	15%	14%	15%	12%	11%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	13%	12%	12%	11%	14%	19%	19%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – Cheshire, Lock 12	12%	12%	12%	11%	13%	20%	20%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	21%	20%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	13%	14%	15%	13%	15%	16%	14%
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	12%	10%	10%	10%	12%	22%	24%
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	14%	12%	13%	11%	14%	17%	18%
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	13%	12%	12%	12%	13%	19%	19%
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	14%	14%	13%	13%	13%	15%	16%
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	15%	14%	14%	13%	14%	16%	14%
New London Waterfront Park – New London	12%	11%	11%	10%	15%	24%	17%
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	14%	15%	14%	13%	14%	14%	15%
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	12%	13%	12%	12%	13%	18%	19%
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	15%	17%	15%	14%	13%	15%	12%
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	11%	13%	11%	13%	10%	24%	18%
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	12%	11%	12%	11%	13%	20%	21%
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	14%	14%	14%	13%	14%	16%	15%
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	15%	15%	15%	13%	14%	14%	14%
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	11%	9%	8%	9%	12%	26%	26%
UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	13%	11%	12%	13%	12%	17%	22%
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	11%	14%	15%	13%	16%	16%	15%

Table 7: Average counts by day of week in 2025 - short-term counters, rounded to the nearest whole number. To calculate the average count by day of the week, the day-of-week counts were summed for each day over the recording period and then divided by the number of weeks in the recording period. The percentage of weekly use figures are calculated by dividing the total average count for all trails for each day by the total average count over all days. Due to their short duration, several days of rainy weather can impact patterns.

Counter Location	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven Grove	412	457	417	376	416	379	360
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson South	44	45	36	38	46	99	78
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton West (not adjusted)	49	38	49	129	49	95	137
Total by day-of-week over 3 trails w/short-term counters	504	541	502	544	510	572	575
Percentage of weekly use	13%	14%	13%	15%	14%	15%	15%

Table 8. Percentage of counts by day of week in 2025 - short-term counters. Darker green indicates higher percentage. The percentages are the average counts by day of week (Table 7) divided by each trail's total across all days of the week.

Counter Location	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven Grove	15%	16%	15%	13%	15%	13%	13%
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson South	11%	12%	9%	10%	12%	25%	20%
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton West (not adjusted)	9%	7%	9%	24%	9%	17%	25%

2025 Counts by Hour of Day

The Hour of Day summary presents trail counts by time of day. Total hourly counts for all 27 trails with permanent counters, averaged over 365 days, are shown in Table 9 while Table 10 shows the percentage of daily counts by hour-of-day for each trail. Hourly patterns from all three short-term counter locations are shown in Table 11, and Table 12 shows the corresponding hourly percentages of daily use.

Key Takeaways

- **Most trail use (76%) takes place between 9am and 6pm**, which is consistent with findings throughout the Connecticut Trail Census data collection. The busiest hours in 2025 overall were 10am-2pm (9% of traffic each hour), followed by 2pm-6pm (8% of traffic each hour).
- **Peaks for the noon hour in Hartford and East Hartford** likely reflect the popularity of lunchtime walks by workers in nearby office buildings.
- **Some trails show a peak past 4pm.** They are the Charter Oak Greenway in Manchester, CTfastrak in New Britain, New London Waterfront Park, and Norwalk River Valley Trail in Norwalk. Late day peaks may be due to other activity near the trail counter locations. In Manchester, the counter is in Charter Oak Park and park users are likely counted in addition

to through-hikers/bikers. In New Britain, the later peak may indicate commuters returning from work. The counter in New London is on the waterfront and adjacent to the commercial center of the city, likely counting park users, anglers, and visitors to shops and restaurants. In Norwalk, several of these factors likely play a role, as the counter is installed near a public park, and the trail is likely used by some commuters and/or to reach the waterfront and its attractions, beaches, and local businesses.

Table 9. Average counts by hour of day in 2025 – permanent counters, rounded to the nearest whole number. Counts for each hour of the day were summed over the year and divided by 365. The percentages represent how much that hour contributed to the total count.

	12AM	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	10PM	11PM
Average Hourly Total	10	7	4	4	6	34	126	240	387	538	635	671	690	659	628	616	620	603	471	276	107	38	21	13
Percent of all hours	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	5%	7%	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Table 10. Percentage of daily use by hour of day in 2025 - permanent counters. Numbers are percentages and darker green indicates a higher percentage. Hourly counts per trail were summed over the entire year and divided by 365 to see the pattern of average hourly count per trail.

Counter Location	12AM	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	10PM	11PM
Air Line State Park Trail - East Hampton	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	7	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	5	2	0	0	0	0
Air Line State Park Trail - Portland	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	5	7	9	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	6	4	1	0	0	0
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	5	6	8	10	11	10	11	9	9	6	4	2	1	0	0	0
Air Line State Park Trail - Willimantic	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	6	7	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	6	4	2	0	0	0
Bluff Point State Park Trail - Groton	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	6	8	10	10	11	11	10	10	9	6	3	1	0	0	0
Charter Oak Greenway - Manchester	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5	5	7	6	6	6	7	8	10	10	10	7	4	2	1	1
CTFastrak Trail - New Britain	1	1	0	0	1	1	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	7	11	13	10	6	4	3	2	2	1
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Cheshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	7	10	10	10	10	8	8	9	8	6	3	1	0	0	0
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – Cheshire, Lock 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	8	9	10	9	9	9	8	8	8	6	3	1	0	0	0
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - Hamden	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	7	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	6	3	1	0	0	0

Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	7	8	8	6	4	3	2	2	2
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5	7	9	10	9	9	9	10	9	8	5	2	1	0	0	0
Hop River State Park Trail - Vernon	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	7	10	11	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	3	1	0	0	0
Larkin State Bridle Trail - Oxford	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	6	7	8	9	10	9	9	9	10	10	6	3	1	0	0	0
Middlebury Greenway - Middlebury	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	9	11	11	9	8	7	6	6	7	7	7	3	1	0	0	0
Naugatuck River Greenway Trail - Derby	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	7	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	7	5	3	1	0	0
New London Waterfront Park - New London	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	7	7	9	7	7	6	3	2	1
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Norwalk	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	7	7	6	5	6	7	7	6	6	9	9	7	3	2	1	1
Norwalk River Valley Trail - Wilton	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	8	5	2	0	0	0	0
Riverfront Recapture - East Hartford	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	7	6	8	13	10	8	7	7	8	9	6	2	1	0	0
Riverfront Recapture - Hartford	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	7	7	12	10	8	7	8	8	8	6	3	1	1	0
Shoreline Greenway Trail - Madison	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	8	11	12	12	10	9	9	8	7	4	1	0	0	0	0
Still River Greenway - Brookfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	8	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	4	1	0	0	0
Sue Grossman Trail - Torrington	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	6	8	9	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	6	4	1	0	0	0
Talcott Mountain State Park - Simsbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5	8	10	12	12	11	10	9	8	5	3	1	0	0	0
UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail - Storrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	7	9	9	10	9	11	11	11	9	5	3	1	0	1	0
UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail - Storrs	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	5	6	8	10	11	13	13	12	10	6	2	1	1	0	0

Table 11. Average counts by hour of day in 2025 - short-term counters, rounded to the nearest whole number. Counts for each hour were summed over the recording period and divided by the respective number of days. The percentages represent how much that hour contributed to the total count.

	12A	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10A	11A	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	10PM	11PM
Average Hourly Total	2	1	1	0	0	1	6	17	32	37	38	41	53	50	43	41	44	44	32	22	14	7	4	3
Percent of all hours	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	6%	7%	7%	8%	10%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Table 12. Percentage of daily use by hour of day in 2025 - short-term counters. Numbers are percentages and darker green indicates a higher percentage. Hourly counts per trail were summed over the recording period and divided by the respective number of days to see the pattern of average hourly count per trail.

Counter Location	12AM	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	10PM	11PM
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail - New Haven Grove	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	7	7	7	9	9	7	7	8	9	7	5	3	2	1	1
Air Line State Park Trail - Thompson South	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	7	10	11	13	11	9	8	7	6	4	2	1	0	0	0
Hop River State Park Trail - Bolton West (not adjusted)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	5	7	9	12	13	14	13	13	7	1	0	1	0	0	0

2025 Counts by Day and Weather

Weather is an important factor when looking at trail use data. Daily count totals across all trails are compared with daily high temperature (Figure 5), precipitation (Figure 6), and snow cover (Figure 7) as recorded at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT.

Key Takeaways

- **Weather is an influential factor impacting levels of daily trail use.** However, even on cold and/or rainy days, people still use trails (Figures 5 and 6).
- **Snow cover limits trail use.** Winter trail use was higher on days without snow cover. For example, January 1 was an unusually warm day and had greater use than many other winter days (Figures 5 and 7). In contrast, days with 3-7 inches of snow cover recorded at Bradley International Airport (January 20-22 and February 16-20) saw lower trail use (Figure 7) but not zero!
- **Rainy and/or hot days decrease trail use.** In 2025, counts during the summer months were lower in June and July than in August. This coincides with a period of many hot days in June and July, often above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (F), even hitting 99 degrees F in late June (Figure 5). Days with heavy rainfall and storms (for example, May 9 with 1.48 inches of rainfall at Bradley Airport, July 31 with 2.58 inches, and October 30 with 1.68 inches) had unseasonably low counts (Figure 6).

- **Spring Fever!** On especially warm days in winter and early spring, trail use spiked. For example, January 1 was 53 degrees F, and trail use was high for winter at 6,894, compared to fewer than 3,000 counts on most days following. March 10 was the first day above 60 degrees, and the total trail uses across all locations spiked to 9,741 compared to a previous winter average of 3,243.
- **October 5, 2025 saw the highest uses recorded** across all trail count locations with 22,519 uses. This day was an 85-degree Sunday - the last weekend before temperatures began to fall below 70 degrees. This also coincided with Riverfront Recapture’s Head of the Riverfront Regatta, an event which garnered this site’s largest turnout of the year.

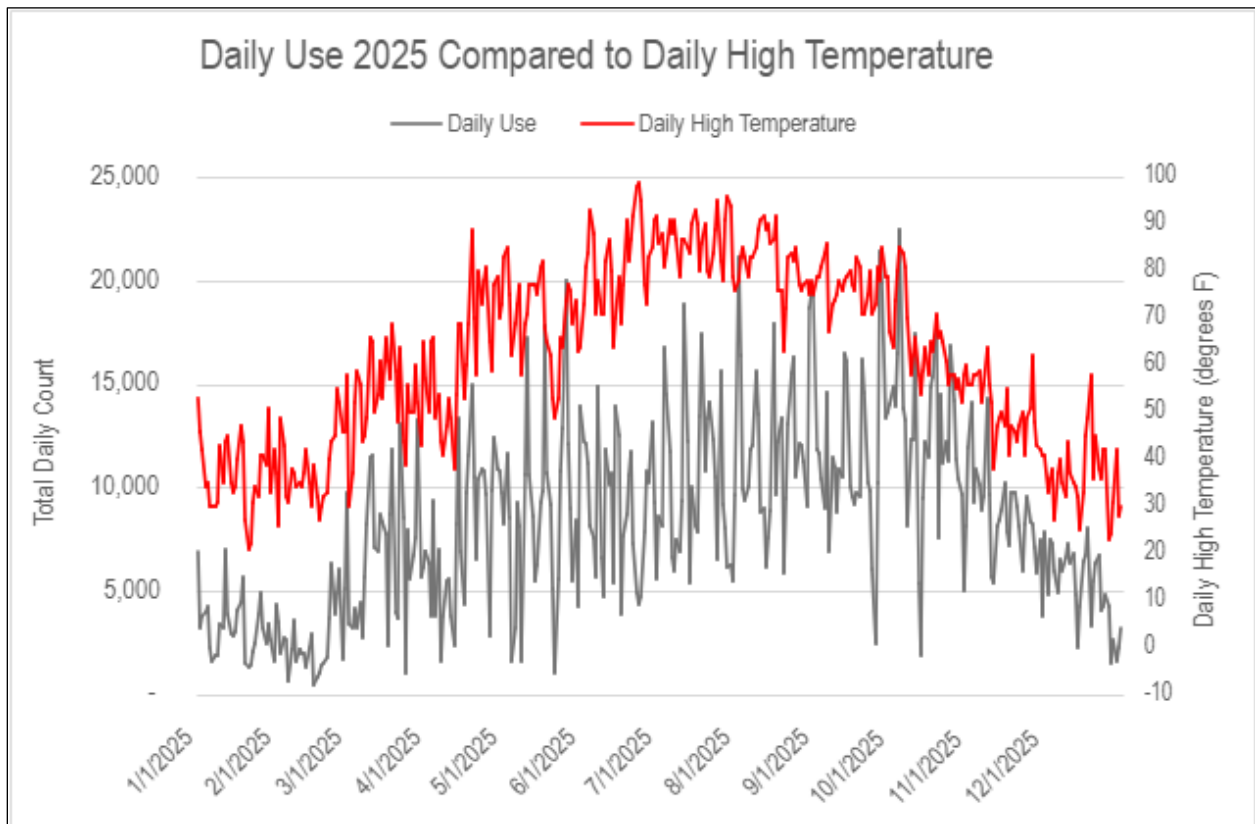


Figure 5. Trail Counts and Temperature. A comparison of the total daily counts for 27 trails with daily high temperatures recorded at Bradley International Airport and obtained from NOAA weather station USW00014740, NOAA – National Centers for Environmental Information³.

In the summer months, smoke from Canada’s second worst wildfire season on record traveled into many northeastern states, including Connecticut⁴. This caused poor air quality and triggered air quality alerts in Connecticut and surrounding states several times throughout the

³ <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/cdo-web/datasets/GHCND/stations/GHCND:USW00014740/detail> (retrieved 3/9/2026)

⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2025/08/03/g-s1-80826/canada-wildfires-cause-poor-air-quality-in-the-midwest-and-northeast-us> (retrieved 3/22/2026)

summer, such as June 4⁵-5⁶ and August 4-5⁷. Residents of these states were advised to limit outdoor activity. It is uncertain to what extent these poor air quality events may have affected trail use.

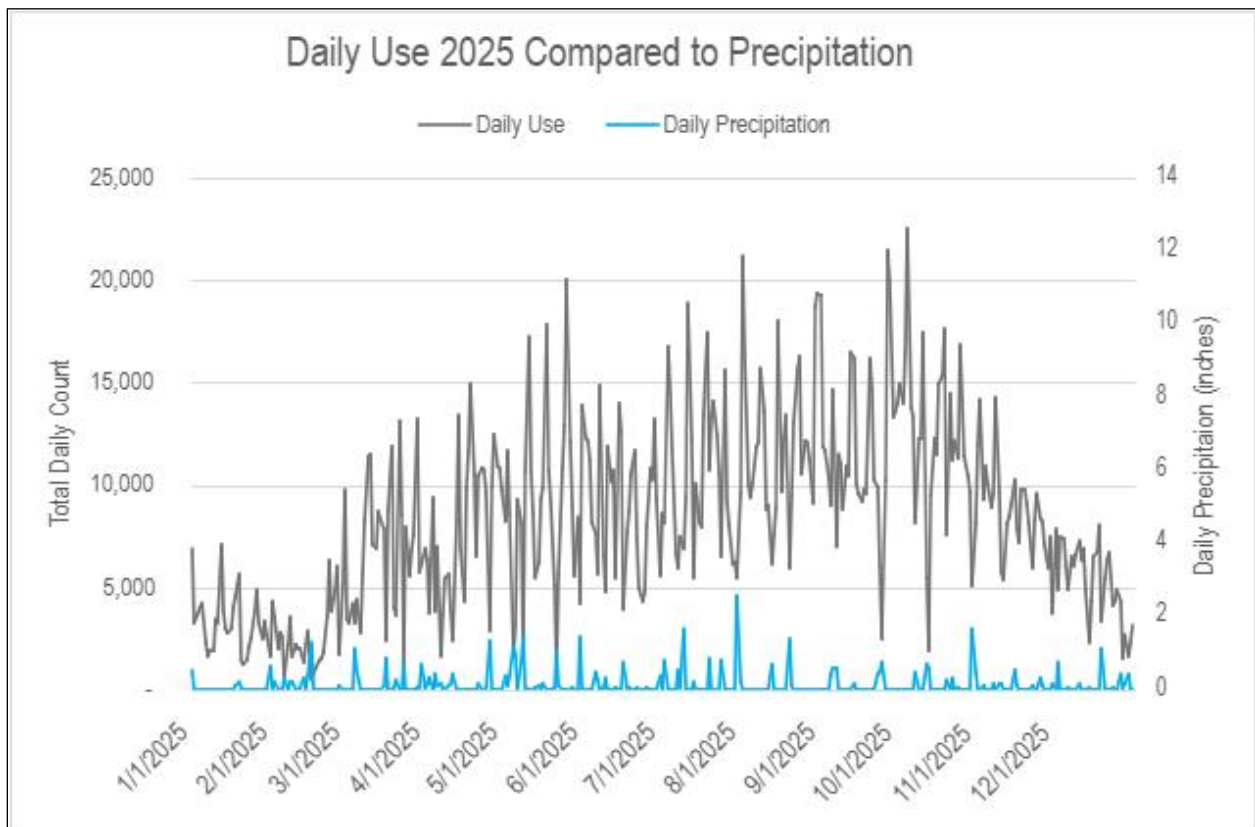


Figure 6. Trail Counts and Precipitation. A comparison of daily counts over 27 trails with daily precipitation recorded at Bradley International Airport. High precipitation coincides with lower trail use.

⁵ <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/weather-news/connecticut-weather-june-4/3579092/> (retrieved 3/22/2026)

⁶ [Air Quality Alert issued for NYC, parts of NY, NJ, CT - Canada wildfires smoke creates hazy day - ABC7 New York](https://abc7.com/news/air-quality-alert-issued-for-nyc-parts-of-ny-nj-ct-canada-wildfires-smoke-creates-hazy-day-107777777/) (retrieved 3/22/2026)

⁷ <https://www.wfsb.com/2025/08/05/canadian-wildfire-smoke-causes-air-quality-concerns-connecticut/> (retrieved 3/22/2026)

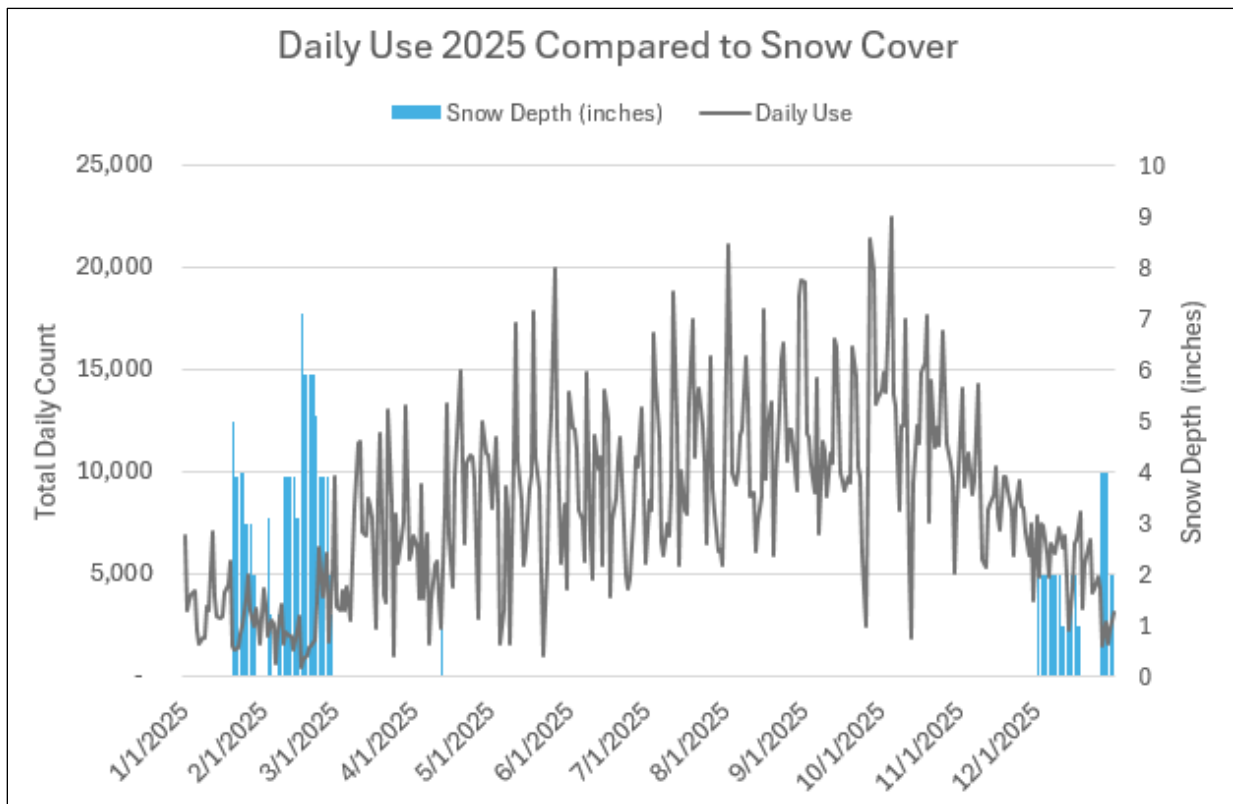


Figure 7. Trail Counts and Snow Cover. A comparison of total daily counts for 27 trails and snow depth as recorded at Bradley International Airport. Generally, trail use decreases when there is snow cover.

Mode Share

The TRAFx IR counters cannot differentiate between different types of trail users. Volunteers conducting manual counts for calibration purposes do collect information about mode of travel. Classification of trail users includes three categories: pedestrian (walk, run, etc.), bike (all types, includes e-bikes, recumbent, tricycle, etc.), and other (wheelchair, stroller, roller skates/blades, skateboard, etc.). Mode shares recorded during manual counts are shown in Figure 8. The locations with the highest proportion of pedestrian use in 2025 were Talcott Mountain State Park in Simsbury (100%) and UConn Fenton Red/Green Trail in Storrs (100%), UConn Fenton Nipmuck Trail in Storrs (96%), and the Riverfront Recapture Trail in Hartford (94%). The highest proportion of cyclists were on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Cheshire (69%) and the Hop River State Park Trail in Bolton (59%).

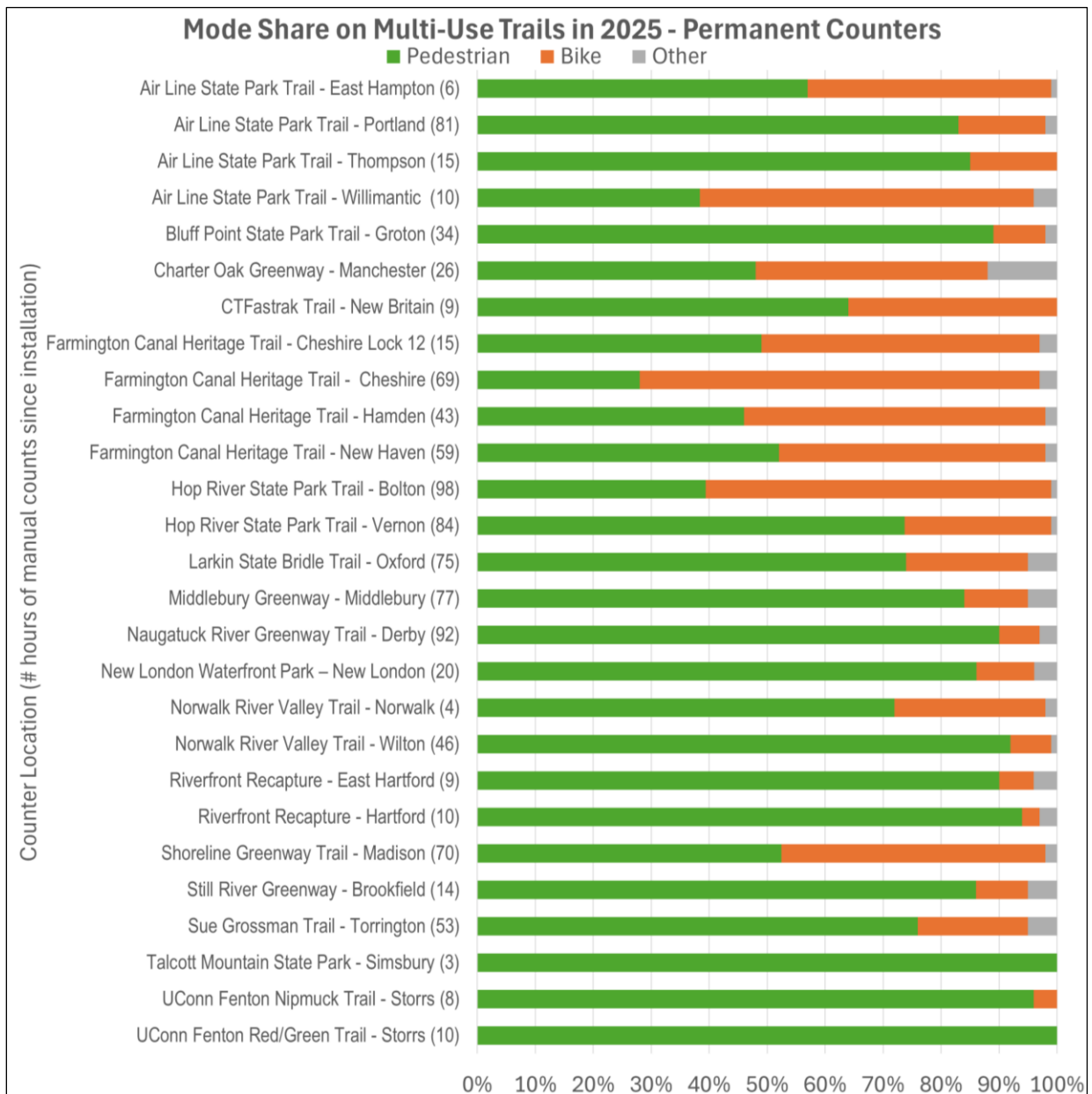


Figure 8. Mode Share by Trail - permanent counters, from manual counts conducted between 2017 and 2025.

For short-term counters in 2025, during five hours of observation at the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail temporary counter in New Haven (Grove Street), 59% of uses were pedestrian, 33% were bike, and 8% were other uses. During four hours of observation in fall 2025 at the Air Line State Park Trail temporary counter in Thompson, 90% of uses were pedestrian, 10% were bike and 0% were other uses. The Hop River State Park Trail temporary counter in Bolton was installed too close to the end of the year for volunteers to collect manual counts and observe trail use modes.

For more information about 2025 trail use counts and yearly comparisons since 2017, visit the Data Dashboard⁸. The CT Trail Census team once again would like to thank the volunteers who make it possible to collect data and maintain accuracy of trail counts statewide. If you are interested in getting involved with the CT Trail Census program as a volunteer, more information is available on the website⁹.

⁸ https://s.uconn.edu/cttc_dataportal

⁹ <https://cttrails.uconn.edu/volunteer/>