Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission

2019 Trail Usage Report

SAP&DC

SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Program Overview

The Southern Alleghenies Region contains hundreds of miles of walking, hiking, and biking trails within its six-county footprint. SAP&DC placed infrared counters on seven trails in the region to quantify how many people were utilizing the natural recreational opportunities in the region.

Counters were placed on the following trails:
- Bedford Heritage Trail in Bedford, PA.
- H&BT Trail
  - Riddlesburg Trailhead
  - Cypher Trailhead
  - Tatesville Trailhead
- James Mayer Riverwalk Trail in Johnstown, PA.
- Path of the Flood in South Fork, PA.
- The Old Pennsylvania Pike Trail (TOPP) in Breezewood, PA.
- Somerset Lake in Somerset, PA.
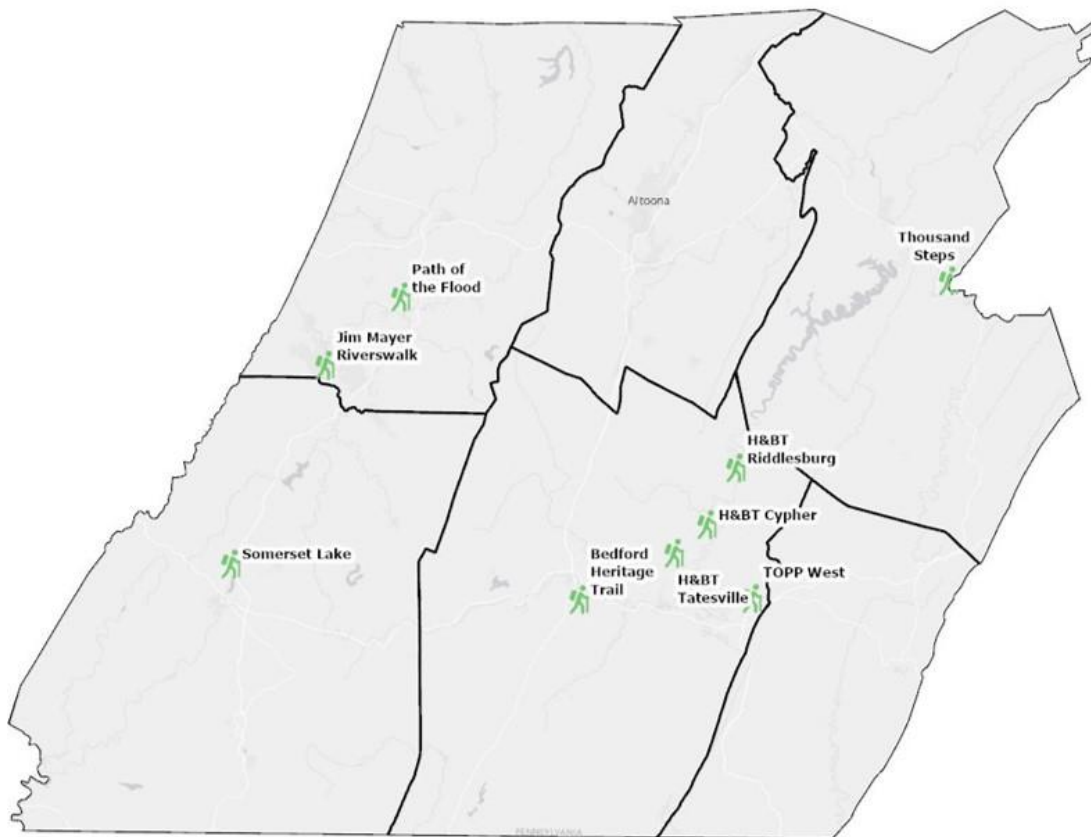- Thousand Steps in Mapleton, PA.

Figure 1: Location of trail counters in the Southern Alleghenies Region.

Trail Information

Bedford Heritage Trail - The Bedford Heritage Trail provides a safe and picturesque connection between the Bedford Springs Resort and a nationally recognized downtown. The trail signage borrows from the flag emblem of Fort Bedford, which lies at the northern terminus of the Heritage Trail. The trail invites users to explore the cultural and historic assets of Bedford.

Figure 2: Deployment at the Bedford Heritage Trail.

H&BT Trail - The H&BT Rail Trail project is the development of a former railroad right-of-way into a rail trail for public use. The entire property, owned by Broad Top Township, includes 10.6 miles of the Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain Railroad right-of-way.

Figure 3: Deployment at the H&BT Riddlesburg Trail.

James Mayer Riverwalk - Named after a local conservationist, the Jim Mayer Riverwalk Trail is a 3.1-mile urban trail on the east end of the City of Johnstown. This trail offers beautiful views of the Stonycreek River, Buttermilk Falls, and serenity within an urban setting.

Path of the Flood - In 1889, more than 2,200 people lost their lives in the Johnstown Flood when the South Fork Dam failed. The nine-mile long trail closely follows the course of the flood waters on their deadly path to Johnstown. Comprised of on- and off-road sections, the trail incorporates the two-mile long Staple Bend Tunnel Trail, managed by the National Park Service.

The Old Pennsylvania Pike - The Old Pennsylvania Turnpike opened on October 1, 1940, with hundreds of motorists waiting for days to be the first to ride "The Road of the Future". Nothing to slow you down, except for the tunnels. In 1968, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (TPC) bypassed the Ray's and Sidling Hill tunnels and 11 miles of pike. The abandoned 11-mile stretch, including the two tunnels, is now used as a walking and bicycling trail.

Figure 4: Deployment at TOPP Trail.

Somerset Lake – The trail is currently under construction. It will begin at the North Parking Lot area, and meander through the woods along side the lake up until the corner of Wood Duck Road and Gilmour Road. The under-construction portion of the trail will be between .25 and .5 miles in length. The trail will eventually run around the entirety of Somerset Lake.

Thousand Steps - Constructed in 1936 during the area's boom in the brickmaking industry, the steps were used by employees of Harbison-Walker to access ganister and bring the rock down the switchbacks to the refractories where it would be turned into fire bricks used to line steel-making furnaces. After World War II, the need for steel fabrication gradually declined and eventually the quarry above Thousand Steps closed. Today,

Thousand Steps is the most popular section of the Standing Stone Trail, which contains over 80 miles of trails and is part of the Great Eastern Trail.

Figure 5: Deployment at the Thousand Steps Trail.

Data Collection Methods

The SAP&DC deployed nine TRAFx Infrared Trail Counters on the trails listed above. The infrared counters were placed in 9" x 5" x 2.5" General Electric metal cases (as seen in Figures 2-5 above) to protect the counters from tampering and the elements. The counter boxes were strategically placed near trailheads (fastened on to trees, posts, or signs) to get an accurate count of people utilizing the trails. The counters work most accurately when they are within 20 ft of the main trail activity (Figure 6) and were placed accordingly. The counter records a count each time the infrared beam is broken by an object. It is important to note possible errors in the count, due to non-human objects breaking the beam or trail users being too far from the counter for the count to register.
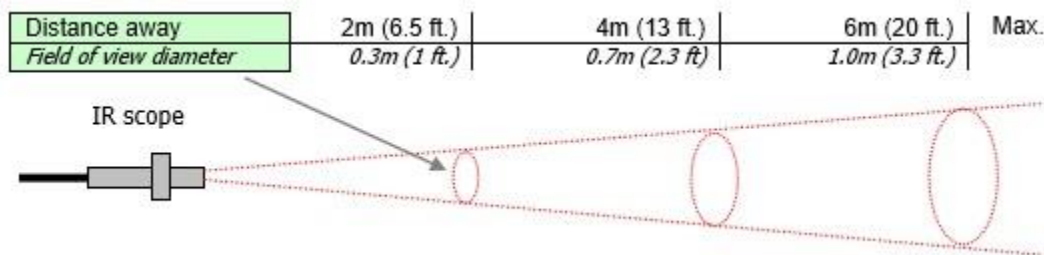

Figure 6: Diagram from TRAFx Manual explaining the field of view of infrared counters.

Most of the counters were installed in the spring of 2019, between the months of March and May, however some were deployed in 2018. This report will only include the 2019 data for counters deployed in 2018. After deployment, counter data was collected and analyzed monthly. Monthly collection of the counters served to ensure that the counters were functioning properly. Data was collected from the counters using a TRAFx Dock, which plugs in to the counters' motherboards and downloads the data. The data from the

dock was then downloaded and uploaded to TRAFx DataNet for processing. The total counts for each trail were divided by two to eliminate double counting visitors as they entered and exited the trailheads.

An ArcGIS Online (AGOL) Dashboard was created and published to the SAP&DC AGOL homepage to publicly display the trail count data. The dashboard displays the location of all the monitored trailheads with point shapefiles. Clicking on a trail name in the legend will zoom to the trailhead location and display monthly counts, as well as a to-date yearly total for the trail. The dashboard is updated monthly as counts are collected from the field. The dashboard can be viewed at the following URL: http://sapdcgis.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html.
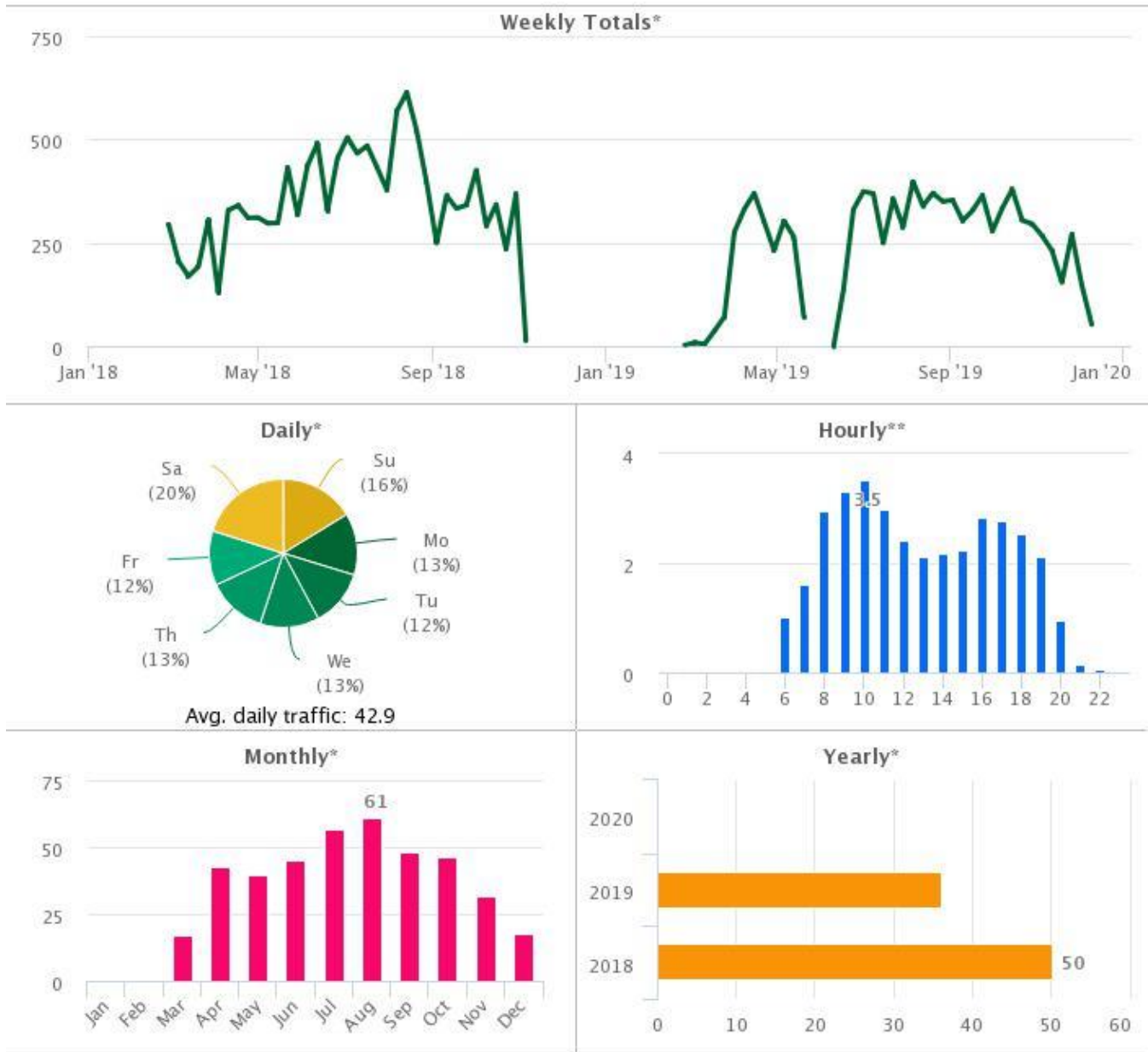
Trail Count Tables and Reports

Trail/ Trailhead	Count Start Date	Average Daily Total	Average Visitors Per Month	2019 Total	Peak Usage Month (Count)	Peak Usage Day of the Week (Count)	Peak Usage Times
Bedford Heritage Trail	3/1/19	35.875	1,051	10,516	August (1,881)	Saturday (61.8)	8-10 AM, 5-7 PM
H&BT Riddlesburg	1/1/19	5.39	174.1	2,089	August (326)	Saturday (6.6)	8-11 AM, 2-4 PM
H&BT Cypher	1/1/19	6.462	187.7	2,242	June (343)	Saturday (11.6)	10-11 AM, 1-2 PM
H&BT Tatesville	1/1/19	10.803	314.8	3,462	May (637)	Saturday (17)	11 AM–3 PM
James Mayer Riverwalk	5/16/19	22.632	696.8	5,587	June (1,196)	Sunday (29.6)	1 PM, 5-7 PM
Path of the Flood	5/17/19	12.388	389.5	3,055	May (646)	Saturday (17.4)	8-11 AM, 1-5 PM
The Old Penn. Pike	5/16/19	23.385	729.4	5,794	May (913)	Saturday (47.2)	12-3 PM
Somerset Lake	5/31/19	1.039	31	204	June (77)	Tuesday (1.9)	8-11 AM
Thousand Steps	4/1/19	75.470	2,164.5	19,480	August (2,814)	Saturday (153.2)	10 AM–2 PM

Table 1: 2019 trail count data and statistics.

Bedford Heritage Trail

Site report: from 2018-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Su (16%)
Mo (13%)
Tu (12%)
We (13%)
Th (13%)
Fr (12%)
Sa (20%)

Avg. daily traffic: 42.9

Hourly**

Monthly*

61
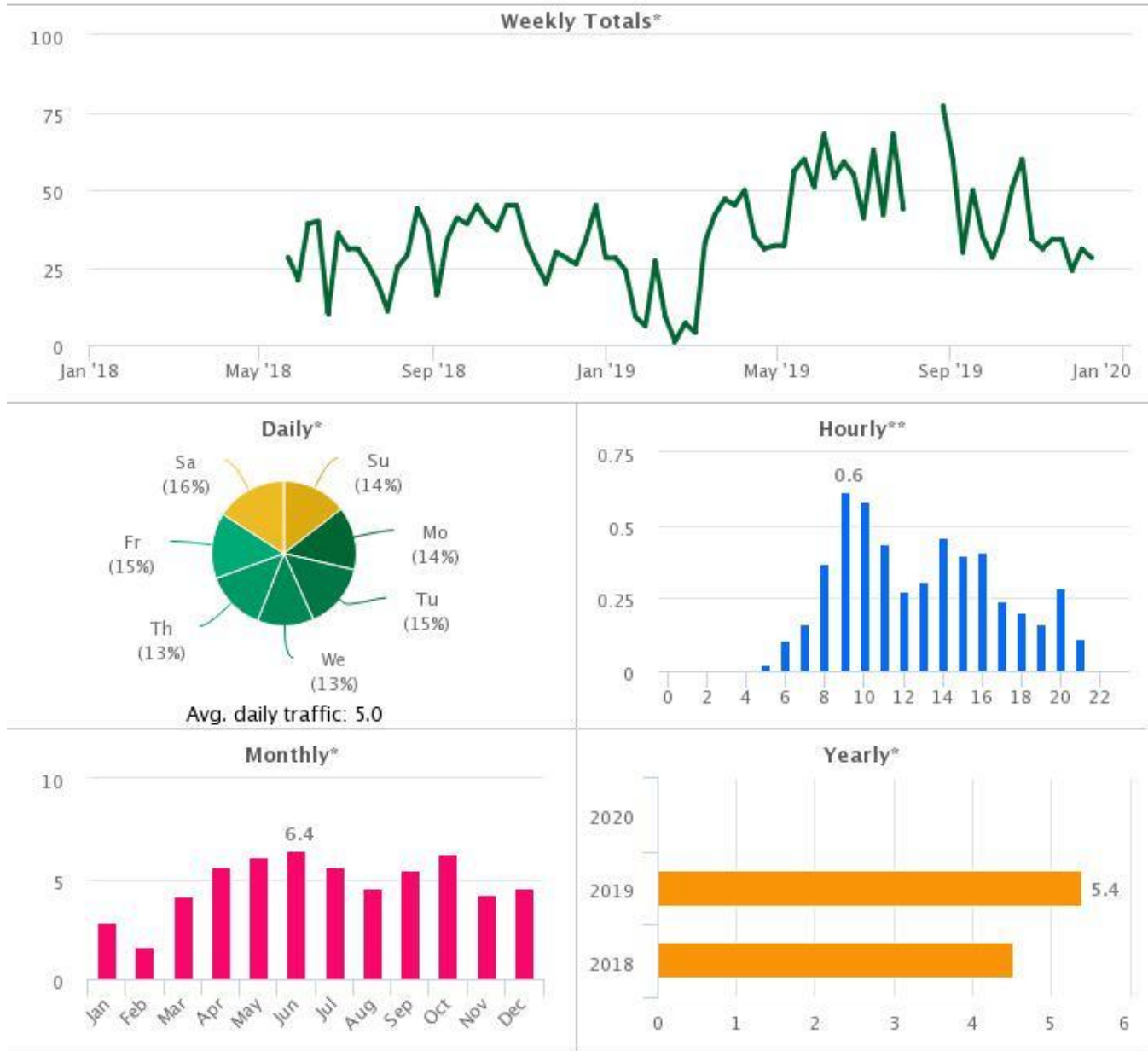
Yearly*

2020
2019
2018 — 50

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 7: Trail report for the Bedford Heritage Trail.

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🚶 H&BT Riddlesburg

Site report: from 2018-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
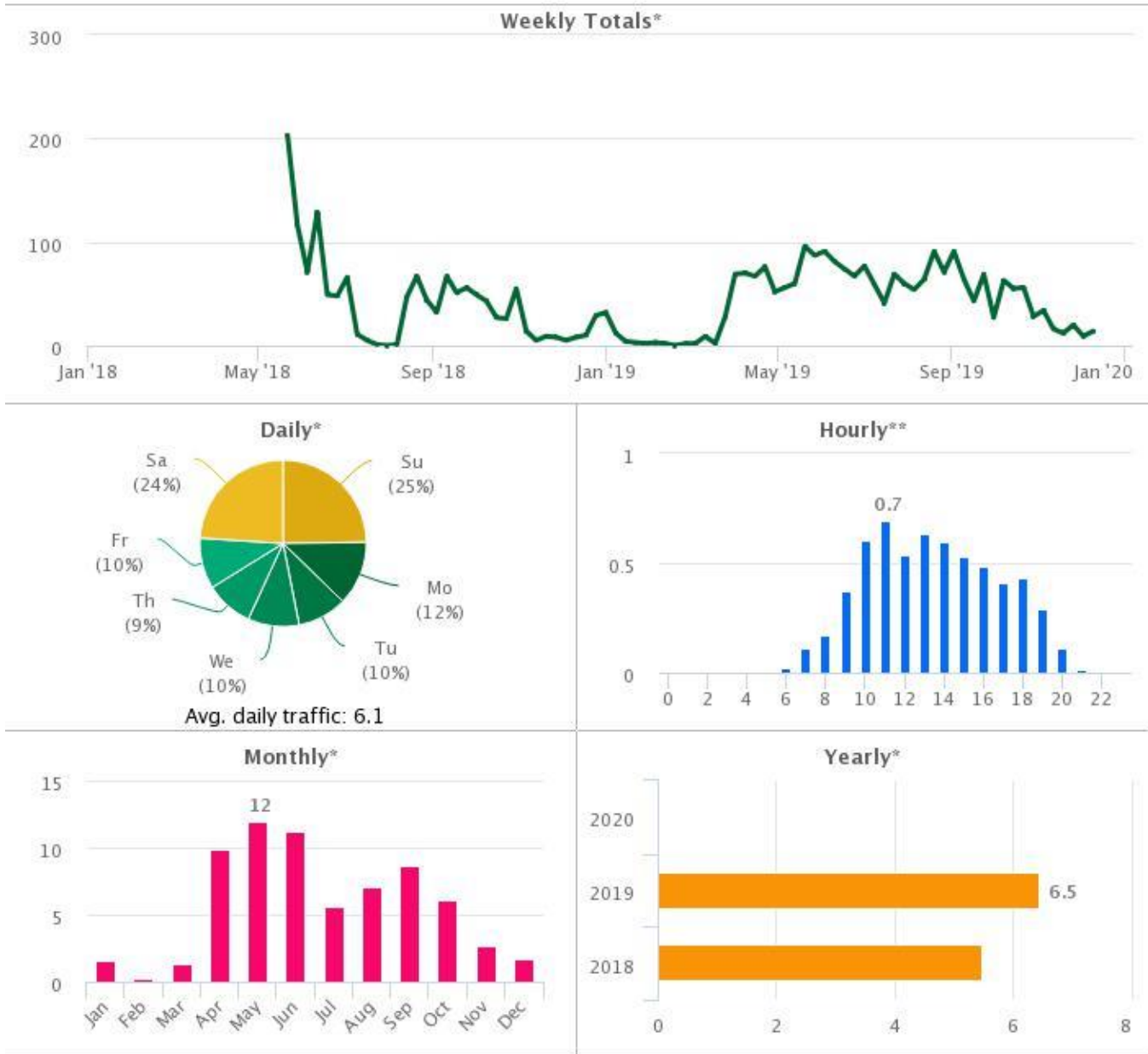Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 8: Trail report for the H&BT Riddlesburg Trailhead.

⛹ H&BT Cypher

Site report: from 2018-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Hourly**
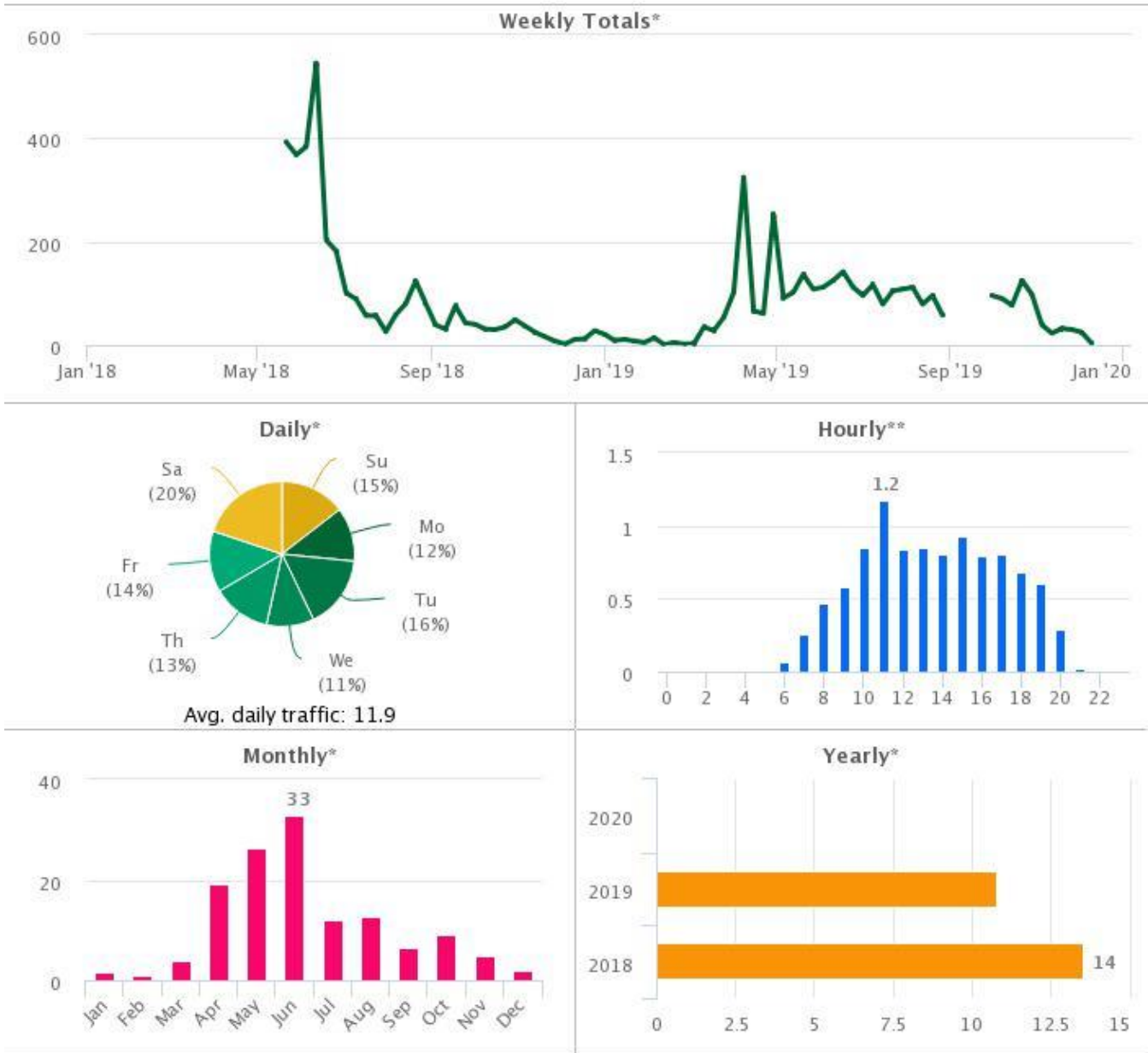
Monthly*

Yearly*

Avg. daily traffic: 6.1

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 9: Trail report for the H&BT Cypher Trailhead.

🚶 H&BT Tatesville

Site report: from 2018-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
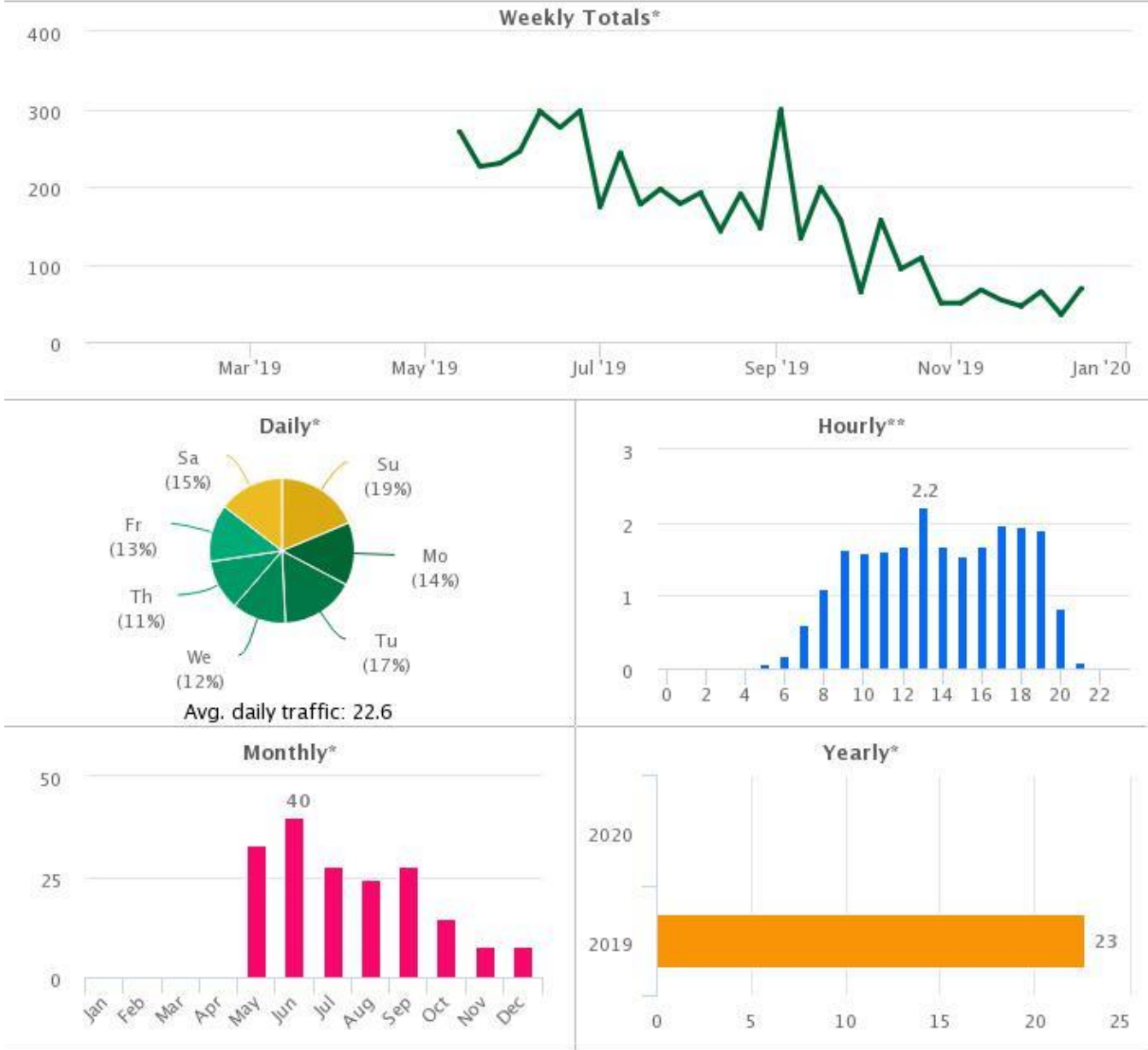Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Su (15%)
Mo (12%)
Tu (16%)
We (11%)
Th (13%)
Fr (14%)
Sa (20%)

Avg. daily traffic: 11.9

Hourly**

1.2

Monthly*

33

Yearly*

2020
2019
2018 — 14

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 10: Trail report for the H&BT Tatesville Trailhead.

⋔ Jim Mayer

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Sa (15%)
Su (19%)
Fr (13%)
Mo (14%)
Th (11%)
Tu (17%)
We (12%)

Avg. daily traffic: 22.6

Hourly**

2.2

Monthly*

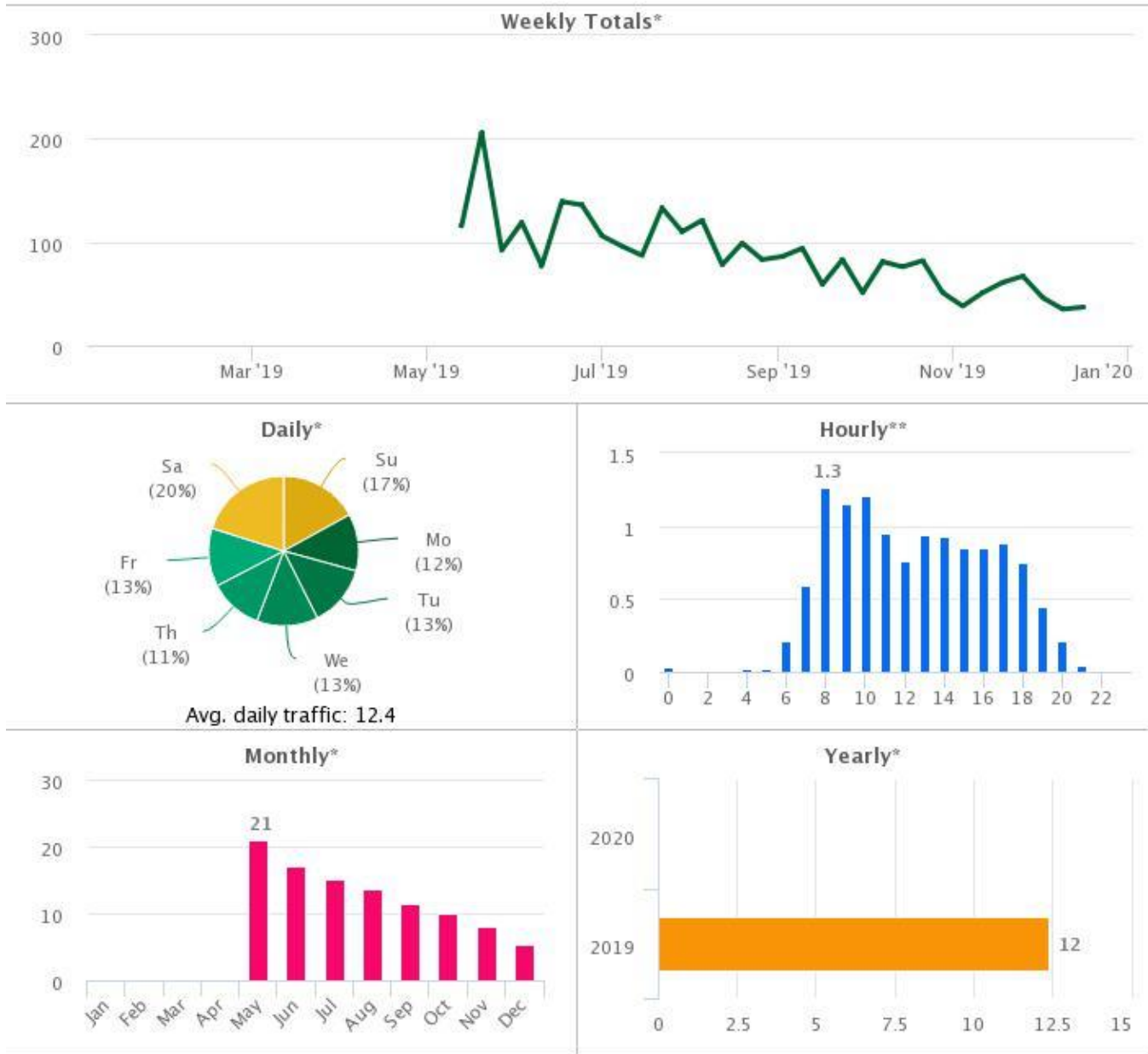40

Yearly*

2020
2019   23

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 11: Trail report for the Jim Mayer Riverwalk.

⫶⚲ Path of the Flood

Site report: from 2019-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

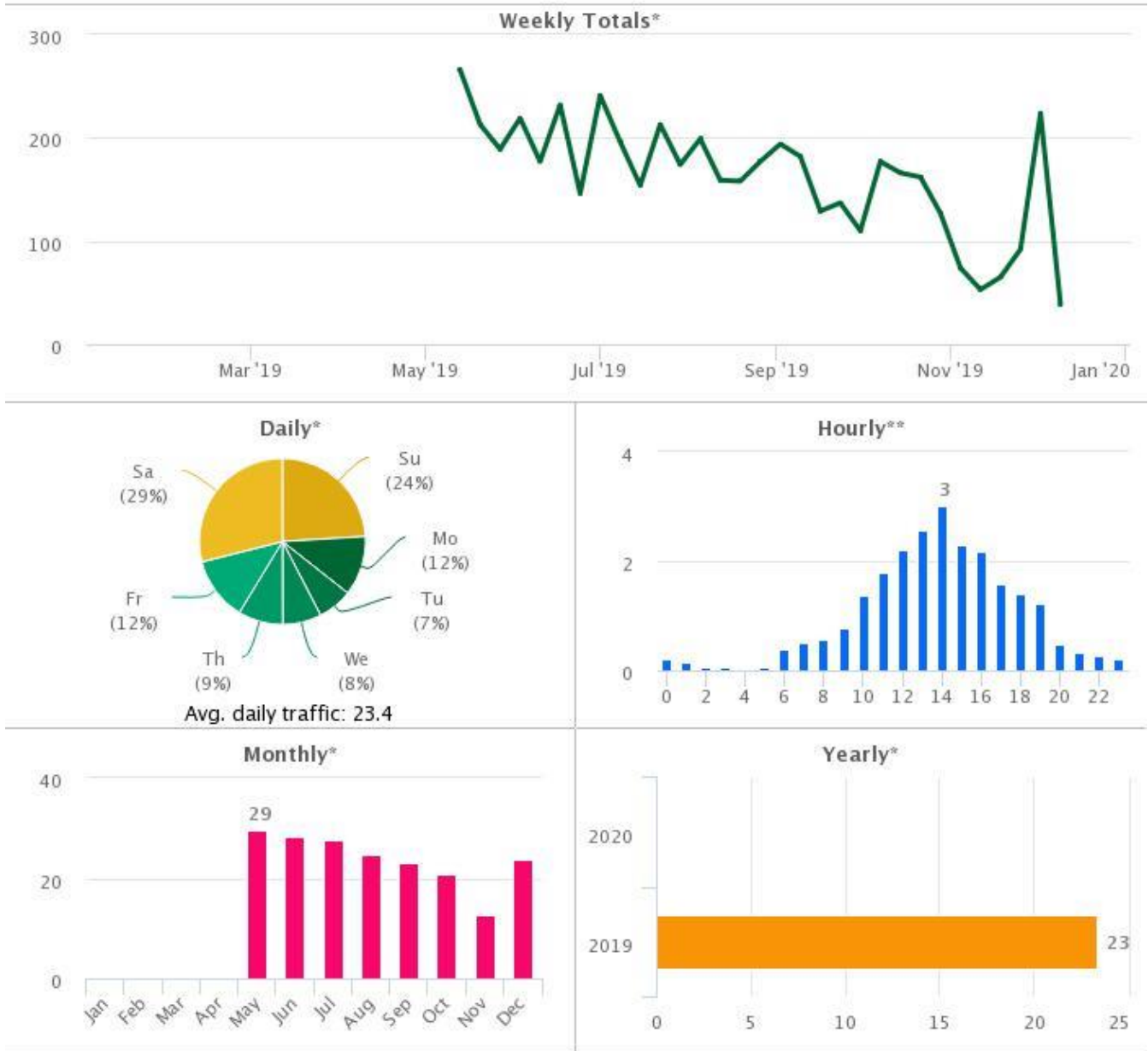Avg. daily traffic: 12.4

Hourly**

Monthly*

Yearly*

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 12: Trail report for the Path of the Flood.

⋔ TOPP

Site report: from 2019-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Su (24%)
Mo (12%)
Tu (7%)
We (8%)
Th (9%)
Fr (12%)
Sa (29%)

Avg. daily traffic: 23.4

Hourly**

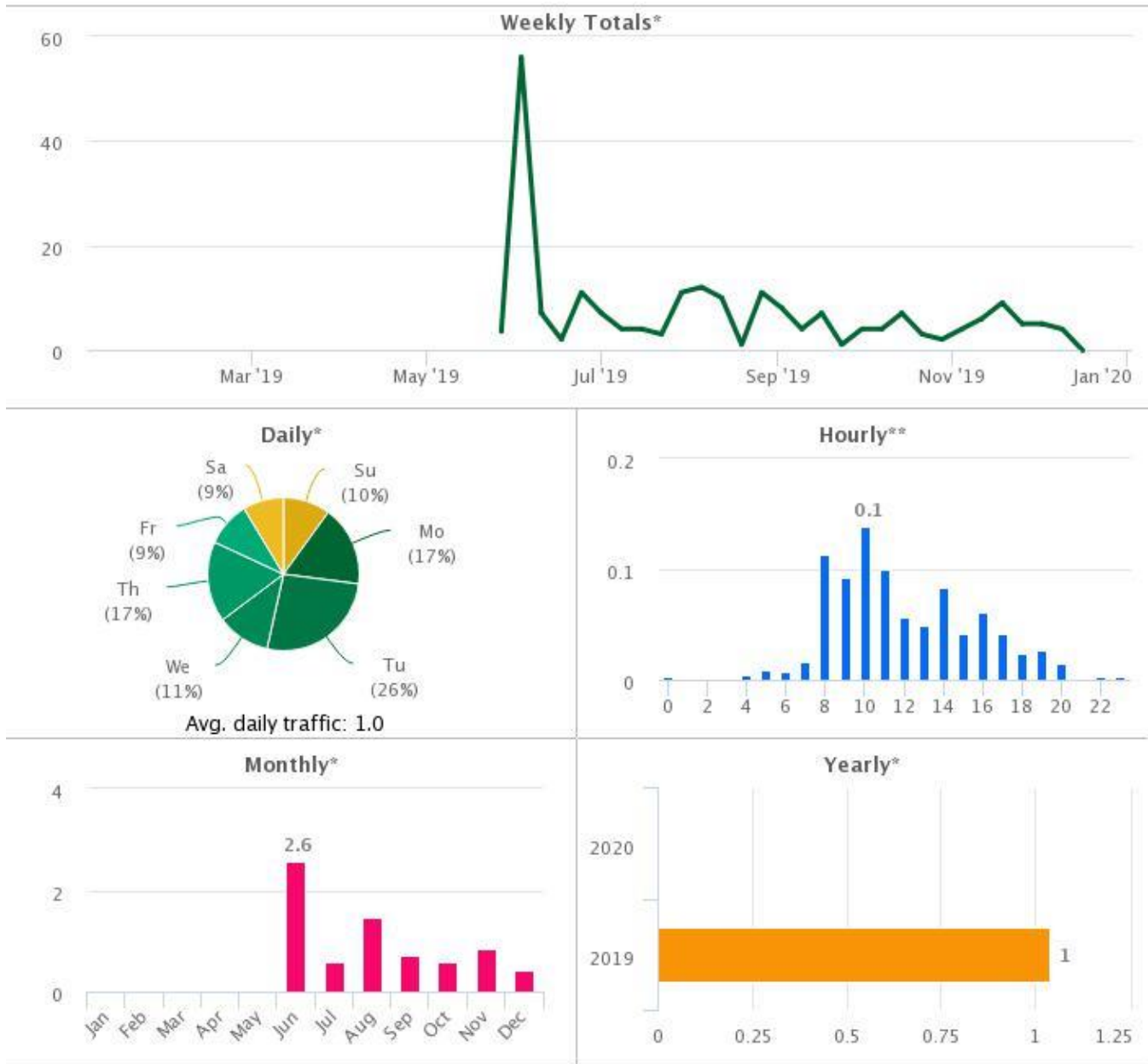**Monthly***

29

Yearly*

2020
2019 — 23

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 13: Trail report for TOPP.

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🚶 Somerset Lake

Site report: from 2019-01-01 to 2020-01-01
Made by: mbjorkman@sapdc.org on 2020-02-04
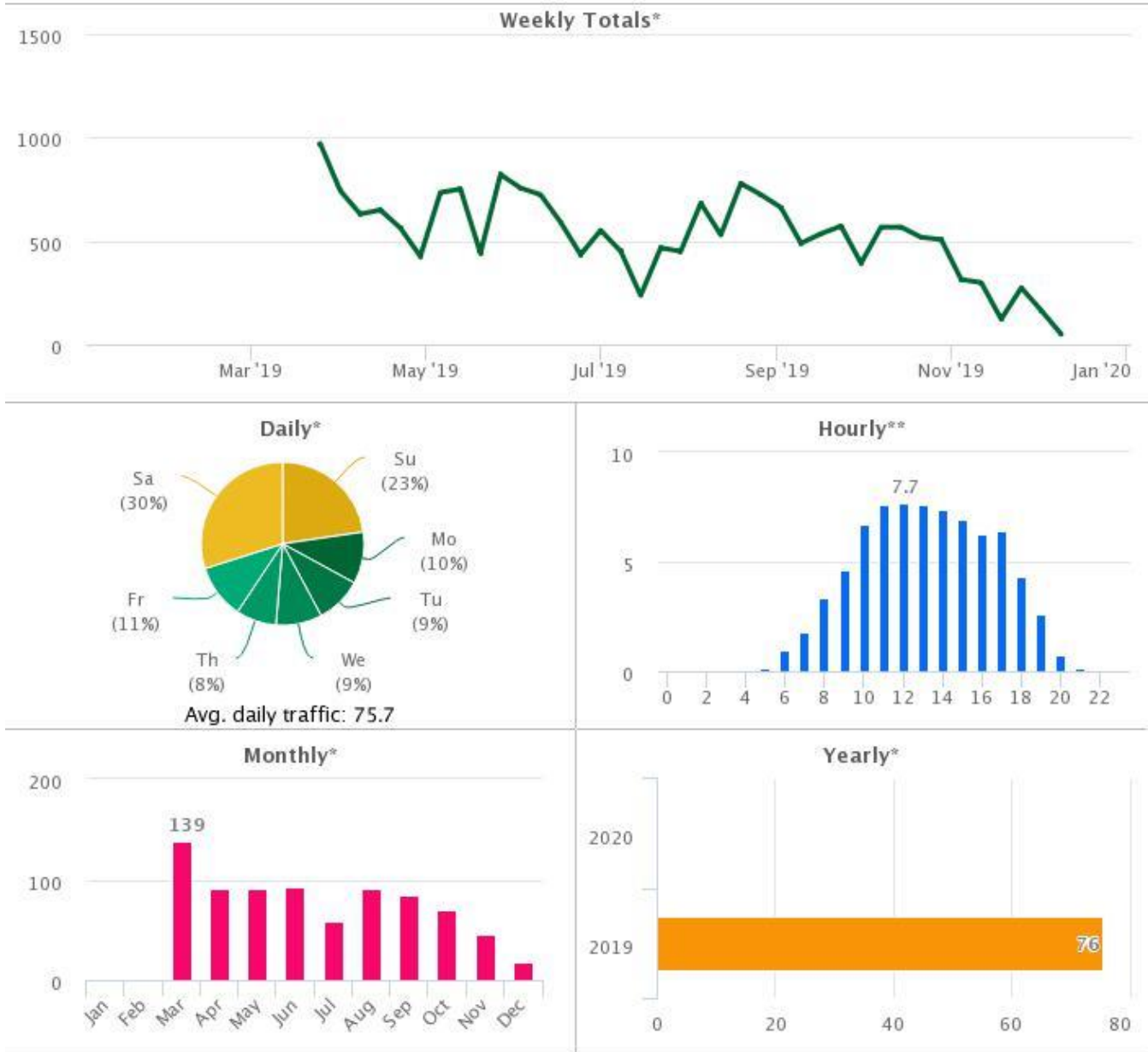Made with: TRAFx DataNet (www.trafx.net)
Divide 2 (Yes)

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Hourly**

Avg. daily traffic: 1.0

Monthly*

Yearly*

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 14: Trail report for Somerset Lake.

Thousand Steps

Weekly Totals*

Daily*

Su (23%)
Sa (30%)
Mo (10%)
Fr (11%)
Tu (9%)
Th (8%)
We (9%)

Avg. daily traffic: 75.7

Hourly**

7.7

Monthly*

139

Yearly*

2020

2019   76

* Weekly and Daily are calculated from Average Daily Traffic (ADT); Monthly and Yearly show ADT values.
** Based on last year of data only.

Figure 15: Trail report for Thousand Steps.