

Columbia Crossing Annual Report

2025



Susquehanna
National Heritage Area

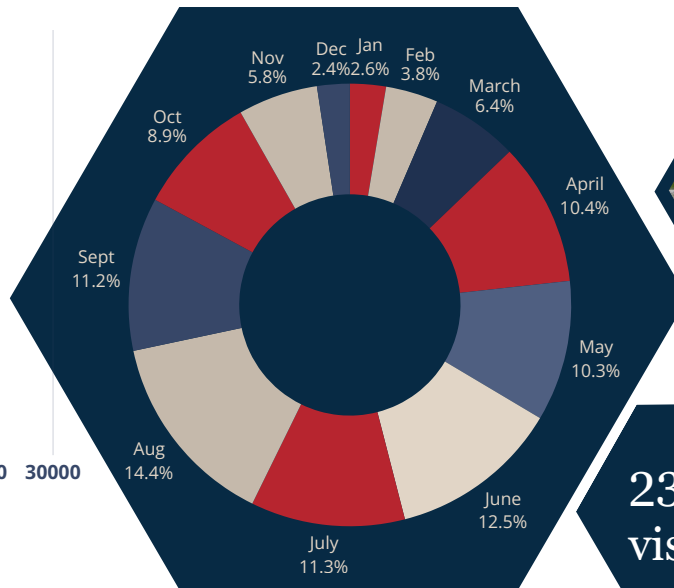
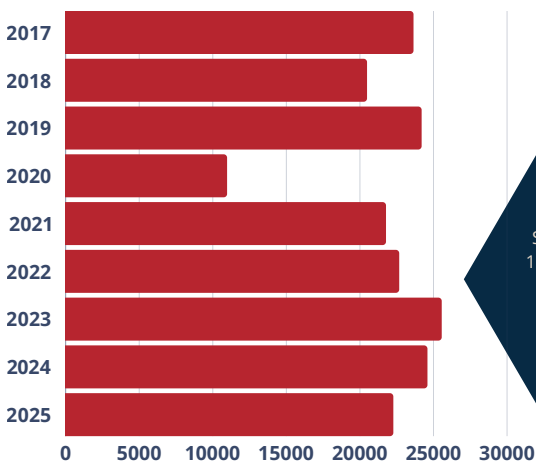
Mission & Vision

Our mission is to provide high-quality visitor services that showcase the area's rich history, outdoor recreation, local businesses, and tourism amenities. As part of this mission, we remain committed to being a dynamic hub for community engagement and educational experiences that celebrate the region's historical, scenic, and recreational significance.

Visitation

In 2025, Columbia Crossing River Trails Center welcomed 23,807 visitors exploring the Susquehanna River region. The center continued to serve as a trusted source for guests to connect with the river, recreation opportunities, and surrounding communities. Visitors consistently valued the personal experience—conversations with staff, insider tips, and printed maps. SNHA staff focused on inspiring guests to return, stay longer, see more, and spend more. In 2025, our maps and guides were distributed to Discover Lancaster and Explore York welcome centers. Over 24,000 SNHA guides and maps were distributed, connecting visitors with local recreation, dining, and small businesses in Columbia's downtown and to other destinations across York and Lancaster counties.

Visitation remained steady throughout the year, with 61.7% of visitation falling outside of the typically Memorial Day through Labor Day season. Sundays remain the busiest day, reflecting Columbia Crossing's role as a weekend destination for families, trail users, and regional travelers.



23,807
visitors



Visitation Trends

While indoor visitation remained strong, several trends helped shape the overall picture in 2025.

- **Rise in Trail-Only Use:** Many visitors enjoyed the riverfront, trail, and outdoor spaces without entering the building, demonstrating strong recreational use not reflected in indoor counts.
- **Shift Toward Quality Engagement:** Programs, tours, and workshops emphasized deeper, more meaningful visitor experiences, focusing on impact rather than volume.
- **Sustainable Visitation Management:** Moderate visitation balances tourism growth with resident needs by easing pressure on parking and infrastructure, preserving quality of life, and informing future investments that prepare Columbia Borough for sustainable growth.

These patterns reflect SNHA's commitment to providing high-quality, sustainable visitor experiences that balance community needs and responsible use.

Public Programs & Events

In 2025, Columbia Crossing served as an active center for education, recreation, and community life, hosting a wide range of programs that connected the Susquehanna River and its history. The Trail Center welcomed 100 Columbia Borough students for STEM Day and over 700 fifth-graders for Canoemobile field trips, providing hands-on environmental learning experiences in Columbia River Park. SNHA offered 70 public programs with over 4,000 participants at Columbia Crossing throughout 2025.

In 2025, Riverfest brought thousands of visitors to Columbia, Marietta, and Wrightsville, supported by 20+ sponsors, 30 recreation partners, and 21 volunteers. The weekend drew over 700 visitors into Columbia Crossing, sold 672 tickets, offered 39 programs, welcomed 108 Bridge Burner Challenge racers, and attracted attendees from 70 zip codes across six states; showcasing Riverfest's growing regional draw and economic impact.

70 SNHA Programs

800+ Students

4,000+ Participants

Regional Partnerships

In 2025, Columbia Crossing expanded its impact as a regional connector, bringing partners together to strengthen heritage, recreation, and educational opportunities throughout the Susquehanna National Heritage Area. By offering 33% of facility use free of charge, Columbia Crossing served as a site for regional collaboration and a community anchor.

Columbia Crossing also hosted 95 partner meetings, programs and events with organizations including Raven Ridge Wildlife Center, Horn Farm, DCNR, Columbia Library, and the Lancaster Conservancy. New collaborations, such as Go Green Columbia Day with Sahd's Recycling and community access during Fourth of July fireworks, further strengthened Columbia Crossing's role as a hub for education, partnership, and community engagement.

These partnerships continue to deliver real benefits to the Columbia community.

2026 Goals

- Leverage the Columbia River Park as destination for America's 250th & Columbia's 300th
- Integrate milestone themes into visitor materials, maps, and guided itineraries
- Work with more partners to expand programming and events
- Update & Reprint the Historic Columbia Map for 2026
- Support Lancaster County Trail Towns and Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape initiatives
- Support public piano installation in River Park



Financial Report

	2025	2026*	Columbia	SNHA
Revenues	\$185,363	\$231,726	\$114,863	\$116,863
Columbia Borough	\$114,863	\$114,863	\$114,863	
National Heritage Area (NPS Grants)	\$20,000	\$40,000		\$40,000
DCNR		\$25,363		\$25,363
County of Lancaster	\$15,000	\$15,000		\$15,000
Facility Rentals**	\$25,000	\$25,000		\$25,000
Program/Exhibit Income	\$2,500	\$2,500		\$2,500
Sales - Merchandise	\$8,000	\$9,000		\$9,000
Expenses	\$185,224	\$229,726	\$114,863	\$114,863
Salaries & Benefits	\$137,885	\$163,132	\$72,979	\$90,153
Programs	\$3,500	\$19,710	\$1,500	\$18,210
Custodial Services	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	
Merchandise Services	\$5,000	\$4,000		\$4,000
Capital Expenses	\$2,500	\$2,500		\$2,500
SNHA Admin Support (10%)	\$16,839	\$20,884	\$20,884	
Operating Net	\$400	\$2,000		\$2,000

*The 2026 budget reflects the work time of staff members from SNHA who are not exclusively stationed at Columbia Crossing. This includes individuals from our seasonal and program teams. As a result, the actual cost of staffing the operations and programming at Columbia Crossing is now reflected in the 2026 finance budget. We therefore show in the revenue that SNHA is leveraging National Heritage Area and DCNR funding to fill those gaps.

**SNHA increased the facility rental hourly fee in late 2025. It is the first price increase during our management of the facility. We chose to increase the fees 15% and remove our wedding package options. We made this decision after thoroughly researching the rental market in the surrounding area. Thus far, the increase has not affected our rental bookings. At the end of 2025, SNHA earned \$29,000 in facility rental income. We kept a conservative budget for 2026, but may increase that next year.



Susquehanna National Heritage Area

5989 Susquehanna Plaza Drive, Suite 102
 York, PA 17406
 (717) 252-0229
www.SusqNHA.org



A MEMBER OF THE
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 Area System**