

# Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail 2022 Trail Visitation Report



**March 23, 2023**



**Hudson River  
Valley Greenway**



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## Executive Summary

New York's Empire State Trail is the longest state multi-use trail in the nation. The 750-mile route runs from New York City north through the Hudson and Champlain Valleys to Canada, and east/west from Buffalo to Albany following the Erie Canal. The Empire State Trail welcomes bicyclists, hikers, and runners of all ages and abilities to experience New York's vibrant urban centers, village main streets, rural landscapes, and diverse history. Attracting visitors from across New York State, the nation, and the world, the trail promotes outdoor recreation, encourages healthy lifestyles, supports community vitality, and bolsters tourism-related economic development.

**This report focuses on the 275-mile Empire State Trail section from New York City to Whitehall in Washington County – which is also designated the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail (HRVG Trail).** Two-thirds (67%) of the HRVG Trail is comprised of non-motorized recreational “rail trails” and “canalway trails,” 10-foot wide paths with a paved or stone dust surface and gentle grades. The remaining one-third (33%) is designated on the shoulders of roadways, creating a continuous route. The on-road sections are appropriate for experienced bicyclists on long-distance rides.

In 2021, the Hudson River Valley Greenway launched a long-term initiative to gather data on the public's use of the HRVG Trail. The Greenway and partner organizations utilize automated trail counters installed for 12-month periods to collect detailed trail visitation data.

**This “Year-One” report presents annual trail use data for 14 locations along the 275-mile Greenway Trail. In total, more than 1.25 million visits were counted across the 14 sites.** Annual visitation averaged 91,000 per site, demonstrating the trail's widespread popularity. Counts varied widely, from 10,291 visits on the Champlain Canalway Trail in Fort Ann in Washington County, to 559,886 visits at the Walkway Over the Hudson State Park in Poughkeepsie – reflecting the trail's ever-changing character as it runs through rural landscapes, historic villages, suburban areas, and densely populated cities. The body of the report includes month-by-month trail counts for each site, along with analysis of seasonal and daily trail use trends.

The 1,276,496 visits counted at 14 specific locations capture only a small fraction of total visitation to the HRVG Trail. The data doesn't provide a sufficient number of sample points to develop an estimate of total visitation to the entire 275-mile route.

### Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail 12-Month Trail Counts

Trail Segment Name	Count Location	Annual Total	12-Month Count Period
Champlain Canalway Trail	Fort Ann, Washington County	10,291	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Champlain Canalway Trail	Schuylerville, Saratoga County	23,671	Dec 2019 to Nov 2010
Champlain Canalway Trail	Waterford, Saratoga County	24,165	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail	Watervliet, Albany County	30,003	Jan 2022 to Dec 2022
Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail	City of Albany, Albany County	120,594	Oct 2018 to Sept 2019
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	East Greenbush, Rensselaer County	54,555	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	Nassau, Rensselaer County	31,798	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	North Chatham, Columbia County	33,379	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	Kinderhook, Columbia County	48,506	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Wallkill Valley Rail Trail	New Paltz, Ulster County	101,934	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Walkway Over the Hudson	Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County	559,886	March 2022 to Feb 2023
WRS Dutchess Rail Trail	Hopewell Junction, Dutchess County	121,451	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Maybrook Trailway	Brewster, Putnam County	51,397	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
North County Trailway	Elmsford, Westchester County	64,474	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
<b>Total Trail Counts, All Sites</b>		<b>1,276,496</b>	

In November 2022, the Greenway moved its 10 trail counters to new locations along the Trail, initiating collection of “Year-Two” data. The counters will remain in place for 12 months. Partner organizations installed counters at two additional locations. By the end of 2023 trail visitation data will be available for a total of 26 sites, providing a more robust picture of trail use patterns along the 275-mile Hudson Greenway/Empire State Trail route. In early 2024, the Greenway will report combined trail counts for the 26 locations.

The Greenway greatly appreciates its collaborative partnerships with seven state agencies and numerous county, town, village, and city governments that own and maintain the diverse trail segments that comprise the HRVG Trail.

The Greenway acknowledges Parks & Trails New York, which has operated trail counters on the Erie Canalway Trail and Champlain Canalway Trail sections of the Empire State Trail for more than a decade, and provided technical support and data for this report.

## The Empire State Trail

In December 2020, the Empire State Trail was completed, now the nation's longest multi-use state trail. The trail spans 750-miles, from New York City through the Hudson and Champlain Valleys to Canada, and from Albany to Buffalo along the Erie Canal. The trail is composed mainly of off-road segments – eighty-five percent (85%) of the 550-mile route from New York City to Albany to Buffalo is off-road rail-trails and canalway trails, with the remainder comprised of on-road connecting sections. The off-road segments are ideal for bicyclists, hikers, runners, cross-country skiers, and snow-shoers. The new recreational trail provides a safe and scenic pathway for New Yorkers and tourists to experience New York State's varied landscapes.

For more information about the Empire State Trail, including a detailed online map depicting the statewide route, off-road trail segments, connecting on-road sections, designated parking areas, and nearby overnight accommodations, campgrounds, and attractions, visit the EST website: [www.empiretrail.ny.gov](http://www.empiretrail.ny.gov).

## Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail

The **Hudson River Valley Greenway** is a unique state agency created in 1991 to assist with the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision making. The Greenway's activities span the 14 counties that adjoin the Hudson River, from Manhattan north to Saratoga and Washington Counties. Detailed information about the Greenway's programs is available at <https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov>.

The Greenway's mission includes creation of a network of multi-use trails along both sides of the Hudson River. Today the Greenway is working to create a system of trails from New York City to Whitehall in Washington county. The Hudson River Greenway Trail System consists of two main components: a land trail and a water trail for paddling and boating. For more information about the **Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail (HRVG Trail)** see <https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/trails>.

The completion of the **Empire State Trail** coincides with the completion of a single 275-mile interconnected **HRVG Trail** route from Battery Park in Manhattan to Whitehall in Washington County:

- The Hudson Greenway Trail knits together portions of 15 regional trails to create a continuous route (north to south): the Champlain Canalway Trail, Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, Sojourner Truth State Park, Kington Point Rail Trail, Walkkill Valley Rail Trail, Hudson Valley Rail Trail, Walkway Over the Hudson, WRS Dutchess Rail Trail, Maybrook Trailway, Putnam Trailway, North and South Westchester County Trailways, Van Cortlandt Park, and the Manhattan Greenway Trail.

- Two-thirds (67%) of the 275 miles are non-motorized recreational trails. The off-road sections between NYC and Albany are “rail trails” built on abandoned railroad beds; the off-road portions between Albany and Whitehall are “canalway trails” that parallel the Hudson River and Champlain Canal.
- All off-road trails are 10-feet wide with gentle grades, welcoming bicyclists, walkers, and runners of all ages and abilities. Most are paved asphalt, with a few stone dust segments (compacted crushed limestone suitable for all types of bicycles).
- The remaining third (33%) of the 275-mile route is designated on the shoulders of public roadways, creating a continuous route connecting rail trails and canalway trail segments. The on-road sections are appropriate for experienced bicyclists on long-distance rides, comfortable riding adjacent to vehicle traffic.

## Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Count Program

In 2021, the Hudson River Valley Greenway launched a program to collect trail visitation data along the 275-mile HRVG Trail from New York City to Washington County. This initiative will generate valuable insights into the public’s use of individual Hudson Valley trail segments, and allow the Greenway to refine projections of total visitation to the Empire State Trail. Trail count data will be provided to state agencies, local governments, non-profit groups, and the general public – to inform trail operations, maintenance, and tourism promotion efforts.

The Greenway operates ten automated trail counters to collect trail visitation data. The units, manufactured by the company Eco-Counter, use passive infrared motion detection to count trail users (they are not able to distinguish between bicyclists and pedestrians, rather they provide combined trail usage information). The counters do not have cameras nor do they collect information about individual trail visitors.

In October 2021, the Greenway installed its counters at 10 locations along the HRVG Trail portion of the Empire State Trail in Washington, Saratoga, Rensselaer, Columbia, Ulster, Dutchess, Putnam, and Westchester Counties. The counters were left in place for 12 months, providing continuous daily trail count data for each location. The detailed results are presented in this report.

Several partner organizations have installed additional trail counters along the HRVG Trail/Empire State Trail route:

- The non-profit organization Parks & Trails New York installed counters on the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in the Corning Preserve in Albany (2018-19); the Champlain Canalway Trail in Schuylerville in Saratoga County (2019-20); and the Mohawk-Hudson Hike-Bike Trail in Watervliet in Albany County (2022-23).



- The Greenway donated two trail counters to Walkway Over the Hudson State Park, which spans Ulster and Dutchess Counties. The counters are permanently installed at the east and west Walkway entrances.
- Trail count data collected by these partners is incorporated into this report. The entities all use the same counter unit as the Greenway, manufactured by Eco-Counter, allowing for accurate data integration.

Combining data collected by HRVG and partners, detailed visitation data for continuous twelve-month periods is available for a total of 14 sites along the 275-mile trail route, depicted on the map below. All 14 locations are rail trails and canalway trails – non-motorized paths that comprise two-thirds (67%) of the 275-mile route, and which attract visitors of all ages and abilities. HRVG has not collected trail use data for on-road trail connecting sections, which are appropriate for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding on roadway shoulders (visitation to on-road sections is low in comparison to non-motorized recreational trails).

## Next Steps: Year-Two (2023) Trail Counts

In November 2022, the Greenway moved its 10 trail counters to new locations, initiating collection of “Year-Two” data. The 10 locations are located along the 275-mile HRVG Trail/Empire State Trail in Saratoga, Rensselaer, Columbia, Ulster, Dutchess, and Westchester Counties, and the Bronx in New York City. The counters will remain in place for 12 months.

In addition, in June 2022 the Wallkill Valley Land Trust installed a counter on the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail in Ulster County, and in June 2022 Parks & Trails New York installed a counter on the Champlain Canalway Trail north of Fort Edward, Saratoga County.

Combining the Year-One and Year-Two sites, by the end of 2023 trail visitation data will be available for a total of 26 sites, providing a more robust picture of trail use along the 275-mile Hudson Greenway/Empire State Trail route. In early 2024, the Greenway will report combined trail counts for the 26 locations.

Also in 2023, the Hudson River Valley Greenway will engage partners in New York City to pursue strategies for developing a trail use estimate for the Manhattan Greenway Trail – which starts at The Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan and runs north on the shoreline of the Hudson River for 12.5 miles through Battery Park City, Hudson River Park, and Riverside Park.

Integrating data for the Manhattan Greenway Trail – which is among the highest visited trails in the nation – is critical to accurately calculating total trail visitation along the 275-mile route north to Lake Champlain.

Finally, the Greenway will evaluate options for estimating annual visits to the 90 miles of *on-road* sections between New York City and Whitehall. On-road usage – limited to experienced bicyclists – is much lower than the 185 miles of non-motorized recreational trails, but should be factored into total visitation estimates for the 275-mile route.

## Erie Canalway Trail Counts

The non-profit group Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) has collected trail use data for more than a decade along the 350-mile Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany, which is one of the three legs of the 750-mile Empire State Trail. Their annual trail use reports are available at <https://www.ptny.org/our-work/support/community-trails-assistance/trail-counts>. PTNY estimates the Erie Canalway Trail attracts between 3.3 and 4.2 million annual visits.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway and PTNY use the exact same infrared counter unit, allowing direct comparison of trail visitation data for the Hudson Greenway and Erie Canalway trails. After the Greenway collects several years of data, the combined initiatives will allow New York State to develop estimated total visitation patterns for the statewide 750-mile Empire State Trail.

## Year-One Greenway Trail Count Results

The map and table below present 12-month trail count results for 14 locations along the HRVG Trail portion of the Empire State Trail. The sites are listed “north to south” from Washington County to Westchester County. In total, more than 1.25 million visits were counted at the 14 sites.

Detailed information about each trail count location is presented in the body of the report.





**Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail  
12-Month Trail Counts  
Sites Listed “North to South”**

<b>Trail Segment Name</b>	<b>Count Location</b>	<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>12-Month Count Period</b>
Champlain Canalway Trail	Fort Ann, Washington County	10,291	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Champlain Canalway Trail	Schuylerville, Saratoga County	23,671	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020
Champlain Canalway Trail	Waterford, Saratoga County	24,165	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail	Watervliet, Albany County	30,003	Jan 2022 to Dec 2022
Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail	City of Albany, Albany County	120,594	Oct 2018 to Sept 2019
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	East Greenbush, Rensselaer County	54,555	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	Nassau, Rensselaer County	31,798	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	North Chatham, Columbia County	33,379	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Albany-Hudson Electric Trail	Kinderhook, Columbia County	48,506	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Wallkill Valley Rail Trail	New Paltz, Ulster County	101,934	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Walkway Over the Hudson	Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County	559,886	March 2022 to Feb 2023
WRS Dutchess Rail Trail	Hopewell Junction, Dutchess County	121,451	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Maybrook Trailway	Brewster, Putnam County	51,397	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
North County Trailway	Elmsford, Westchester County	64,474	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
<b>Total Trail Counts, All Sites</b>		<b>1,276,496</b>	

**Aggregating across the 14 sites, a total of 1,276,396 trail users passed the 14 counter locations.** Reviewing the data:

- Across the 14 sites, annual trail usage averaged roughly 91,000 visits, demonstrating the Empire State Trail’s remarkable popularity among hikers, runners, and bicyclists.
- The trail count numbers vary widely at individual locations – from 10,291 visits at Fort Ann in Washington County, to 559,886 visits at Walkway Over the Hudson State Park. This wide variation is expected given the Walkway is a major state park whereas the Champlain Canalway Trail passes through rural areas.
- The 1,276,496 visits were counted at 14 specific locations, capturing only a small fraction of total visitation to the HRVG Trail. The trail count data collected to date does not provide a sufficient number of sample points to develop an estimate of total visitation to the entire 275-mile route.

## Champlain Canalway Trail – Fort Ann in Washington County



Month	Visits
November 2021	577
December 2021	230
January 2022	159
February 2022	493
March 2022	627
April 2022	1,055
May 2022	1,006
June 2022	1,000
July 2022	1,508
August 2022	1,133
September 2022	1,384
October 2022	1,119
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>10,291</b>

The Village of Fort Ann in Washington County marks the northern end of a 12-mile off-road section of the Champlain Canalway Trail that runs south to Fort Edward. This trail segment is mainly compacted stone dust, and also includes some paved trail and an on-road section on a gravel road with very low vehicle traffic. The scenic route alternates between the bank of the active Champlain Canal and the tow path of the historic canal, winding past woodlands, wetlands, farm fields, rural landscapes, and historic villages.

The trail attracts local residents along with bicyclists riding longer sections of the 62-mile Champlain Canalway Trail route from Whitehall to Waterford. Due to its rural location away from major population centers, visitation to the Champlain Canalway Trail is lower than trail segments in the more densely settled parts of the Hudson Valley.

Where the trail passes through the Village of Fort Ann, the Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of visitation data (the automated counter was installed on the trail south of Clay Hill Road). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 10,291 visitors passed the Fort Ann trail counter.** July registered the highest number of visits (1,508); January registered the lowest (159).

This location is one of the few places on the entire 275-mile Hudson Valley route where snowmobiles are allowed (the monthly totals include snowmobile visits). However, the 2021-22 winter season was warm - very few days had sufficient snow cover for snowmobiling.

### Champlain Canalway Trail – Schuylerville in Saratoga County

Month	Visits
December 2019	176
January 2020	376
February 2020	245
March 2020	1,233
April 2020	1,858
May 2020	6,124
June 2020	2,314
July 2020	2,097
August 2020	2,750
September 2020	2,330
October 2020	2,540
November 2020	1,528
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>23,671</b>



The HRVG Trail in the Village of Schuylerville (Town of Saratoga) in Saratoga County is primarily off-road trail. The trail through the Village has a stone dust surface, built on the towpath of the original Champlain Canal. A newly opened Visitor Center on Ferry Street provides information on the area's rich history and tourism opportunities.

North of the Village, the route through Hudson Crossing Park is paved, and includes the historic Dix Bridge over the Hudson River which has been converted to a bike/pedestrian trail.

In Schuylerville, Parks & Trails New York collected more than fifteen months of visitation data from September 2019 through November 2020 (the automated counter was installed on the trail in Hudson Crossing Park, north of the Village). **During the 12 months from December 1, 2019 through November 30, 2020, a total of 23,671 visitors passed the Schuylerville trail counter.** May registered the highest number of visits (6,124); December had the lowest (176).

## Champlain Canalway Trail – Waterford in Saratoga County



Month	Visits
December 2021	1,323
January 2022	720
February 2022	464
March 2022	1,372
April 2022	2,342
May 2022	3,202
June 2022	2,918
July 2022	2,668
August 2022	2,443
September 2022	2,367
October 2022	2,613
November 2022	1,733
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>24,165</b>

The Village of Waterford in Saratoga County is the southern end of a 5-mile off-road section of the Champlain Canalway Trail that runs north to the Town of Halfmoon. The trail attracts local Waterford and Capital District residents, along with bicyclists on long-distance trips on the Champlain route.

This trail segment is compacted stone dust, built on the towpath of the original Champlain Canal. This scenic section includes interpretive panels about the historic Champlain Canal, and presents excellent birding and wildlife observation opportunities.

Where the trail passes through Waterford, the Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of visitation data (the automated counter was installed on the trail north of Division Street). **During the 12 months from December 1, 2021 through November 30, 2022, a total of 24,165 visitors passed the Waterford trail counter.** May registered the highest number of visits (3,202); February registered the lowest (464).



## Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail – Watervliet in Albany County

Month	Visits
January 2022	547
February 2022	524
March 2022	1,316
April 2022	2,083
May 2022	3,479
June 2022	3,925
July 2022	3,703
August 2022	3,825
September 2022	3,950
October 2022	4,108
November 2022	1,892
December 2022	651
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>30,003</b>



The HRVG Trail / Empire State Trail in the City of Watervliet is a side path adjacent to Broadway. This section provides a safe path for trail users connecting to the off-road Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail that heads south of Watervliet at 4<sup>th</sup> Street, along the Hudson River shoreline to Albany (before the Watervliet path opened in 2021, bicyclists were forced to ride on Broadway next to vehicle traffic).

The new MHBHT path is a welcoming and comfortable connection to this portion of the Empire State Trail and provides easy access to visitor services in Watervliet and Troy.

Parks & Trails New York collected continuous trail visitation data from September 2021 through January 2023 (the automated counter was installed on the trail at the intersection of Broadway and 16<sup>th</sup> Street). **During the 12 months from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, a total of 30,003 visitors passed the Watervliet trail counter.** October registered the highest number of visits (4,108); February registered the lowest (524).

## Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail – City of Albany in Albany County



Month	Visits
October 2018	11,225
November 2018	4,067
December 2018	3,503
January 2019	2,632
February 2019	2,901
March 2019	6,808
April 2019	12,497
May 2019	14,584
June 2019	17,183
July 2019	16,088
August 2019	13,841
September 2019	15,265
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>120,594</b>

The HRVG Trail / Empire State Trail north of the Corning Preserve is heavily used year-round, welcoming City of Albany residents, people who work in the downtown area, and visitors from across New York and the nation. The City of Albany sponsors concerts and programs during summer months, and the recently completed Skyway provides an inviting connection to the City.

Where the trail passes through the Corning Preserve, Parks & Trails New York collected more than fifteen continuous months of trail visitation data from August 2018 through September 2019. PTNY placed its counter on the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail slightly north of the Corning Preserve – to provide an accurate count of “trail visits” while excluding people attending concerts, launching boats, and relaxing in the park. **During the 12 months from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019, a total of 120,594 visitors passed the City of Albany counter.** June saw the highest number of visits (17,193); January had the lowest (2,632).



## Albany-Hudson Electric Trail – East Greenbush in Rensselaer County

Month	Visits
November 2021	2,767
December 2021	2,351
January 2022	908
February 2022	1,133
March 2022	2,840
April 2022	4,890
May 2022	6,800
June 2022	7,505
July 2022	7,180
August 2022	7,060
September 2022	6,058
October 2022	5,063
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>54,555</b>



The 36-mile Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET) – operated by the Hudson River Valley Greenway – was completed in December 2020. Most of the 36-mile route from the City of Rensselaer to the City of Hudson is an off-road “rail trail” built on a former electric trolley line. Short on-road connecting sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways.

The East Greenbush section of AHET in Rensselaer County is a paved, 12-foot wide, recreational trail. The route passes residential neighborhoods, schools, and small businesses. The trail serves as a linear park for local residents; provides a safe and welcoming path for walkers, runners, and bicyclists of all ages and abilities; and is the gateway to the HRVG Trail/Empire State Trail south through the Hudson Valley.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of visitation data (the automated counter was installed on the trail west of Electric Avenue). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 54,555 visitors passed the East Greenbush trail counter.** June registered the highest number of visits (7,505); January registered the lowest (908).

## Albany-Hudson Electric Trail – Nassau in Rensselaer County



Month	Visits
November 2021	1,513
December 2021	975
January 2022	282
February 2022	446
March 2022	1,522
April 2022	3,506
May 2022	4,374
June 2022	4,490
July 2022	4,539
August 2022	3,946
September 2022	3,554
October 2022	2,651
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>31,798</b>

The 36-mile Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET) follows the route of an electric trolley that ran between the Cities of Rensselaer and Hudson from 1899 to 1929. The Rensselaer County section of the trail has a paved surface; the Columbia County section is a mix of paved and stone dust trail. Eighty percent of the route is off-road trail, with the remaining twenty percent designated on the shoulders of public roads.

The AHET in Nassau is a paved recreational trail, passing through the historic Village where visitor services are available. South of the Village, the trail runs through wooded areas with multiple bridge crossings of the Valatie Kill. Formal trailhead parking areas provide access in the Village and at Nassau Lake.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of visitation data (the automated counter was installed on the trail north of Route 20). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 31,798 visitors passed the Village of Nassau trail counter.** July registered the highest number of visits (4,539); January registered the lowest (282).

### Albany-Hudson Electric Trail – North Chatham in Columbia County

Month	Visits
November 2021	1,794
December 2021	1,388
January 2022	663
February 2022	598
March 2022	1,202
April 2022	2,946
May 2022	4,283
June 2022	4,509
July 2022	4,504
August 2022	4,209
September 2022	4,154
October 2022	3,129
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>33,379</b>



The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET) opened to the public in December 2020. Most of the 36-mile route from the City of Rensselaer to the City of Hudson is an off-road “rail trail” built on a former electric trolley line. Short on-road connecting sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways.

The AHET trail running south from North Chatham in Columbia County has a 10-foot wide stone dust surface, passing scenic rural vistas, farmland, streams, wetlands, and Kinderhook Lake. North of the hamlet, the AHET route is a half-mile on-road section designated on the shoulders of Route 203. The trail is popular with North Chatham residents, and attracts visitors from the Capital District as well as long-distance bicyclists. A trailhead parking area on Depot Street provides easy access.

In North Chatham, the Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of trail visitation data (the automated counter was installed on the trail south of County Route 32). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 33,379 visitors passed the North Chatham trail counter.** June registered the highest number of visits (4,509); February registered the lowest (598).



## Albany-Hudson Electric Trail – Kinderhook in Columbia County



Month	Visits
November 2021	3,586
December 2021	2,783
January 2022	1,140
February 2022	1,248
March 2022	2,761
April 2022	4,555
May 2022	5,402
June 2022	5,585
July 2022	6,052
August 2022	5,445
September 2022	5,067
October 2022	4,882
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>48,506</b>

The 36-mile Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET) follows the route of an electric trolley that ran between the Cities of Rensselaer and Hudson from 1899 to 1929. Eighty percent of the route is off-road trail, with the remaining twenty percent designated on the shoulders of public roads.

In Columbia County, the AHET in the Village of Kinderhook is paved; the trail sections to the north and south have a stone dust surface. AHET is popular with local residents, and also attracts tourists visiting Kinderhook and bicyclists on long-distance rides. The trail passes historic neighborhoods, local parks, and farmland. Formal trailhead parking is available in Rothermel Park. Visitor services are available in the Village's downtown area, as well as where the trail passes through the Village of Valatie two miles to the north.

In Kinderhook, the Hudson River Valley Greenway collected twelve continuous months of visitation data from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 (the automated counter was installed on the trail in Rothermel Park). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 54,555 visitors passed the Village of Kinderhook trail counter.** July registered the highest number of visits (6,052); January had the lowest (1,140).

## Wallkill Valley Rail Trail – New Paltz in Ulster County

Month	Visits
November 2021	5,462
December 2021	4,751
January 2022	1,831
February 2022	1,963
March 2022	4,937
April 2022	8,761
May 2022	10,858
June 2022	12,201
July 2022	13,929
August 2022	13,665
September 2022	11,926
October 2022	11,650
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>101,934</b>



The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail (WVRT) is a 22-mile stone dust trail in Ulster County. The trail is operated through a partnership effort among the Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Open Space Institute, Village of New Paltz, and Towns of New Paltz, Rosendale, and Ulster.

A 13.5-mile portion of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail – from south Kingston to the Village of New Paltz – is part of the Empire State Trail route. The trail is heavily used year round by New Paltz residents, local college students, and visitors from across New York and the nation. The trail passes the Wallkill River, woodlands, scenic views of the Shawangunk Ridge, and New Paltz’s historic district. The Village’s local businesses and tourism attractions welcome trail visitors.

HRVG collected visitation data where the WVRT passes through the Village of New Paltz (the automated counter was installed on the trail near Mulberry Street). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 101,934 visitors passed the Village of New Paltz trail counter.** July registered the highest number of visits (13,929); January had the lowest (1,831).

### Walkway Over the Hudson – Poughkeepsie in Dutchess County

Month	Visits
March 2022	29,534
April 2022	48,364
May 2022	59,077
June 2022	68,549
July 2022	68,606
August 2022	64,636
September 2022	58,037
October 2022	74,442
November 2022	34,368
December 2022	14,036
January 2023	20,105
February 2023	20,132
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>559,886</b>



Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park spans the Hudson River from the Town of Lloyd in Ulster County to the City of Poughkeepsie in Dutchess County. The Walkway, operated by New York State Parks in partnership with a non-profit Friends group, includes a 1.25-mile historic train bridge over the Hudson River – converted into a recreational linear park – along with visitor centers and parking areas on both sides of the bridge. Interpretive programming and signage explain the history of the railroad and Hudson River Valley. State Parks and the Walkway Friends offer a robust schedule of programming and events throughout the year.

The Walkway is a destination state park attracting visitors year-round – and is also a critical part of the HRVG Trail/Empire State Trail, providing a unique, inspiring path for hikers, runners, and bicyclists to cross the Hudson River. Trail users can access visitor services in Poughkeepsie and Lloyd.

In 2022, the Hudson River Valley Greenway donated two automated trail counters to State Parks, which are permanently installed on the Walkway's east and west entrances. The trail data above is for the counter installed at the West entrance to the Walkway deck (Town of Lloyd/Ulster County side). **During the 12 months from March 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023, a total of 559,886 visitors crossed the Walkway Over the Hudson.** October registered the highest number of visits (74,442); January registered the lowest (20,132).

## WRS Dutchess Rail Trail – Hopewell Junction in Dutchess County

Month	Visits
November 2021	7,253
December 2021	5,462
January 2022	1,684
February 2022	2,052
March 2022	5,635
April 2022	9,559
May 2022	13,448
June 2022	16,834
July 2022	17,589
August 2022	16,208
September 2022	14,643
October 2022	11,084
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>121,451</b>



The William R. Steinhaus Dutchess Rail Trail (WRSDRT) starts in the City of Poughkeepsie at the east end of the Walkway Over the Hudson, and runs 13.5 miles southeast to Hopewell Junction. The paved recreational trail is operated by Dutchess County, which has created trailhead parking areas and access points along the route.

The WRSDRT attracts visitors from across Dutchess County, New York State, and the nation. The trail passes through varied settings including residential neighborhoods, business districts, long stretches of wooded areas, stream crossings, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. It serves as a vital link in the HRVG Trail and statewide Empire State Trail.

HRVG collected twelve continuous months of visitation data in Hopewell Junction (the automated counter was installed on the trail northwest of the historic Train Depot/Museum). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 121,451 visitors passed the Hopewell Junction trail counter.** July registered the highest number of visits (17,589); January registered the lowest (1,684).



## Maybrook Trailway – Brewster in Putnam County



Month	Visits
November 2021	3,349
December 2021	2,281
January 2022	838
February 2022	1,069
March 2022	2,786
April 2022	4,595
May 2022	5,887
June 2022	7,225
July 2022	6,684
August 2022	5,647
September 2022	5,884
October 2022	5,152
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>51,397</b>

The Maybrook Trailway is a 24-mile paved rail-trail that starts in Hopewell Junction in Dutchess County, and runs southeast to Brewster in Putnam County. The trail, which opened to the public in December 2020, was constructed by Metro-North Railroad and is maintained in partnership with Dutchess and Putnam Counties.

The Maybrook is surprisingly wild in character, with remote trail segments passing dense forests, wetlands, lakes, and stream crossings. Due to its rural setting, most visitors access the trail by driving to one of the trailhead parking areas along the route. In addition to attracting day hikers, the north end of Maybrook directly connects to the Dutchess Rail Trail, and the south connects to the Putnam Trailway in Brewster, providing a vital connection for long-distance bicyclists.

HRVG installed an automated counter on the trail at Lake Tonetta, a town park near the south end of the Maybrook Trailway (the automated counter was installed one-mile north of the Village of Brewster near Pumphouse Road). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 51,397 visitors passed the Brewster trail counter.** June registered the highest number of visits (7,225); January registered the lowest (838).

### North County Trailway – Elmsford in Westchester County

Month	Visits
November 2021	3,409
December 2021	2,229
January 2022	902
February 2022	1,471
March 2022	3,143
April 2022	5,289
May 2022	7,469
June 2022	10,471
July 2022	9,324
August 2022	7,095
September 2022	7,211
October 2022	6,461
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>64,474</b>



In Westchester County, the HRVG Trail/Empire State Trail follows the North and South County Trailways. Operated by the County, the two trails form a continuous 36-mile paved “rail trail” from the Putnam Trailway to the north to Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. Over the past several years, the County repaved the entire trail route, creating a smooth walking and bicycling surface.

Despite Westchester’s dense development, the trail has a remarkably natural character, buffered from nearby neighborhoods and roadways by a ribbon of thick vegetation and mature trees. Sections of the trail follow the Saw Mill River, and it crosses the Croton Reservoir on an iconic railroad bridge. The trail attracts a mix of local residents and visitors that drive to the many parking areas and access points the County has created along the route.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway installed a trail counter in Elmsford, which marks the junction of the North and South County Trails (the counter was installed on the trail 1/3<sup>rd</sup> mile north of Route 119). **During the 12 months from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022, a total of 64,474 visitors passed the Elmsford trail counter.** June registered the highest number of visits (10,471); January saw the lowest (902).

## Seasonal, Daily, and Hourly Trail Use Patterns

The Greenway's automated trail counters collect continuous trail use data in one-hour, daily, and monthly increments, allowing detailed analysis of trail use patterns.

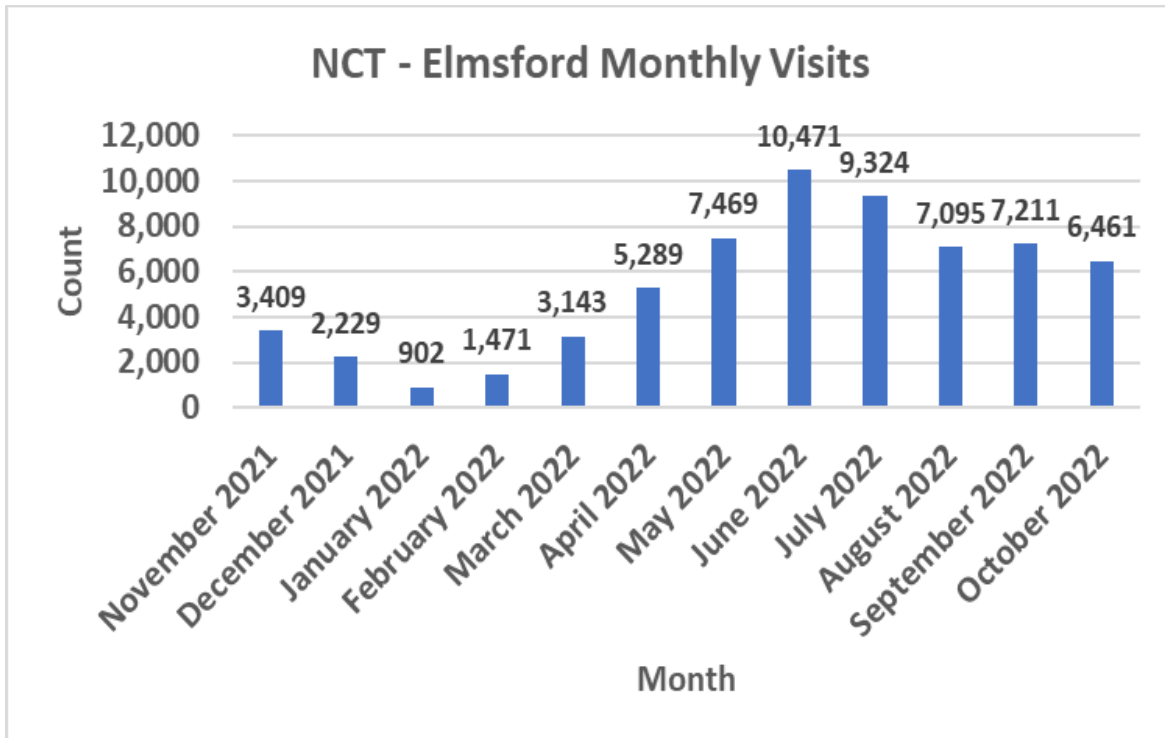
Data is presented below for two sites: Elmsford in Westchester County (a densely populated area); and East Greenbush in Rensselaer County (a suburban trail section). The data identifies minor differences in trail use patterns reflecting local community factors at each count location.

Having said that, the rail trails and canalway trail segments that comprise the 275-mile HRVG Trail are similar in character – all are 10-foot wide improved non-motorized paths with gentle grades. At a high level view, public use of all 14 Hudson Greenway Trail locations where trail counts have been collected follow seasonal and daily patterns that are similar to the two sites analyzed below.

### Seasonal/Monthly Trail Use

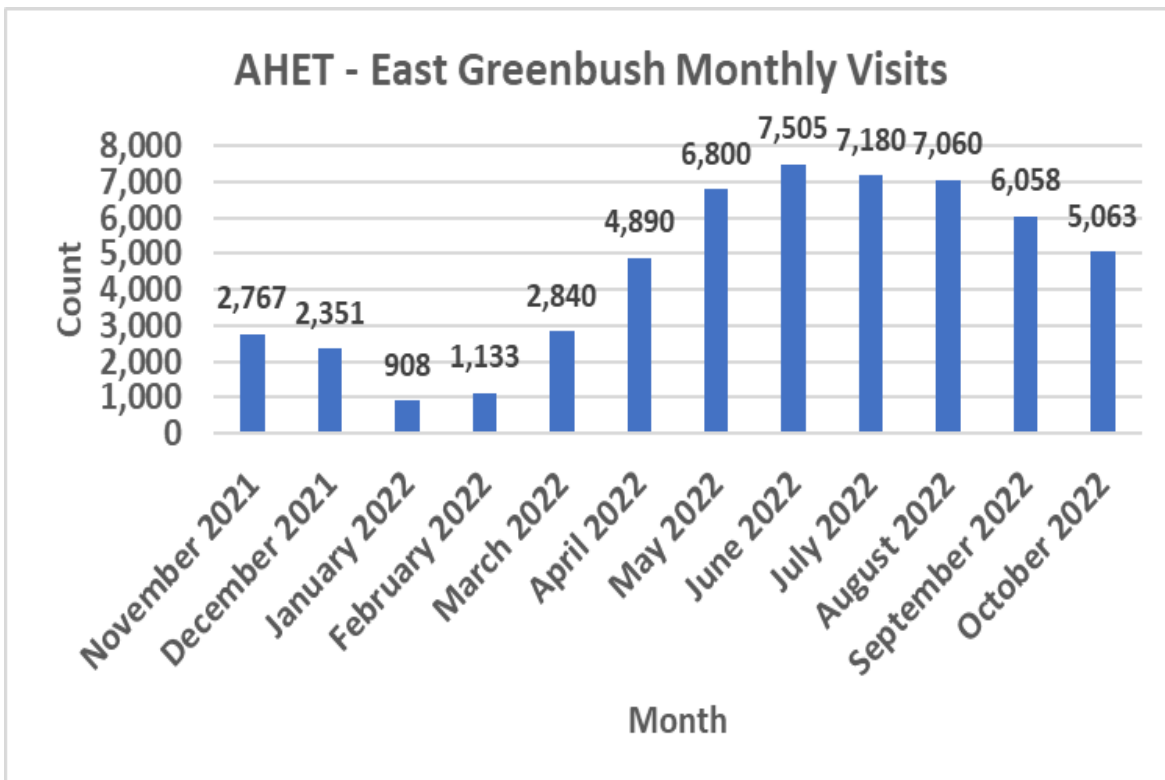
Per the graphics below, trail visitation patterns follow a predictable pattern over the course of the year:

- Visitation is lowest in winter months. January was the lowest visitation month at Elmsford and East Greenbush. Like virtually all of the 275-mile Greenway Trail, these locations are not plowed during the winter, resulting in very low visitation when trail sections are covered by snow and ice. Visitation increases slightly on winter days when warmer temperatures melt the trail clear of snow, which is becoming more frequent due to climate change.
- Visitation grows steadily as spring weather arrives in March and April.
- Monthly visitation peaks during the summer. June was the highest visitation month at both Elmsford and East Greenbush. Visitation remained high during July and August, albeit slightly lower than June – reflecting somewhat lower mid-day visitation during the heat of the summer.
- Visitation declines during the fall, dropping as the weather turns cold and daylight hours wane.



*Above: Monthly trail visitation at Elmsford in Westchester County.*

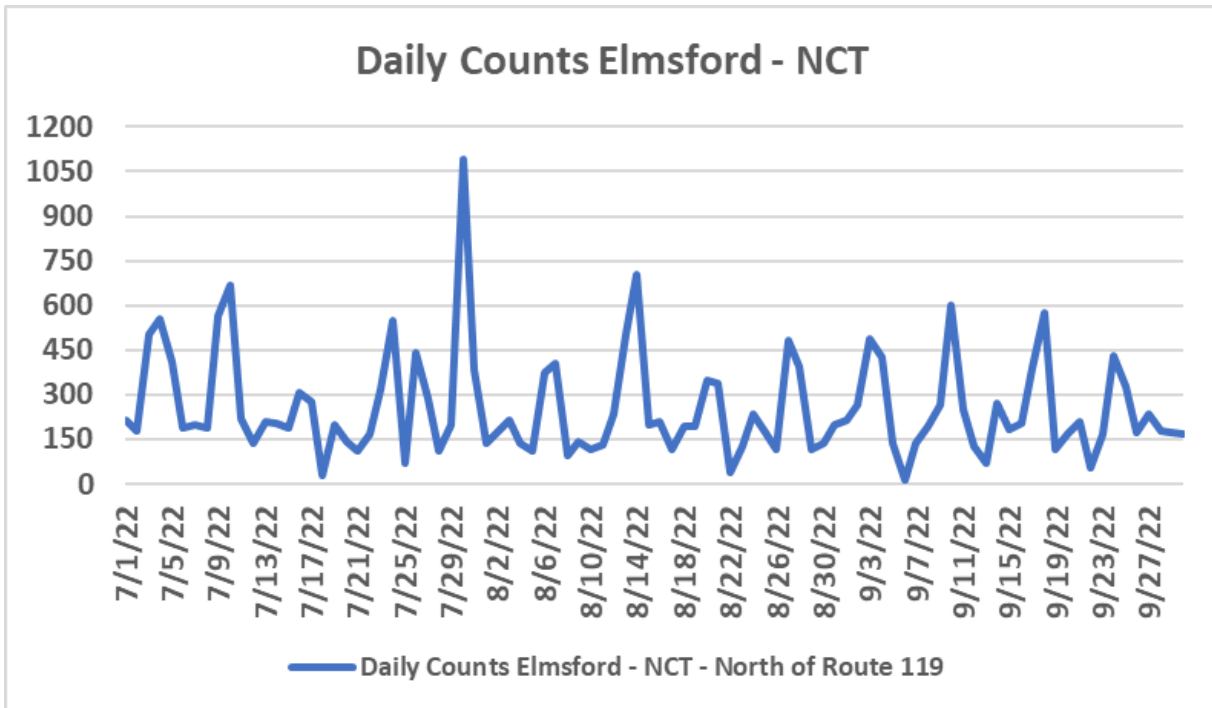
*Below: Monthly visitation at East Greenbush in Rensselaer County.*



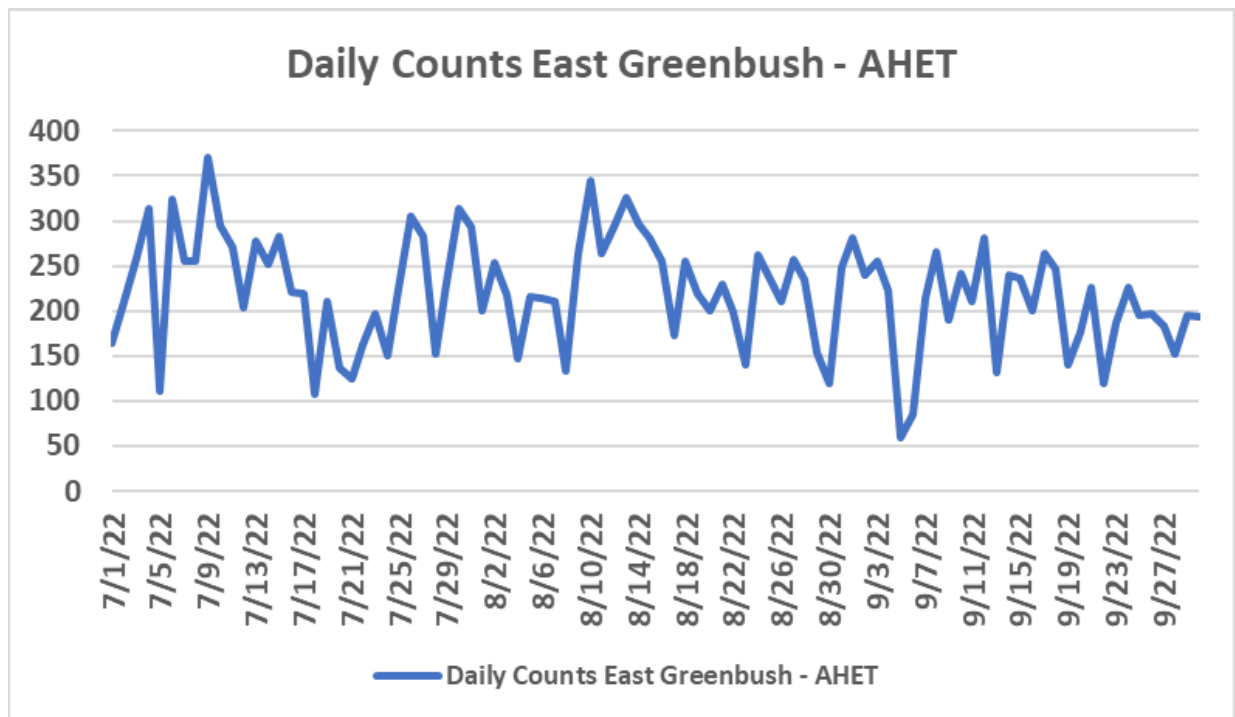
## Daily Trail Use Variation Due to Weather

Although trail numbers follow a predictable seasonal cycle, day-to-day weather greatly influences visitation. Trail visits peak on warm sunny days. Conversely, visitation is low during cold rainy weather. The graphics below depict the daily trail use numbers during the 3-month period July 1 to September 30, 2022:

- Elmsford had the greatest variation in daily use. A high of 1,093 visitors passed the counter on July 30<sup>th</sup>; whereas only 11 visitors passed on September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- East Greenbush ranged from a high of 370 on July 9<sup>th</sup> to a low of 59 on September 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Trail use trends higher on weekends, with lower numbers recorded on weekdays. However weather plays a greater role – visitation is higher on sunny weekdays than on rainy Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.



*Above: Daily trail visits at Elmsford in Westchester County – July 1 through September 30, 2022.*



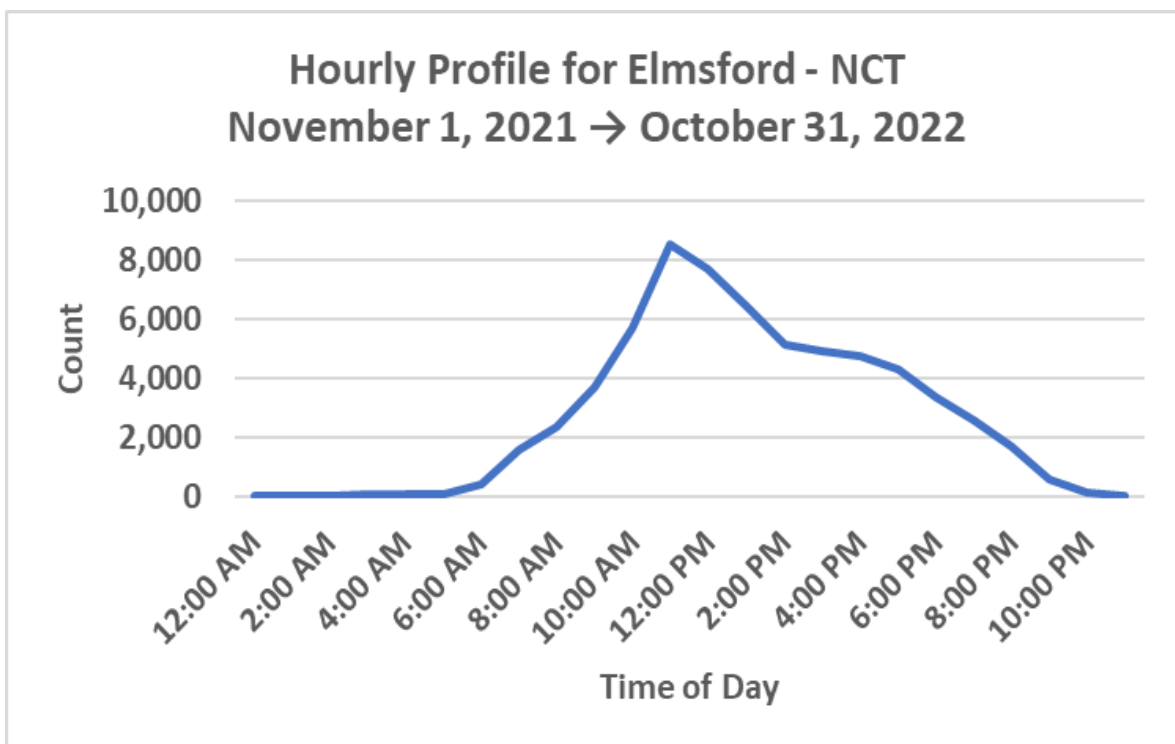
*Above: Daily trail counts at East Greenbush in Rensselaer County  
July 1 through September 30, 2022.*

## Hourly Patterns – Visitation Over the Course of the Day

The HRVG Trail is open to public use from dawn to dusk (most of the trail does not have night lighting). The graphics below depict trail visits during one-hour increments, averaged over an entire year.

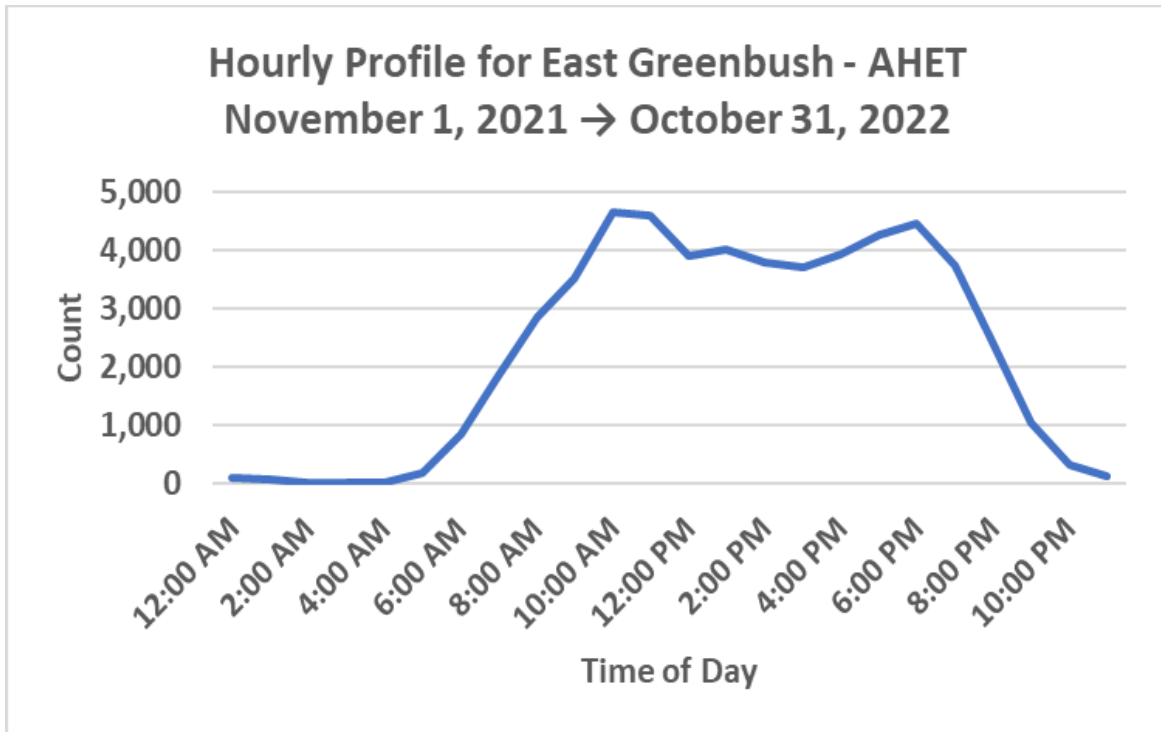
There is variation in the hourly profiles among the two sites:

- At Elmsford, visitation grows rapidly through the morning, peaks at noon, and drops throughout the afternoon.
- At East Greenbush, visitation peaks at 11:00am, drops slightly during the midday, and peaks again at 6:00pm.
- Site-specific surveys would be needed to explain the factors driving different hourly visitation patterns at the two sites. Possible factors include variations in the ratio of pedestrians vs. bicyclists; the mix of local trail users versus those driving to the site; and proximity to local businesses increasing mid-day use.



*Above: Hourly trail visit profile at Elmsford in Westchester County.*





*Above: Hourly trail visit profile at East Greenbush in Rensselaer County.*

## Conclusion & Next Steps

The Hudson River Valley Greenway's trail count program is off to a strong start, recording more than 1.25 million visits at 14 specific locations along the 275-mile Hudson Greenway Trail from New York City to Lake Champlain.

During 2023, the Greenway and its partners are collecting trail counts at 12 additional sites, laying the groundwork to develop a projection of total visitation along the 275-mile route.

The Greenway acknowledges Parks & Trails New York, which has operated trail counters on the Erie Canalway Trail section of the Empire State Trail for more than a decade. PTNY provided valuable technical guidance and data for this report.

In the future, combined data collected by the Greenway and PTNY will allow calculation of total visitation on the statewide 750-mile Empire State Trail.