



# Albany-Hudson Electric Trail

*2023 Trail Use Report*

**Issued January 2024**

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**Hudson River  
Valley Greenway**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TRAIL COUNT PROGRAM OVERVIEW – ALBANY-HUDSON ELECTRIC TRAIL ...</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RESULTS OF VISUAL SURVEYS OF AHET TRAIL USER TYPES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SITE-SPECIFIC AUTOMATED COUNTER RESULTS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
AHET 2022 & 2023 Counter Locations .....	8
East Greenbush (West) Trail Counter.....	9
East Greenbush (Southeast) Trail Counter .....	10
Schodack Trail Counter .....	11
Village of Nassau Trail Counter .....	12
North Chatham Trail Counter.....	13
Niverville Trail Counter .....	14
Village of Kinderhook Trail Counter .....	15
Stuyvesant Falls Trail Counter.....	16
<b>SEASONAL, DAILY, AND HOURLY TRAIL USE PATTERNS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
AHET Seasonal/Monthly Trail Use .....	17
Daily Trail Use Variation Due to Weather .....	18
Hourly Patterns - Visitation Over the Course of the Day.....	19
<b>CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS.....</b>	<b>21</b>

For additional information about the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, go to <https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/albany-hudson-electric-trail>, or Contact Us at [hrgv@hudsongreenway.ny.gov](mailto:hrgv@hudsongreenway.ny.gov).

Detailed on-line maps of the AHET trail, including designated parking areas and nearby lodging and attractions, are available on the Empire State Trail website [www.empiretrail.ny.gov](http://www.empiretrail.ny.gov).

# TRAIL COUNT PROGRAM OVERVIEW – ALBANY-HUDSON ELECTRIC TRAIL

The Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) constructed and operates the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET), a 36-mile recreational “rail trail” in Rensselaer and Columbia Counties. The non-motorized AHET trail, which is part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System, is 10-feet wide with gentle grades and an improved surface welcoming bicyclists, walkers, and runners of all ages and abilities. The trail is open year-round from dawn to dusk. The AHET trail is a segment of New York State’s 750-mile Empire State Trail, which runs from New York City to Canada and Buffalo to Albany.

HRVG administers a formal program to collect data on the public’s use of the AHET trail. Data is being collected in two formats:

## 1. AHET Automated Counters – Two Years of Results

- HRVG installs automated trail counters on off-road segments of the AHET route. The “Pyro-Box” counters, manufactured by the company Eco-Counter, use an infrared sensor to record the number of trail users passing by the unit, and store data in hourly increments allowing detailed analysis of trail use patterns on an hourly, daily, and monthly basis.
- The units are not cameras, do not collect information about specific trail users, and don’t differentiate between bicyclists and walkers. Rather they simply record the number of people passing the counter.
- During 2022, HRVG installed trail counters in East Greenbush, Nassau, North Chatham, and Kinderhook.
- During 2023, HRVG installed trail counters in East Greenbush, Schodack, Niverville, and Stuyvesant Falls.
- All counters were left in place for a full year, collecting 12-months of continuous trail use data at each location.
- **Combining data collected over two years, HRVG’s counters have registered a total of 288,076 visits (the count sites below are listed “north to south” along the AHET trail):**
  - **Town of East Greenbush (West):** 45,288 visits
  - **Town of East Greenbush (Southeast):** 54,555 visits
  - **Town of Schodack:** 26,059 visits
  - **Village of Nassau:** 31,798 visits
  - **Hamlet of North Chatham:** 33,379 visits
  - **Niverville:** 29,022 visits
  - **Village of Kinderhook:** 48,506 visits
  - **Stuyvesant Falls:** 19,469 visits

- **Note** the 288,076 trail users were counted at eight distinct locations, and therefore capture only a portion of total annual visitors along the entire 36-mile AHET route.
- In November 2023, HRVG moved the counters to four new locations in Nassau, Valatie, Stockport, and Greenport, where the counters will remain in place for twelve months to collect “year-three data.” By the end of 2024, after annual trail counts have been collected at 12 specific locations, HRVG will have sufficient data to project total annual visitation to the entire AHET trail.

## 2. Visual AHET Trail Use Surveys

- HRVG’s automated counters collect highly accurate trail use numbers, but don’t differentiate between trail user types (walkers, runners, bicyclists, etc.).
- To understand how people use the AHET trail, HRVG staff completed visual surveys of trail users at varied locations during September and October 2022.
- Visual surveys were collected during 60 and 90-minute periods at eight locations along the trail in East Greenbush, Schodack, Nassau, Chatham, and Kinderhook. Data was collected over a total of 14 hours. Surveys occurred on a mix of weekdays and weekends, and at different times of the day (mid-day, afternoons, and early evenings). All counts occurred on days without rain (ranging from sunny to cloudy), with temperatures from 60 to 75 degrees – conditions amenable to all types of trail use.

# RESULTS OF VISUAL SURVEYS OF AHET TRAIL USER TYPES

This section presents the results of visual surveys conducted in 2022 of 333 AHET trail users observed at eight locations over a total of fourteen hours.

## Bicycle Vs. Pedestrian Use

- Pedestrians account for 56% of AHET visitors.
- Bicyclists account for 44% of AHET visitors.

This split – slightly more pedestrians than bicyclists – is typical for rail trail visitation statewide during spring, summer, and fall months (this ratio does not apply to the winter season, when bicycle usage drops to very low levels from December through March). For both pedestrians and bicyclists, virtually all visitors were small groups of 1 to 4 people. Very few groups of 5 or larger were observed.

## Types of Pedestrian Visitors:

- Walkers (without pets): 69%
  - Walkers With Dogs: 14%
  - Walkers Pushing Child Strollers: 9%
  - Runners: 5%
  - Skateboards & Kick Scooters: 3%
- 100% of Pedestrian Visitors

Walkers comprise 92% of AHET pedestrian visitors (including visitors walking dogs and pushing strollers). Dog-walking is a popular activity – one of every seven pedestrians brings a dog to the trail (dogs are allowed on the trail but must be on leash at all times and owners must clean up after their pets). Small numbers of runners, skateboarders, and kick scooter riders (e.g. razors) comprise the balance of pedestrians.

## Types of Bicycle Users

- Traditional Pedal Bikes, All Types: 92%
  - E-Bikes (e.g. electric bicycles): 8%
- 100% of Bicyclists

A wide range of bicyclists visit the trail, from casual/recreational riders including small children just learning to ride; to high-end gravel and road-bikes; to riders on touring bikes carrying gear for multi-day trips.

HRVG's trail use regulations allow Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes (bicyclists with electric assist motors). E-Bike use is modest, accounting for 8% of AHET bicyclists.

NYS law requires bicyclists under the age of 14 to wear helmets, and HRVG strongly encourages helmet use by bicyclists of all ages. Combining regular bicycles and E-Bikes, 74% of all bicyclists wear helmets, whereas 26% do not.

### **Illegal Motorized Vehicles**

No illegal motorized vehicles (cars, ATVs, UTVs, dirt bikes) were observed on AHET during the trail surveys, which totaled 14 hours of surveys spread across seven locations along the trail route.

HRVG plans to undertake additional field surveys during 2024 to expand our understanding of the mix of pedestrians and bicyclists using the AHET trail.

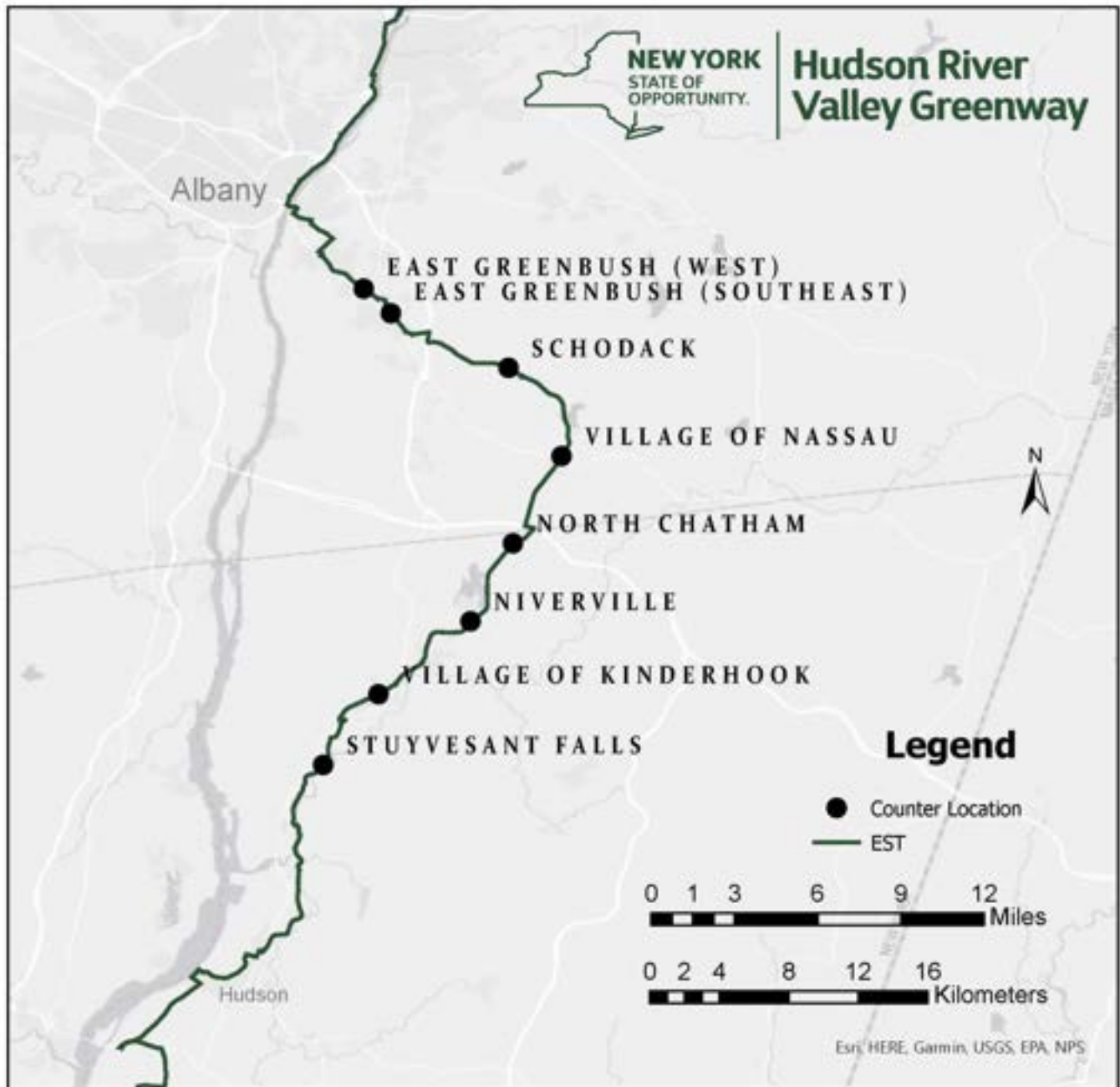
# SITE-SPECIFIC AUTOMATED COUNTER RESULTS

The chart below lists annual visits at eight locations along the 36-mile AHET trail. The sites are listed “north to south.”

<b>Count Location</b>	<b>Annual Visits</b>	<b>Count Period</b>
East Greenbush-West - Near Route 4	45,288	Nov 2022 to Oct 2023
East Greenbush-Southeast – Near Electric Ave	54,555	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Schodack - West of Route 150	26,059	Nov 2022 to Oct 2023
Nassau - North of Route 20	31,798	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
North Chatham - South of CR32	33,379	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Niverville - North of CR 28	29,022	Nov 2022 to Oct 2023
Kinderhook - Rothermel Park	48,506	Nov 2021 to Oct 2022
Stuyvesant Falls - North of Hudson Ave	19,469	Nov 2022 to Oct 2023
<b>Total Annual Visits at Eight Sites =</b>	<b>288,076</b>	

Detailed information about each trail count location is provided on the following pages.

# Albany-Hudson Electric Trail 2022 & 2023 Counter Locations





## East Greenbush (West) Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail section in the Town of East Greenbush is a paved, 12-foot-wide trail. HRVG has collected trail visitation data at two AHET locations in East Greenbush - the “West” location northwest of Route 4; and the “Southeast” location near Electric Avenue.

The East Greenbush-West counter was installed for 12 months during 2023 at the location pictured below:

- During the 12 months, a total of 45,288 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 124/per day.
- August saw the highest use (6,092 visits during the month), which was six times the lowest monthly visitation (1,026 visits during December).



Above: the East Greenbush (West) counter site, located northwest of Route 4.

### MONTHLY COUNTS

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
November 2022	2,572
December 2022	1,026
January 2023	1,314
February 2023	1,550
March 2023	2,497
April 2023	5,051
May 2023	5,956
June 2023	5,180
July 2023	5,097
August 2023	6,092
September 2023	4,667
October 2023	4,286
<b>Annual Total =</b>	<b>45,288</b>

ANNUAL TOTAL  
USERS

**45,288**

AVERAGE DAILY  
VISITATION

**124**

HIGHEST USE DAY  
July 30, 2023

**524**

## East Greenbush (Southeast) Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail section in the Town of East Greenbush is a paved, 12-foot-wide trail. It is heavily used, drawing local users from surrounding residential neighborhoods, visitors who travel to the trail from the capital district, and long-distance Empire state Trail users from across the nation and other countries.

- The East Greenbush-Southeast counter was installed for twelve months on the AHET trail near the intersection with Electric Avenue:
- During the 12 months, a total of 54,555 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 150/per day.
- Daily visitation varied greatly due to seasons and daily weather conditions.
- Trail use ranged from a high of 370 people on May 29th and again on July 9th, to a low of only 8 visitors on January 28th.

### MONTHLY COUNTS



Above: the AHET Trail in East Greenbush, Rensselaer County.

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
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>

ANNUAL TOTAL  
USERS

**54,555**

AVERAGE DAILY  
VISITATION

**150**

HIGHEST USE DAY  
May 29 & July 9, 2022

**370**

## Schodack Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail has an 8-mile section through the Town of Schodack. The 10-foot-wide paved asphalt trail passes through varied residential and rural settings. Formal trail parking areas in Schodack are located at Route 150, Rice Road, and Nassau Lake.

HRVG installed a counter for twelve months where the AHET trail crosses State Route 150 in East Schodack:

- During the 12 months, a total of 26,059 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 71/per day.
- The busiest four months - May through August - totaled 14,712 visits, accounting for 56% of annual visitation.
- The slowest four months - December through March - totaled 2,666 visits, accounting for only 10% of annual visitation.

### MONTHLY COUNTS



Above: The Schodack counter was installed in East Schodack.

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
November 2022	1,378
December 2022	505
January 2023	550
February 2023	738
March 2023	873
April 2023	2,115
May 2023	3,408
June 2023	3,498
July 2023	3,936
August 2023	3,870
September 2023	2,915
October 2023	2,273
<b>Annual Total =</b>	<b>26,059</b>

**ANNUAL TOTAL  
USERS**

**26,059**

**AVERAGE DAILY  
VISITATION**

**71**

**HIGHEST USE DAY  
July 30, 2023**

**460**

## Village of Nassau Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail section in the Village of Nassau is a paved, 10-foot-wide trail. It draws local users from Nassau, visitors driving to access the trail from the large trailhead parking area on John Street in the Village, and long-distance bicyclists.

HRVG installed a counter for twelve months on the AHET trail slightly north of Route 20:

- During the 12 months, a total of 31,798 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 87/per day.



*Above: trail bridge over the Valatie Kill in Nassau on a Fall day.*

### MONTHLY COUNTS

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
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>

<p>ANNUAL TOTAL USERS</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">31,798</p>	<p>AVERAGE DAILY VISITATION</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">87</p>	<p>HIGHEST USE DAY May 1, 2022</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">421</p>
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## North Chatham Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail section in the hamlet of North Chatham is a 10-foot-wide trail with a compacted stonedust surface. While it draws local users from the community of North Chatham, most visitors access the trail from the trailhead parking area on Depot Street, or bicycle down the trail from the Village of Nassau (to the north) or Niverville and Kinderhook (to the south).

HRVG installed a counter for twelve months on the AHET trail slightly south of the Trolley Station on County Route 32:

- During the 12 months, a total of 33,379 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 91/per day.

### MONTHLY COUNTS



Calendar Month	Monthly Users
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>

*Above: the AHET trail in North Chatham has a compacted stonedust surface.*

<p><b>ANNUAL TOTAL USERS</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>33,379</b></p>	<p><b>AVERAGE DAILY VISITATION</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>91</b></p>	<p><b>HIGHEST USE DAY</b> May 29, 2022</p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>356</b></p>
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## Niverville Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail in Niverville spans the border of the Towns of Chatham and Kinderhook. North of Niverville the trail is paved asphalt, passing by Kinderhook Lake. To the south toward Valatie the trail has a stonedust surface. There is a large formal trailhead parking area at the intersection of County Route 28 and State Route 203.

The Niverville counter was installed for 12 months slightly north of where the trail crosses County Route 28:

- During the 12 months, a total of 29,022 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 80/per day.
- August saw the highest use (4,044 visits during the month), which was more than six times the lowest monthly visitation (604 visits during December).

### MONTHLY COUNTS



Calendar Month	Monthly Users
November 2022	1,625
December 2022	604
January 2023	702
February 2023	825
March 2023	1,107
April 2023	2,598
May 2023	4,044
June 2023	3,379
July 2023	3,888
August 2023	4,289
September 2023	3,075
October 2023	2,886
<b>Annual Total =</b>	<b>29,022</b>

*Above: The AHET trail in Niverville, with the large trailhead parking area in the background.*

<p><b>ANNUAL TOTAL USERS</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>29,022</b></p>	<p><b>AVERAGE DAILY VISITATION</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>80</b></p>	<p><b>HIGHEST USE DAY July 30, 2023</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>566</b></p>
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## Village of Kinderhook Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail section in the Village of Kinderhook is a paved, 10-foot-wide trail. It is heavily used, drawing local users from the Village, visitors who travel to the trail from the capital district, and long-distance Empire state Trail users from across the nation and other countries.

HRVG installed a counter for twelve months on the AHET trail where it passes through the Village's Rothermel Park:

- During the 12 months, a total of 48,506 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 133/per day.



Above: the AHET Trail through Rothermel Park in the Village of Kinderhook.

### MONTHLY COUNTS

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
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>

ANNUAL TOTAL  
USERS

**48,506**

AVERAGE DAILY  
VISITATION

**133**

HIGHEST USE DAY  
May 29, 2022

**376**

## Stuyvesant Falls Trail Counter

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail in Stuyvesant Falls has a mix of stonedust and paved asphalt surfaces. A formal trailhead parking area on Hudson Ave (County Route 25) provides easy trail access and overlooks the dramatic Kinderhook Creek waterfalls.

The Stuyvesant Falls counter was installed for twelve months slightly north of where the trail crosses Hudson Avenue:

- During the 12 months, a total of 19,469 trail users passed the trail counter.
- Average daily visitation was 53/per day.
- Daily visitation varied greatly due to seasons and daily weather conditions.
- Trail use ranged from a high of 371 people on July 30th, to a low of zero visitors on January 23 and 24 (freezing rain left a thick glaze of ice making the trail impassable).

### MONTHLY COUNTS



Above: A bicyclist approaching Stuyvesant Falls on the AHET trail.

Calendar Month	Monthly Users
November 2022	877
December 2022	381
January 2023	638
February 2023	594
March 2023	786
April 2023	1,694
May 2023	2,431
June 2023	2,058
July 2023	2,682
August 2023	2,858
September 2023	2,268
October 2023	2,202
<b>Annual Total =</b>	<b>19,469</b>

ANNUAL TOTAL  
USERS

**19,469**

AVERAGE DAILY  
VISITATION

**53**

HIGHEST USE DAY  
July 30, 2023

**371**

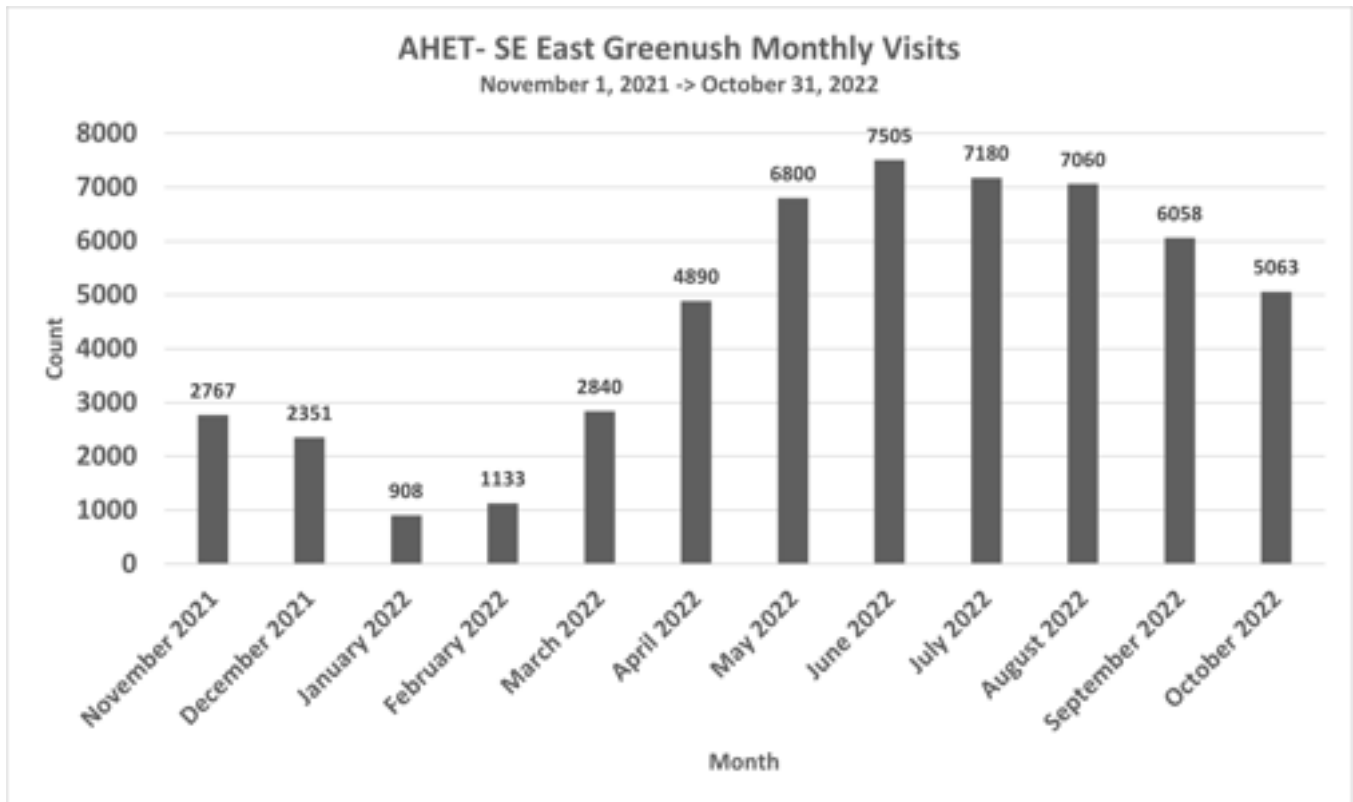


# SEASONAL, DAILY, AND HOURLY TRAIL USE PATTERNS

HRVG's automated infrared trail counters provide continuous trail use data in one-hour, daily, and monthly increments, allowing detailed analysis of trail use patterns. This section presents data for the East Greenbush counter. Similar visitation patterns occurred at AHET trail count locations.

## AHET Seasonal/Monthly Trail Use

As is typical for rail-trails in New York State, AHET visitation follows a predictable seasonal cycle. The graphic below depicts monthly visitation during 2022 at the East Greenbush-Southeast counter location – but similar monthly visitation patterns were measured at all AHET counter locations.



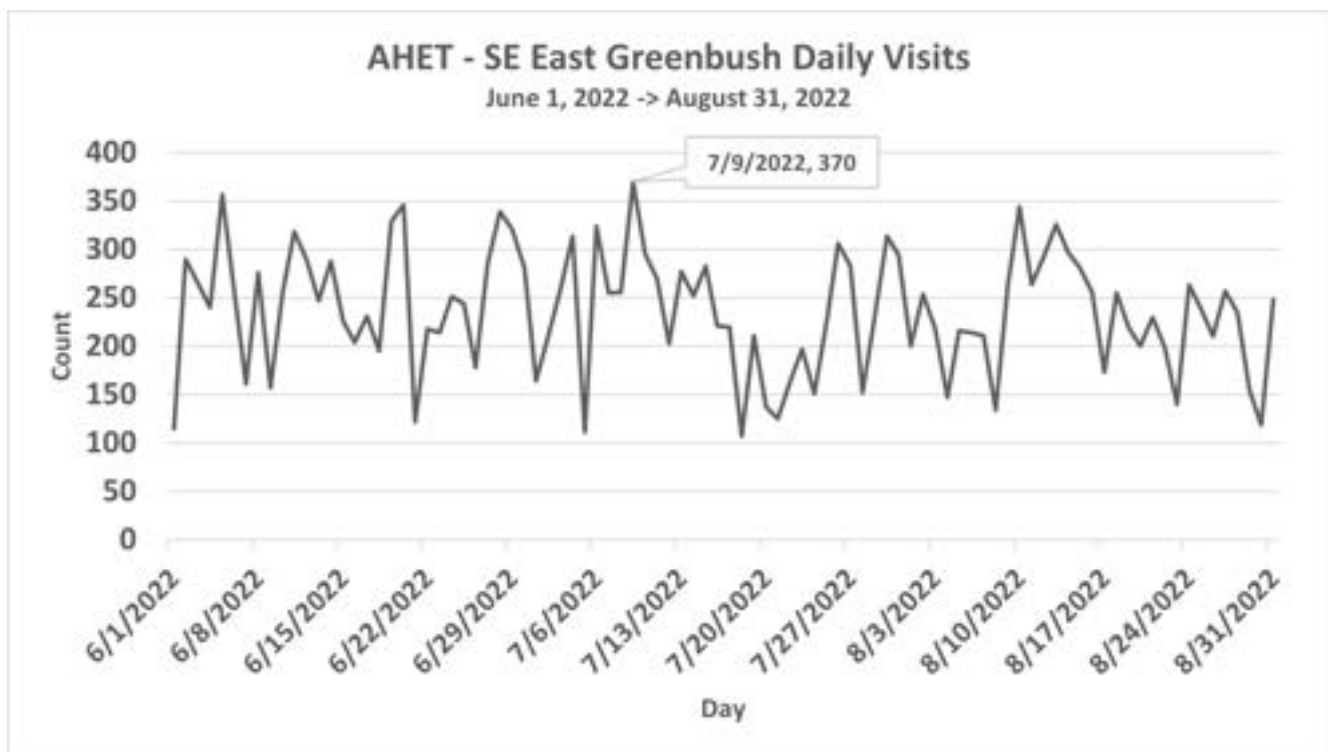
*Above: Trail visitation by month, recorded at the East Greenbush-Southeast counter in 2022. This seasonal pattern occurred at all four AHET counters and is typical of rail-trails and canalway trails in NYS.*

Over the course of the year:

- Visitation is lowest in the winter months (only 908 people passed the East Greenbush-Southeast Counter during the month of January 2022). The trail is not plowed, and visitation is very low when the trail is 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 through as spring weather arrives in March and April.
- Monthly visitation peaks during the summer, with May, June, July, and August receiving the highest numbers of trail users.
- At the East Greenbush-Southeast counter, June was the busiest month in 2022 with 7,505 visitors passing the counter.
- Visitation declines during the fall, dropping as the weather turns cold and daylight hours wane.

## Daily Trail Use Variation Due to Weather

Although AHET visitation follows a predictable seasonal cycle (lowest in winter months, highest from May through September), day-to-day weather greatly influences trail visitation. The graphic below depicts the number of trail users passing the East Greenbush-Southeast counter each day during the 3-month period from June 1 to August 31, 2022, during the peak summer trail season.



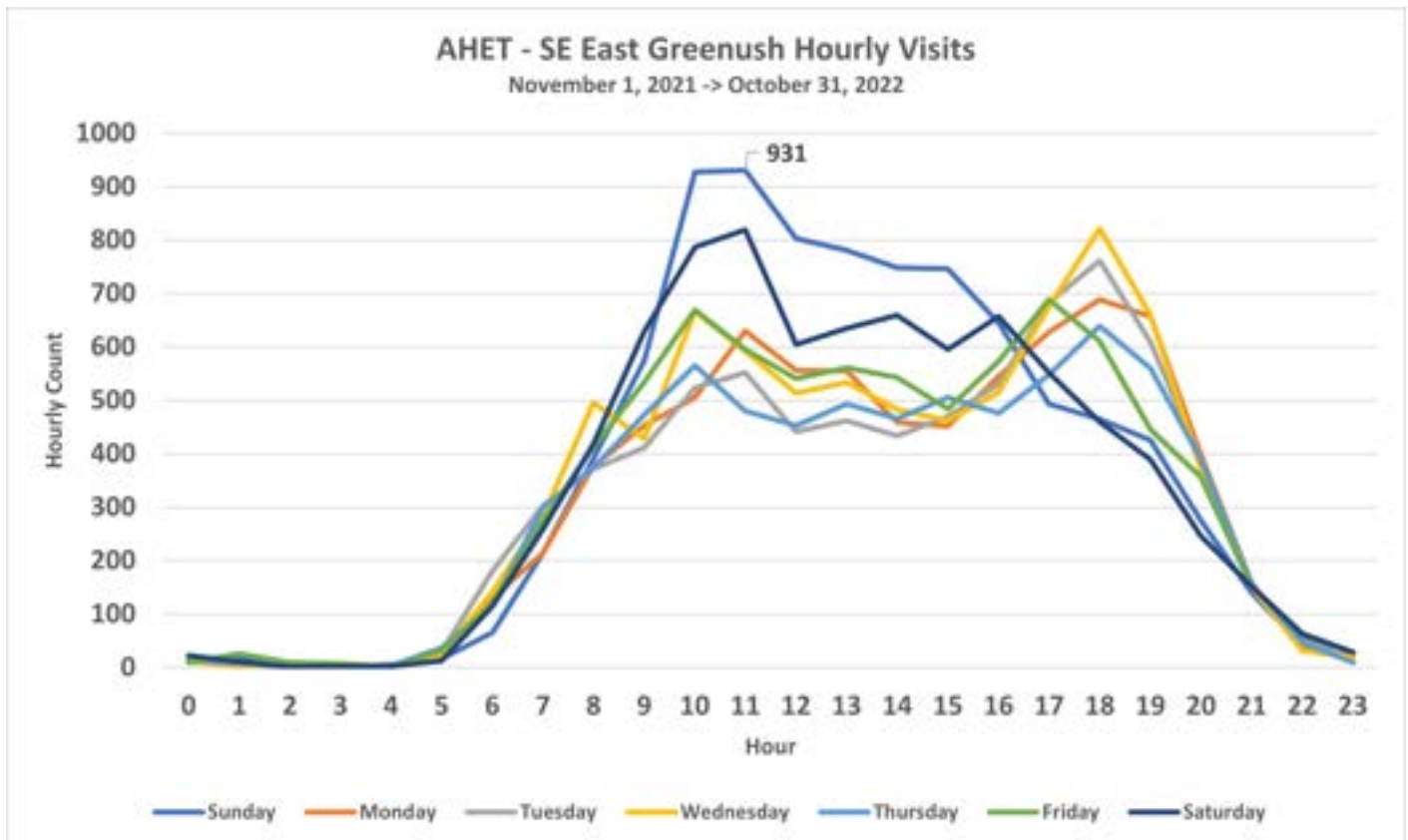
Above: Daily AHET visitation from June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> at the East Greenbush-Southeast counter, illustrating visitation is highly impacted by daily weather conditions (sunny vs. rainy days).

Reviewing the East Greenbush-Southeast chart above:

- During 2022, visitation peaked on warm sunny days. During the three months, visitation exceeded 350 people/day on 13 dry days, of which 6 were during the weekend and 7 were weekdays.
- Conversely, trail use is low on rainy days, particularly on rainy weekdays. During the three months, less than 150 people/day people visited the trail on 9 cold/rainy days, all of which were weekdays.
- Overall, although trail use trends higher on weekends, weather plays a greater role – visitation is higher on sunny weekdays than on rainy Saturdays and Sundays. This pattern occurred at all four AHET counters.

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

The AHET trail is open to public use from dawn to dusk (the trail does not have night lighting). The graphic below shows average trail user numbers during 2022 for one-hour increments at the East Greenbush-Southeast site, over an entire year.



Above: trail visitation in East Greenbush (one-hour increments, over an entire year).  
 ("0" is midnight) ("6" is 6:00am) ("12" is noon) ("20" is 8:00pm)

Reviewing the hourly East Greenbush-Southeast chart above:

- Visitors start using the AHET trail around 6:00am.
- Visitation increases steadily through the morning, peaking between 10:00am and noon.
- Trail use drops slightly during mid-day, reflecting lower use during work/school hours, as well as visitors avoiding the trail during the hottest hours during summer months.
- A second peak in visitation occurs between 5:00pm and 7:00pm. Trail use then declines through the evening hours.
- This pattern is typical across all AHET trail count locations.

## CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

During 2022 and 2023, HRVG collected annual trail counts using automated counters at eight locations along the AHET trail in Rensselaer and Columbia Counties. The counters registered a total of 288,076 AHET trail visits.

The 288,076 visits were counted at eight distinct locations, and therefore capture only a portion of the total number of trail users who visit the entire 36-mile AHET route each year.

In November 2023, HRVG installed counters at four new locations in Nassau, Valatie, Stockport, and Greenport, where the counters will remain in place for 12 months to collect “year-three data.”

By the end of 2024, after data has been collected at 12 different locations, HRVG will have sufficient data to project total annual visitation to the entire 36-mile AHET trail.

Also, during 2024 HRVG will conduct additional visual surveys on the AHET trail, to expand the detailed data on specific types of trail users presented in this report.