

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Andrea Armstrong,
Environmental Studies and
Sciences, Lafayette College;
armstral@lafayette.edu

Trail counter system and user experiences on the Karl Stirner Arts Trail (Awarded 2018)

SUMMARY

Outdoor public spaces are important for quality of life, community well-being, and the environment, but gathering reliable information about these greenspaces can be challenging. Our project developed a trail counter data collection system for the Karl Stirner Arts Trail (KSAT) in Easton, Pennsylvania. We installed trail counters along the trail and developed a counter calibration system to improve count estimates. We also conducted a survey of trail users to learn more about use patterns and users' perceptions and attitudes. The project yielded use estimates for July-December 2018, with over half of KSAT users residing in or near Easton.



CHALLENGE

Located along the Bushkill Creek and between Easton's West Ward and College Hill neighborhoods, the KSAT brings together diverse trail users as they experience community, the arts, and the riparian-urban environment along the Two Rivers Trail Network. Prior to this project, there were no trail counters on the KSAT. With many changes occurring along the Bushkill Creek Corridor, it is important to assess and monitor the frequency of trail use.

Of critical importance to the future of the KSAT is understanding its diverse audience. The KSAT provides one of the few greenspaces available to Easton's West Ward residents, and thus the trail may potentially serve as an important place for community activities and cross-town resident interactions. Information on trail users, and their use patterns may contribute towards a more inclusive trail environment.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$3,400

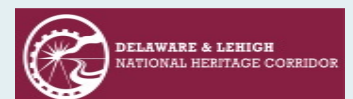
Match:
\$5,400

Total Project Cost:
\$8,800

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

We would like to thank Brian Greene, Trail Programs Manager of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor for his assistance with the trail counter system, as well as Jim Toia of the Karl Stirner Arts Trail and Dave Hopkins of the City of Easton for their support of the project.

LAFAYETTE
COLLEGE



SOLUTION

We installed two infrared trail counters along the KSAT (see the map in Figure 1, below). With baseline trail use estimates in hand, we are now able to understand shifts in trail use over time.

To tell us more about trail users, we also conducted an intercept survey. We asked trail users to tell us about their purposes for visiting the KSAT, what the KSAT means to them, a sense of a trail community, and trail-related expenses. The knowledge gained from our research will inform trail programs, facilitate trail planning efforts, and can support local businesses. We also have a data collection protocol that can guide future trail research efforts.

RESULTS

On an average day along the KSAT, the trail counters record 112 trips. This estimate was based on trail counts collected between July and December 2018. Based on the data shown in the bar chart below (Figure 2), the KSAT was used most frequently in July, and least often in December. Generally, use patterns are similar between the two trail counter locations.

We recorded 81 usable intercept survey responses. Among our participants, over half (55.6%) permanently resided in one of Easton's zip codes (18040, 18042, 18045).

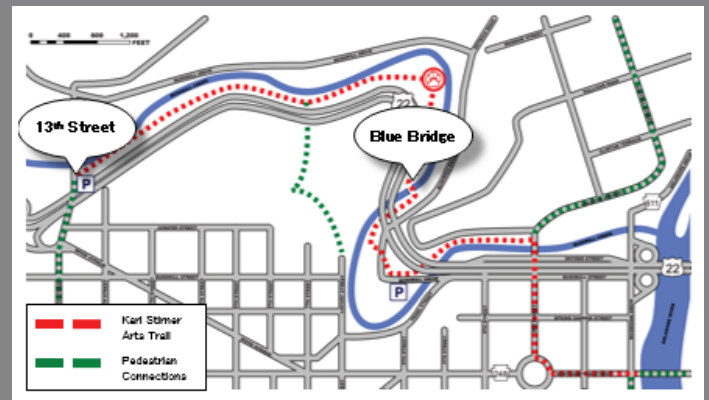


Figure 1. KSAT trail counter locations.

Contact



www.LVgreenways.org

Claire Sadler, Dir. Trails & Conservation

Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage

Corridor

2750 Hugh Moore Park Road

Easton, PA 18042

610-923-3548 ext. 226

Claire@delawareandlehigh.org

www.delawareandlehigh.org

Diane Kripas, Division Chief

PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and

Conservation

717-772-1282

dkripas@pa.gov

www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cli

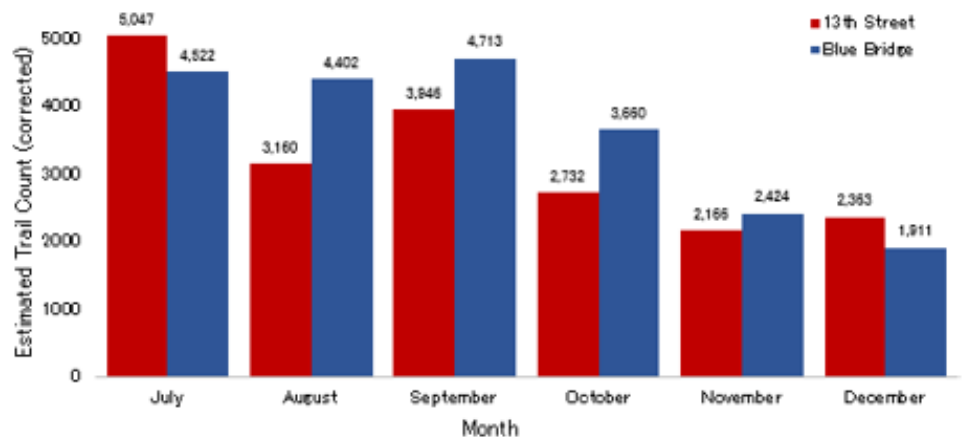


Figure 2. Estimated trail counts by month, 2018.

Table 1. Trail use patterns July – December 2018.

Time Frame	Max Use	Min Use
Time of Day	12–3pm	12–3am
Day of Week	Sunday	Tuesday
Month of Year	July	November