

Introduction

Volunteer trail counts are an excellent way of understanding the use of your town forest. These trail counts, when extrapolated, provide data for trail use over a day, week, month, or year. This, in turn, can help the town forest steering committee secure grants, develop maintenance programs, and understand the patterns and levels of existing trail use. Trail count data can also establish a baseline of trail usage for the future. Volunteer-done trail counts also provide additional data on trail users – who they are and what activity they're doing in the forest.

Collecting Trail Count Data

The table on the attached counting form should be filled out by a volunteer. The volunteer should collect data over a consecutive two hour period, ideally at a peak time. Peak times are weekends between 12 and 2 p.m. or weekdays between 5 and 7 p.m. For accuracy, weekday counts are best taken on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, with Mondays, Fridays, and holidays avoided. All counts should be taken between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Data can be collected throughout the forest – on a popular or unpopular trail, at a gathering place, or a trailhead. For accuracy purposes, multiple counts should be collected at each location, over the same period. For example, data could be collected at a trailhead between 12 and 2 p.m. on two consecutive Saturdays.

Volunteers need to bring this form and instructions, a writing utensil and possibly a trail map, clipboard, hat, sunscreen, jacket, snacks, and water. The volunteer should count from a safe location where they are aware of their surroundings.

Extrapolating the Data

To extrapolate the data to see weekly, monthly, and annual estimates based on the counts, the forest steering committee should collect the data sheets and download the extrapolation workbook at www.bikepeddocumentation.org/index.php/downloads. For every two hour-count periods, sum up all the users across male and female and the various user types. For counts at the same location, those sums should be averaged, and the date of the first count entered into the

spreadsheet. All forest trails would likely be considered “path” and Vermont’s climate is “long winter short summer.”

Inputs - Green cells require your attention.	
Input your two-hour count total	20
Count date	9/21/2018
Count time: Enter first hour of two hour count period	12:00 PM
Type: Path or Street/Sidewalk	Path
Climate Zone: Long Winter Short Summer, Moderate Climate, or Very Hot Summer Mild Winter	Long Winter Short Summer

For more information on the counting process, extrapolation process, and download additional forms and guidance, visit the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project website at <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ASSESSMENT POD

VOLUNTEER TRAIL COUNTING

Surveyor Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____ Time Count Conducted: _____ to _____

Trail/Location: _____ Trail Type: _____ Trail Surface: _____

Weather Conditions: Sunny Partly cloudy Cloudy Partly Rainy Rain Approximate Temperature: _____

Make one “tic mark” for each person passing by in either direction engaged in each activity. Count the number of people on the bicycle, not the number of bicycles (children in rear seats, tandem bicycles, etc.). “Others” may include people in wheelchairs or others using assistive devices, children in strollers, etc. If possible, make notes about the “others” category.

User Type	Male	Female
Walkers/Hikers		
Walkers/Hikers		
Bicyclists		
Bicyclists		
Joggers		
Joggers		
Equestrians		
Equestrians		
Others		
Others		

Thanks for your help!!!! Please return forms to your town forest committee.