



Breakneck Visitor Survey Report 2018

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Trail Conference Breakneck Visitor Survey: Table of Contents

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Breakneck Visitor Survey Methodology & Data Analysis

Breakneck Trail Stewards collected self-administered survey data from visitors to Breakneck Mountain in 2017 and again in 2018:

- September & October, 2017 (78 respondents)
- June 21–27, 2018 (137 respondents)

Data was input/saved into Excel and analyzed using SPSS

Findings will be presented as follows:

- 2018 data sets
- Comparative results from 2017-2018 where applicable

Note: Some columnized totals will not equal 100% due to rounding.



Breakneck Visitor Survey

Executive Summary – Key Findings

This exploratory study identified unique aspects of Breakneck Ridge, namely:

Visitation:

- Breakneck attracts both new visitors (34%) as well as repeat hikers (21% have visited 20+ times). Therefore, there is the potential for this park to have continually increased visitation numbers as the park brings in new hikers as well as attracts people to return again.

Draws of Breakneck:

- Word-of-mouth (especially among Millennials) is the main draw of hikers to this park, with 70% of first-time visitors hearing about the park from someone; half of first-time visitors were younger than 30 years old.
- Hikers indicated exercise and fun as the main two reasons they traveled to Breakneck.

Trail Conditions:

- Trail conditions have improved from the 2017 to 2018 studies, with trail erosion and lack of trail marking mentions both dropping off.
- However, graffiti and litter are still (and more so) problematic.



Data Collection: Day/Time

- The 2018 Breakneck survey varied from the 2017 round, in that it was conducted throughout the week as opposed to only on the weekend.

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)
Thursday	-	23%
Friday	-	25%
Saturday	62%	12%
Sunday	38%	14%
Monday	-	15%
Tuesday	-	8%
Wednesday	-	3%

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)
Weekday	-	73%
Weekend	100%	26%

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)
AM	31%	40%
PM	40%	60%
N/A	29%	-



Breakneck Visitation

- Across both surveys, roughly one-third of visitors to Breakneck were there for the first time. In the summer 2018 study, however, there were twice as many visitors indicating they had been frequent visitors to the park (going more than 20 times.)
- The park, therefore, is both attractive to new visitors but also draws hikers to return for multiple visits.

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)
0 / First Time	33%	34%
1-2 Times	17%	19%
3-4 Times	19%	7%
5-20 Times	17%	19%
21+ Times	8%	12%
“A lot”	1%	5%
“Yes” (didn’t list #)	-	4%
N/A / Blank	5%	-

	2018 % (137)
Spring	44%
Summer	64%
Autumn	34%
Winter	12%

Note: The seasonal visitation question was new for 2018.



Who Are Your Hikers?

- Gender was fairly split across the studies, and skewed somewhat younger for the 2018 summer survey.
- Of first-time visitors to the park, nearly half were younger than 30 years old. The park, therefore, has potential to increase visitation numbers as it draws in a strong segment from the younger population.

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)
Male	54%	47%
Female	47%	50%
Other Response	-	2%

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)	2018 First-Time Visitors
< 18	0%	4%	4%
18 – 29	33%	44%	43%
30 – 45	39%	24%	26%
46 – 64	27%	26%	26%
65 +	1%	2%	2%



Knowledge of Breakneck (1/2)

- 62% of Breakneck visitors in the 2018 study said they learned of the park from someone; a quarter had personal knowledge from living or working nearby the park.
- 70% of first-time visitors had been told of the park by someone else. Therefore, word-of-mouth is an effective draw to Breakneck.

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)	2018 First-Time Visitors
Someone told you about it	-	62%	70%
Word of mouth	46%	-	-
You live or work nearby	-	27%	11%
Newspapers / magazines	1%	3%	2%
Maps / guidebooks	12%	9%	6%
Websites	24%	9%	17%
Social Media	7%	3%	2%
Personal Knowledge	24%	-	-

Note: Answer choices varied from 2017-2018, and were adjusted to gather more detailed data (e.g. “personal knowledge” was removed as an answer choice). A list of specified answers are listed in the Appendix of this report.



Knowledge of Breakneck (2/2)

Where did you learn about this hiking area/trail network? (Specified Responses)	N
Google	3
All Trails	3
Hike the Hudson	2
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference	2
Instagram (unspecified)	2
Blog (unspecified)	1
Facebook	1
Website (unspecified)	1
Hiking Camp	1
Hudson Hotels	1
REI	1



Purpose of Hiking

- Reasons for visiting Breakneck were fairly similar across both studies – with a slight edge going to “escape the city” in autumn’s 2017 survey.
- First-time visitors in 2018 primarily indicated wanting to exercise and have fun as their reasons for going to the park.

2017 / 2018 Wording	2017 % (78)	2018 % (137)	2018 First-Time Visitors
Relax / Relax/unwind	42%	49%	60%
Have fun	59%	65%	70%
Escape the city	41%	27%	34%
Experience nature	64%	57%	57%
Experience something new	-	23%	47%
Exercise	68%	80%	77%
Family time	13%	15%	19%
Spend time with friends	-	33%	38%
Walk the dog	5%	7%	4%

Note: Answer choices varied from 2017-2018, and were adjusted to gather more detailed data (e.g. “relax” was changed to “relax/unwind.” “Experience something new” and “Spend time with friends” were added for 2018.



Park Maintenance

	2017 % (78)	2018 % (90)
Trails are eroded	12%	6%
Trails are too narrow	-	3%
Trails are too wide	-	1%
Loose rocks on the trails	-	7%
Trails aren't clearly marked	18%	4%
Dogs (not on leash or waste on trail)	3%	0%
Litter/dumping	18%	30%
Graffiti	23%	30%
Too many people	27%	14%
Not enough people (too secluded)	1%	1%
No issues OR positive mentions	31%	39%

- Trail conditions appear to have improved in between the two studies, with “trail erosion” and “lack of trail marking” mentions dropping off in 2018.
- Litter/dumping and graffiti appear to still be problematic (and more so) in 2018. Specifically, broken glass at the trailhead was mentioned by 4 respondents.

Note: Answer choices varied from 2017-2018, and were adjusted to gather more detailed data (e.g. “Trails are too narrow,” “Trails are too wide,” and “Loose rocks on the trails” were added for 2018. Additionally, for 2018, respondents were asked only to answer if they had hiked there already that day or anytime in the past year. Additionally, 2018 responses were filtered to ensure responses were from hikers who had been on the trails (and not those who just got to the park and had never been there before).



2018 – Trail Navigation Methods

- Breakneck visitors indicated various ways of trail navigation that they typically use. While 4 in 10 usually don't refer to any map, 50% utilize the kiosk and either take one of its available maps or snap a photo of the park map with their phone.
- Additionally, 30% of visitors typically rely on printed maps from the Trail Conference or another organization.

	2018 % (137)	2018 First-Time Visitors
Use a phone map app (such as Avenza Maps)	15%	11%
Use Google Maps or other internet map	14%	11%
Use paper map provided at park kiosk	39%	49%
Don't refer to any map – just walk on marked trail and/or follow other hikers	41%	45%
Use printed map (Trail Conference or other organization)	30%	23%
Take a picture of the map on the park kiosk	10%	13%
Use paper map that you have printed	4%	2%

Note: This trail navigation question was new for the 2018 survey.

Q Wording: "When hiking somewhere, which method of trail navigation do you typically use? (Select all that apply.)



2018 – Breakneck Visitors' Zip Codes

- The allure of Breakneck Ridge's challenging trail system will draw hikers there, bypassing more local parks (refer to map on next page).
- Visitors also traveled to Breakneck (up to 60 miles away) from New Jersey, Metro New York, and Long Island.
- Breakneck visitors came from local Putnam County, as well as primarily from surrounding Dutchess, Orange, and Westchester Counties.

Breakneck Visitation, Based on 2018 Survey Results:

Dutchess County = 10.95%

Putnam County = 8.76%

Estimating 100,000 total visitors per year, there are likely:

10,950 visitors from Dutchess County per year

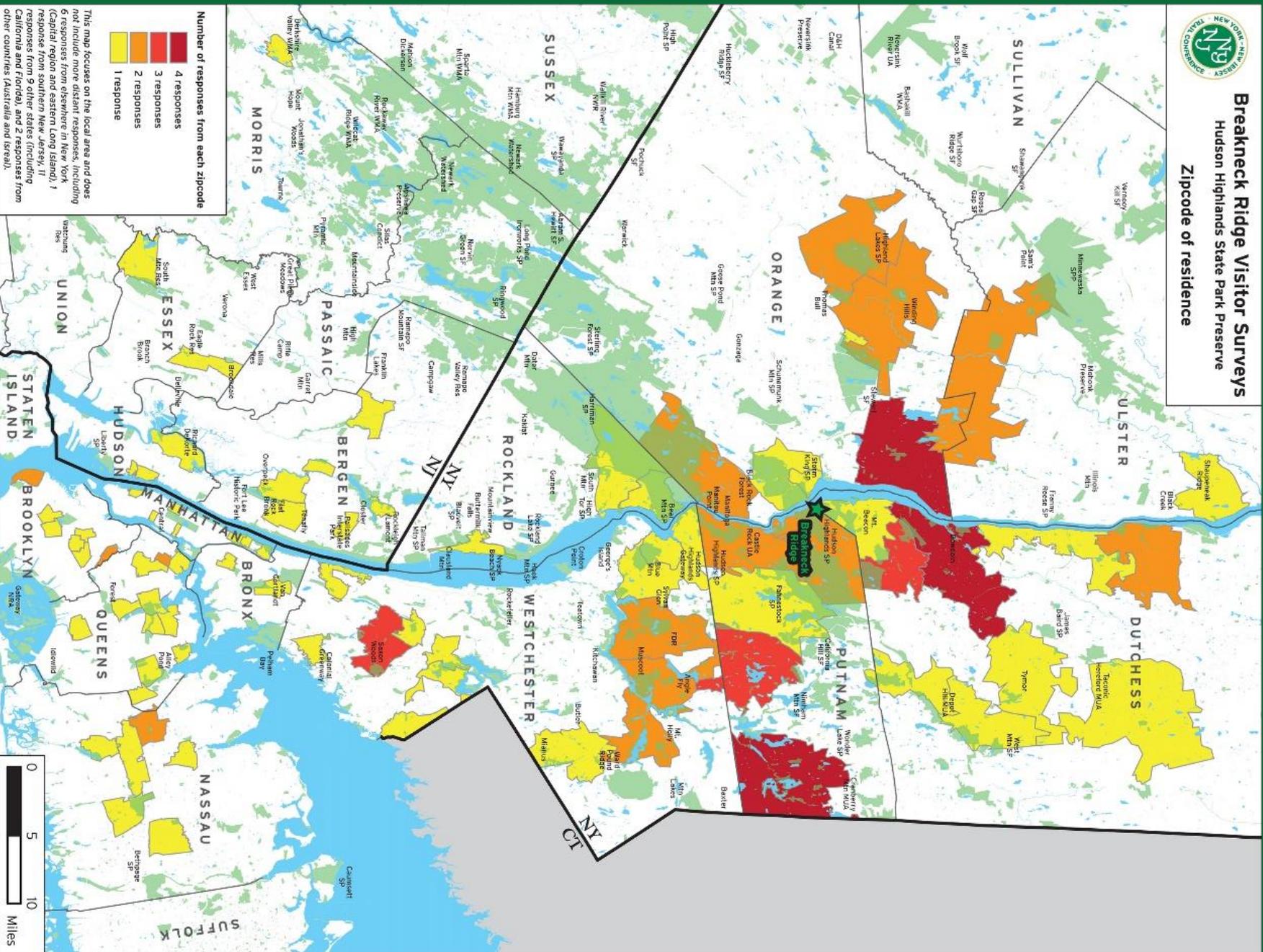
8,760 visitors from Putnam Country per year



Breakneck Ridge Visitor Surveys

Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve

Zipcode of residence



This map focuses on the local area and does not include more distant responses, including 6 responses from Oswego in New York (Capital region and eastern Long Island), 1 response from southern New Jersey, 11 responses from 9 other states (including California and Florida), and 2 responses from other countries (Australia and Israel).