



# What's Happening at Blue Marsh Lake?

USACE

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## Summer Safety at Blue Marsh Lake

Summer at Blue Marsh Lake is busy. Visitors are not only from Berks County, but from numerous other counties in the state. And there are plenty of people visiting from other states, especially New Jersey and New York. They visit Blue Marsh because of the variety of recreation opportunities that are available. However, we want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable visit!

Our first suggestion before visiting the lake is to do some research on the area. If you have internet visit the web site and Facebook page, and if not, give us a phone call. Know before you go, and plan for the unexpected, no matter what activities you are partaking in during your visit. Summer in southeastern Pennsylvania tends to bring in hot, humid weather. When spending any time outdoors in this type of weather it is very important to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water or sports drinks, and avoid caffeine. Never stray from the trails as you increase your chances of getting into poison ivy, or picking up chiggers or ticks. Always check yourselves after spending time on the trails. We recommend that bike riders always wear a helmet.



Water safety is a priority at Blue Marsh Lake during the summer season. Parents need to keep a close watch on their children at all times. Wearing a lifejacket can save your life. It only takes an adult an average of 60 seconds to drown, and it takes 10 minutes for a strong swimmer to put on a lifejacket after entering the water. When water skiing, board sailing or operating/riding on a personal watercraft you are required to wear a lifejacket. You are required to have a wearable lifejacket on board when canoeing, kayaking or paddle boarding. I recommend that you wear the lifejacket. Whatever the activity, stay safe and expect the unexpected!

## Recreation Spotlight—Swimming

Swimming is a popular summer recreation activity at Blue Marsh Lake. The lake is “swim at your own risk,” which means there are no lifeguards. Therefore, parents need to keep a constant watch on their children when they are in the water. We only permit Coast Guard approved floatation devices on the lake. That means no “floaties/inflatable toys” are allowed. Water wings or the float-rings that they wear around their waist are not made to serve as a lifesaving device. If children are unsupervised and get into deep water the water wings will only keep the child’s arms out of the water, and will not support the head. When children use the float toys that go around their waist, they can flip over head-first into the water. Lifejackets are made to keep the child afloat, and support their head and neck. Also, never swim beyond your skills or abilities. Always enter the water feet first; do not dive into the water. The water may not be deep enough, or their could be objects submerged beneath the water’s surface on which you could hit your head. Be safe!

### Inside this issue:

Why Are They Not Allowed?	2
Meet Volunteer Megan Majeski	2
Volunteer Work Days	2
Summer Word Search	3
National Public Lands Day	3
Fishing Line Bins	3
Summer 2013 Programs	4

### Volunteer Project Days

- August 10, Saturday
- September 7, Saturday
- September 28, Saturday

Projects will include trail work, bridge work and possibly olfactory garden rehab work.

Contact Volunteer Coordinator Nate Freiwald for more information, 610-376-6337

## Why Are They Not Allowed?

We would like to take a moment to explain our most common violation here at the lake and the rationale behind the regulation. The most common regulation that has to be enforced is that the only swim aid permitted are U.S. Coast guard approved floatation devices. This means that you may not use anything like water wings, inner tubes, boogie boards, or water noodles.

What is a U.S. Coast Guard approved device? These are devices that have been found to be safe in a lifesaving situation. Life jackets or personal flotation devices are the most common, but in the past few years there has been an approved set of water wings that are filled with floatation material and have a chest and back floatation pad. If the swimmer would be unconscious in the water a Coast Guard approved device has the best chance to save the life of the swimmer or boater.

When enforcing this regulation, the most common comment given to the rangers is that “my child can’t swim without them.” This is exactly why the child should not be using those devices. Anything inflatable can pop or leak. The water wings can slide off of the arms or you could fall through the middle of the inner tube. Boogie boards and water noodles have similar flaws, the user can easily become separated from the item. All of the illegal swim aids have another thing in common, they will do nothing for an unconscious swimmer. The staff at Blue Marsh wants everyone to have a safe and fun-filled summer, so enjoy the water with your U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.



**Park Rangers explaining the swimming aid regulation to parents at the swimming Area**

## Meet Volunteer Magen Majeski

Magen Majeski is volunteering her time this summer as an intern at Blue Marsh Lake. She has been working along side the natural resource management staff, performing the same duties as those who are getting paid. And she always does it with a smile and a great attitude. She is a Wildlife Management and Conservation Major, and also has a minor in Education, at Delaware Valley College. Megan also serves as president of the Future Farmers of America Collegiate Chapter at Delaware Valley, Treasurer of the Bowling Club, and is vice president of the Council For Campus Clubs and Organizations. In addition to all of that, she also works at the Eat N’ Park, which is located on campus.

What she does in her free time? Homework and sleeps! To unwind, Megan also likes to go line dancing.

Megan loves the outdoors, and goes rifle hunting during deer season. She also loves to work with children, which she got to do this summer at Blue Marsh. Megan does a great job leading programs. I teamed up with her to do water safety programs for Operation Purple Camp at Camp Conrad Weiser, and after seeing the program done a couple of times she stepped right in and did a fantastic job teaching the children. Thank you Megan for volunteering at Blue Marsh. We sure enjoyed working with you this summer.



## Volunteer Work Days

Lend a helping hand and participate in a volunteer work day. The section of trail to be focused on is between the Stilling Basin and State Hill Boat Launch. Trail stabilization using stone and geo-textile fabric along with the removal of low hanging branches from a section of cedar trees are two of the projects to be worked on. Pre-registration is required to ensure that a proper project is scheduled for the group participating. If you are interested in signing up please contact Nathan Freiwald or Hallie Groff at 610-376-6337. Hope to see you there.

**Saturday, August 10**

**Saturday, September 7**

**9 a.m. at the Visitor Center**

# Summer Word Search

BEACH                      BIKING                      BOATING  
 FISHING                    HEAT                        ICE CREAM  
 SAND                        SUN GLASSES              SUNSCREEN  
 SUNSHINE                 SWEAT                      SWIMMING

G	N	S	V	J	H	Z	S	H	S	G	E
K	N	H	A	C	M	W	A	E	X	N	C
G	G	I	A	N	I	X	S	A	I	I	E
B	Z	E	T	M	D	S	O	T	C	K	B
S	B	A	M	A	A	L	H	R	E	I	F
Z	U	I	N	L	O	P	U	T	C	B	C
O	N	N	G	D	B	B	I	M	R	M	U
G	Z	N	S	U	N	S	C	R	E	E	N
J	U	R	B	H	X	R	C	H	A	F	X
S	Y	G	W	M	I	X	R	C	M	S	R
S	W	E	A	T	G	N	I	H	S	I	F
V	I	H	G	M	M	R	E	X	G	D	B

## National Public Lands Day

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation’s largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. In 2013, the 20th Anniversary of NPLD will be held on Saturday September 28. Blue Marsh Lake will once again be part of Public Lands Day. Our event will be held from 8:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. at the Visitor Center. Work projects will include seedling planting, trail work, litter pick-up, bridge repair and garden work. You can also celebrate our public lands by joining the Berks County Parks for Hike with a Ranger at 11:00 a.m. at the Visitor Center, or for a Control Tower Tour at 1:00 p.m. We also hope to have a Geo cache in - trash out event as well.



Public Lands Day actually dates back to 1994 when they first started the event with three sites and 700 volunteers. It was a large success, and became an annual tradition. The event is typically held on the last Saturday in September. Since that first NPLD it has grown by leaps and bounds.

Last year we accomplished extensive work on the trail system, and also hosted several activities throughout the day. Now we are recruiting for this year’s NPLD. This is your opportunity to volunteer and help our public lands. We need your help! If interested contact us. Contact information is on the last page.

## Monofilament Fishing Line Recycling Bins

When you visit many of our areas at Blue Marsh Lake you might take notice of a new device attached to our information boards or signs. The Federated Sportsmen’s Clubs of Berks County built and installed numerous monofilament line recycling bins throughout the Project Area. These bins are to be used to dispose of monofilament fishing line. Unfortunately numerous folks improperly dispose of their fishing line by just throwing it on the ground or leaving it hang in tree branches. This is extremely dangerous for both people and the wildlife. Staff members have had to rescue numerous wildlife species that have become entangled in fishing line that was thoughtlessly thrown behind by an individual who was fishing. Animals can be injured or killed when becoming entangled in fishing line. These bins are a much-needed addition to Blue Marsh Lake. Thank you Ken Madeira, and members of the Federated Sportsmen’s Clubs of Berks County!



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**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
Philadelphia District**

## Summer 2013 Programs

**Paddle up the Tulpehocken:** Friday, August 9, 3:00 p.m., Route 183 Pull-off (north of Fish Commission Launch). Bring your kayak or canoe and join us for a flat-water paddle on the upper portion of Blue Marsh Lake, starting at the small pull-off near Sheidy Boat Launch. Trip is for all levels of paddlers, and is limited to 15 boats. Bring your own life jacket and boat. Free, unless you want to add American Canoe Association insurance for \$10. **Pre-registration is required (610-376-6337).**

**Hike with a Ranger:** Saturday, August 10 at 8:00 a.m., Church Road Access. We plan on hiking the Skinner's Loops, which is three-miles long. Wear comfortable walking shoes, and you may want to bring water.

**Whooo Goes There:** Friday, August 16, 8:00 p.m., Squirrel Run Nature Trail, State Hill Boat Launch. Join park rangers on a night time safari and discover what (or who) goes bump in the night. Bring along a flashlight, insect repellent, and your sense of adventure.

**Family Fun Day Butterfly Walk:** Saturday, August 17, 10:00 a.m., Swiftwater Court (along Palisades Drive). Join Karl Gardner, local butterfly expert and naturalist, for a butterfly walk at Blue Marsh Lake. He will discuss and show you caterpillars, and then head out on a walk in search of butterflies. Karl always brings along some extra nets for participants to use to try to catch these beautiful insects. Don't miss this program—you will be sorry!

**Wee Ones What's It All About:** Wednesday, August 21, 10:00 a.m., Visitor Center. We all know that Blue Marsh Lake provides great recreation opportunities. But the lake is here for more important purposes, including flood control, water supply and water quality. Learn about some of these purposes while we walk out onto the dam and take a look at the control tower. This walk will certainly be both fun and educational for our younger park visitors.

**Paddle Blue Marsh:** Thursday, August 22, 6:00 p.m., Church Road Access. Join volunteer Tony "Doc" Schoch on a Blue Marsh Lake cruise. Doc is an expert kayaker and naturalist, and will lead you on an excellent on-water adventure. Participants must provide their own equipment, and are required to wear a Coast Guard approved lifejacket.