



What's Happening at Blue Marsh Lake?

USACE

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Stay Safe This Fall Season

Whew! We all survived another busy summer season at Blue Marsh Lake. Now the staff is preparing for the fall season. As the temperatures cool down, and the days get shorter, the recreation uses at Blue Marsh Lake take on a different focus. There is a lot more trail use, including hikers, horse back riders, mountain bikers, and runners. Several of the local school district cross-country teams utilize the trails as part of their training routine. Hunting season started with mourning dove and goose on Labor Day. Currently, small game/archery deer season are open.

Safety should still be your number one priority when recreating, whether on land or water, this fall season. If you are staying land-based and your adventures will take you through the woods and fields, stay alert for a pesky little critter. The eastern black-legged tick, commonly called the deer tick, seem to be a lot more prevalent in the fall season. I have already found a few on my dogs. After an outing, remember to check yourself for these very little, somewhat dangerous ticks, as they can carry Lyme disease.

As mentioned earlier, hunting is also in season. Blue Marsh Lake is a multi-use facility. Hunters use the trails to get to their location, but do not typically hunt along trails and lanes. They go into the fields and woods to do their hunting. If you plan on being out on the trails this fall, wear bright colors, such as florescent orange. And keep your dogs with you. I typically put an orange vest on my German Shepherd when I take her for a walk during hunting season. You may want to do the same. And hunters, make sure you have your target clearly in sight, before taking a shot.

The water in the lake is cooling down due to the shorter days, and cooler air temperatures, especially at night. Boaters, keep this in mind! Wear your life jacket, and dress for the weather. Enjoy the outdoors, but please stay safe!



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Upcoming Programs

- November 1: Family Fun Day Look Up, Look Down, Look All Around, 1:00 pm, Conference Center
- November 12: Bird Walk, 1:00 pm, Visitor Center
- November 13: Control Tower Tour, 10 am, Visitor Center
- November 15: Hike with a Ranger, 10 am, Visitor Center

Take Your Kid Mountain Biking Day

Berks Area Mountain Bike Association (BAMBA), Berks County Parks and the US Army Corps of Engineers teamed up to host “Take Your Kid Mountain Biking” on Saturday, October 4. They met at the Church Road Access, and rode a section of the multi-use trail heading north towards North Heidelberg Road. The day was a great success, as 28 people participated in the event. This was the second year that BAMBA presented this program. Thank you to all the members of BAMBA who made this possible. Does October 3, 2015 look good for next year?



Hunters Wear Bright Orange, So Should You!

Blue Marsh Lake offers a great variety of recreation activities, no matter the time of year. The cooler fall temperatures bring an increase in trail use, including mountain bikers, hikers and horseback riders. But fall is also the season for hunting. All user groups must learn to co-exist and respect one-another's' recreation pursuits. Hunting is a popular activity at Blue Marsh Lake, and on PA State Gamelands 280, which borders the lake. Small game, pheasant, duck and goose, and white-tailed deer hunting occurs throughout the area. No hunting is allowed in developed areas. This includes "driving game," as that is considered an act of hunting. Most hunters hunt in the fields and forested areas, and avoid hunting from the trails. However, they will use the trails to access hunting areas.

Hunters should remember that there will be other folks out using the trails, and that is perfectly legal. Non-hunters should also be aware that hunters may be out pursuing game, and should stick to trails and wear bright colors. Hunters (not including archery hunters) are required to wear florescent orange. Non-hunters should do the same. And if you are walking your dogs, keep them with you and under your control at all times. It is not a bad idea to have your dog wear a bright orange vest when you are out walking on the trails. Many pet stores carry a variety of orange and bright yellow vest for all sizes of dogs. I have a florescent orange vest for my German shepherd.

All user groups should "police" themselves, which means making sure nobody is disobeying the regulations. We are all stewards of our public lands, and we need to be responsible and take care of our natural resources. This starts with picking up trash and carrying it out with you. Fishermen, pick up that monofilament fishing line - if left behind wildlife can become tangled in it and be seriously injured or worse. Hunters pick up your shotgun shells, and hikers and bike riders carry out the plastic water bottles instead of throwing them aside.

If you use a portable tree stand when hunting, you should carry it out with you after you are finished hunting for the day. Tree stands are not allowed to be left in trees overnight, or to be permanently installed in trees. This is also true for hunting blinds as well.

Four-wheel vehicles of any kind are not permitted anywhere on Blue Marsh Lake property. The use of dirt bikes are also not permitted throughout the project area and Gamelands 280. There are numerous access areas located throughout Blue Marsh Lake that allows for easier access for hiking, biking, horseback riding and hunting. Always be safe when recreating at Blue Marsh!

Mandatory Cold Weather Life Jacket Wear

Blue Marsh Lake's water temperature is slowly dropping due to the shorter days and cooler weather. Anyone recreating around or in the water should take steps to prevent hypothermia, which is the lowering of one's body core temperature. Hypothermia can be life threatening if the right steps are not taken.

Pennsylvania took steps to prevent hypothermia – related fatalities on the water by implementing a new law in 2012. This law requires individuals on boats less than 16 feet in length to wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket when on Pennsylvania waters November 1 - April 30. This law also requires individuals in kayaks or canoes, regardless of length, to wear their life jackets. Recreation boating fatalities that occur in the state November through April are mainly the result of the effects of cold water immersion. According to the PA Fish and Boat Commission, "with water temperatures less than 70 degrees F, cold water shock is a major factor in boating fatalities." By wearing a life jacket when exposed to cold water you will have potentially life-saving advantages, including insulation from the cold, the buoyancy ability of the jacket to keep you afloat when you may not be able to tread water, which reduces your risk of aspirating water. In the past many of the cold water related fatalities occurred on small and unstable boats. Victims were either not wearing their life jackets, or did not have any on board their vessel. Bottom line, wear that life jacket!

The Blacklegged Tick

The Blacklegged Tick (deer tick) is quite common at Blue Marsh Lake. Ticks feed on blood by inserting their mouth parts into the skin. They are slow feeders and will feed for 3 –5 days. If the tick is infected, it must be attached for 24 - 48 hours before it transmits Lyme disease, and at least 12 - 24 hours to transmit human anaplasmosis. Deer ticks live in wooded, brushy areas that provide food and cover for the white-footed mouse, deer and other mammals. Exposure to ticks is greatest in forested areas (especially along trails), and the fringe areas between woods and fields. The larva is the size of a period at the end of a sentence, and the nymph is slightly larger. The adult is the largest in size, and is red or orange in color. When out on the trails wear insect repellent, and check yourself for ticks after your outing. Both the nymph and adult transmit Lyme disease, so use caution when outdoors.



Hunting Seasons 2014 - 2015

It is fall, which means hunting season for many outdoor enthusiasts. When out on the trails wear bright colors! We have listed the seasons below for your reference.

Squirrels: October 18 - November 29, December 15 - 24 and December 26 - February 21, 2015 (6 daily)

Rabbit: Oct. 25 - Nov. 29, Dec. 15 - 24, and Dec. 26 - Feb. 21, 2015 (4 daily)

Pheasant: Cocks only Oct. 25 - Nov. 29, Dec. 15 - 24, Dec. 26 - Feb. 21, 2015 (2 daily)

Groundhog (woodchuck): No closed season except during the regular firearms deer season. Hunting is prohibited on Sundays. No limit

Deer, Archery (Antlered & Antlerless) Statewide: Oct. 4 - Nov. 15, and Dec. 26 - Jan. 10, 2015

Deer, Antlered & Antlerless Regular Firearms: Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 5B (Blue Marsh area), Dec. 1 - 13 (one legal antlered deer/license year. One antlerless deer with each valid WMU specific antlerless license)

Special Antlerless Only - Firearms: Oct. 23 - 25 for Junior and Senior license holders, disabled persons permit holders, and PA residents serving on active duty in the US Armed Forces only, with required antlerless license. Also, persons who have reached their 65th birthday in year of license application.

Deer, Antlerless Muzzleloader (Statewide): Oct. 18 - 25. Must have a muzzleloader license.

Flintlock Muzzleloader (Antlered or Antlerless) Statewide: Dec. 26 - Jan. 10, 2015. One antlered deer per hunting license or one antlerless deer and an additional antlerless deer with each valid WMU specific antlerless license. Must have a muzzleloader license.

National Public Lands Day—A Great Success

Blue Marsh Lake once again participated in National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 27. It was a great success, thanks to all of the fantastic volunteers who helped out. Litter pick-up at access areas along PA State Route 183 was one of the many projects. Volunteers collected 32 bags of trash, two tires, a large piece of plywood and various other items. Other projects included work at the sensory trail and garden that was accomplished by Girl Scouts and Blue Marsh volunteers. Seven volunteers from the Pagoda Pacers Runners Club worked on clearing their section of "Adopt A Trail," while other volunteers worked on other trail sections.



Local Geo Cachers Picked Up Trash

There were also other events that occurred on Public Lands Day. Volunteer Al Schoenebeck (former Blue Marsh Lake Project Manager) conducted a tour of the Control Tower, which was attended by 29 visitors. Three persons took part in Hike with a Ranger, which was led by our newest volunteer, Ron Waszk. There was a Paddle with a Ranger Program in the afternoon that was led by Chief Ranger Scott Sunderland and Berks County Parks staff member Laura Weisser. Thanks to all who participated! The weather was fantastic, and we had a great day!

Meet Volunteer Ronald Waszk

Ronald Waszk is our newest volunteer. He started on September 18, 2014. He was eager to get right out on the five miles of the multi-use trail that he decided to adopt. Ronald maintains miles seven through eleven. He has already put in 21 hours of trail work including trimming brush, weed whacking, and picking up trash. Ron even made a cart to carry all of his tools (see picture) by utilizing a small hand-truck. In addition to trail work, he has begun leading hikes and assisting Park Ranger Kathy Grim with some of her interpretive programs. On National Public Lands Day he led a three mile hike along the multi-use trail. To date, Ron has volunteered eight hours assisting with interpretive programs.

Ronald resides in West Lawn, and is a fire policeman for Spring Township and Mohn-ton. He is a retired US Army sergeant, and is very knowledgeable in outdoor survival skills, orienteering, backpacking and camping. Thank you Ronald - you do a great job!



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

Fall–Winter 2014 Programs

Bird Walks: Wednesdays, November 12, December 10, January 14, 2015, February 18, 2015 and March 18, 2015, 1:00 pm, Visitor Center. Don't let some cool temperatures keep you indoors. Join birding expert and naturalist Joan Silagy as she guides you along trails and roadways in search of birds. Walking should be easy with few hills. Don't forget your binoculars!

Control Tower Tours: Thursdays, November 13, December 11, January 22, 2015, February 12, 2015 and March 26, 2015, 10:00 am, Visitor Center: Join Volunteer Alfred Schoenebeck for a behind-the-scenes look at the dam and control tower. You will learn how the dam/tower function, while getting a first-hand look at the interior of the tower. Be prepared to go down and up numerous steps.

Hike with a Ranger: Saturdays, November 15, December 27, January 16, February 7, and March 21, 2015, 10:00 am, Visitor Center. We have a perfect remedy for cabin fever! Join us for a hike! During hunting season all hikes will take place in "No Hunting" areas. The hikes in November and December 2014, and January and February 2015 will be 3 miles long. Our March 2015 hike will head in the direction of State Hill Boat Launch following the hiking trail and the lake shoreline, and will be five miles in length.

Stroll with a Ranger: Wednesdays, November 19 (Swiftwater Access) and December 17 (Stilling Basin Gravel Lot), 10:00 am. Join us for a stroll along the Union Canal Connector Trail, which is "stroller friendly." There are few hills along this gravel – covered trail, which at times, parallels the Tulpehocken Creek. So get outdoors, get a bit of a workout, and enjoy the scenery along the way. Leashed dogs are also welcome.

Family Fun Day Nature's Decorations: Saturday, December 13, 10:00 am, Conference Center. Join us for this popular and fun workshop that brings out your creative nature! You will be able to make all types of creations out of natural items including pine cones, greens, acorns, etc. All supplies are provided, and you will take your creations home with you.