

# BLUE MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE

I N C O R P O R A T E D

Summer 2016

[www.BlueMountainWildlife.com](http://www.BlueMountainWildlife.com)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

### WILD THINGS

### WHERE CAN I GO AT THE KERNY?

### WALKING WITH DRAGONFLIES

### TASTE OF HAMBURGER FESTIVAL DINE & DASH

## OUR MISSION

**THE PRESERVATION  
AND CONSERVATION OF  
THE WILDLIFE AND  
WETLANDS ALONG THE  
SCENIC SCHUYLKILL  
RIVER IN NORTHERN  
BERKS AND SOUTHERN  
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY**



## CONTACT US

Don Waldron (President):  
610.562.3199  
Barry Shollenberger (Vice-President)  
484.332.4471  
Gregg Adams (Secretary/Membership)  
610.562.1428  
Sue Fisher (Treasurer): 610.562.0720  
P.O. Box 389 Hamburg, PA 19526  
[www.bluemountainwildlife.com](http://www.bluemountainwildlife.com)  
[info@BlueMountainWildlife.com](mailto:info@BlueMountainWildlife.com)

## SUMMER OF "WILD THINGS"

What a difference a summer makes. As the last of the leaves fall from the trees, we can look back over the past few months and see the big changes that have occurred at the Kerny. In June, the Kerny was pretty much as I and most people familiar with it remember it from years past—reasonably wild and fairly empty of people; there for all aware of its secrets to enjoy. By August, it changed to overused and overrun with people; both threatened and threatening with the throngs of strangers. By October, it again changed to be smaller; some of its secrets now locked away for their own protection, yet still exploited by those who seem not to respect its new ways. One can only guess what changes are in store for the Kerny in the coming months.

Blue Mountain Wildlife, whose mission is the preservation and conservation of the wildlife and wetlands along the scenic Schuylkill River in northern Berks and southern Schuylkill Counties, has been struggling to cope with these events. We have a long-range plan in the works that we hope will put the two-hundred and eighty-two acre wilderness in a situation wherein it will be preserved in a

manner intended by BMW and its supporters for the foreseeable future. But while we work to achieve that goal, we must also deal with the many short-term problems that are currently demanding of our resources and imposing upon us their challenges. While we must continue to have clean-ups and repair damage as we have always done, we must also work with State and local agencies to try to find ways that will protect the Kerny for future visitors and keep the Kerny open to all without sacrificing its wildness and serenity. That is the greatest challenge we now face and, recognizing that we may not be able to achieve all of those conditions, we are wrestling with degrees to which we may have to sacrifice one or more of those conditions, and for how long. Finally, we must keep in mind that the land is not ours, that we can only attempt to influence those in control of the land's destiny and that other sensibilities may, in the end, prevail.

Enough of the speechifying. Lest you think the summer was all about trash, read on and discover the good things that also happened at and around the Kerny this summer.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS—FALL & WINTER 2016-7

Thursday December 8, 2016...BMW Monthly Business Meeting 6:00 to 8:00 pm Hamburg Library  
Saturday September 24, 2016...Historical Walking Tour 10:00 am Monument Parking Lot  
Thursday January 12, 2017...BMW Monthly Business Meeting 6:00 to 8:00 pm Hamburg Library  
Friday January 27, 2017...BMW Annual Membership Meeting and Banquet 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. C.J. Hummel's Restaurant, Lenhartsville  
Thursday February 9, 2017...BMW Monthly Business Meeting 6:00 to 8:00 pm Hamburg Library

## THE SUMMER OF THE “WILD THINGS”

GREGG ADAMS

For Blue Mountain Wildlife, the summer of 2016 started off much like most summers before it—the busy spring season coasting to a close while the heat builds and things slow down as the active membership starts to take vacations and enjoy the season. Normally, the BMW activity at the Kerny would settle into an easy rhythm of trash collection and butterfly garden maintenance, with occasional road work and dragonfly walks to highlight the summer season. The Kerny would see plenty of visitors, but usually the local traffic that the area was accustomed to. The increased traffic would inevitably bring more trash and a small amount of vandalism, challenges that BMW has learned to meet with resolve and a small bit of resignation. Though unwelcome, these things have become expected.

With the “Run To The Rock” on June 25th and the Blue Mountain Wildlife 15th Anniversary Open House on the following day, the BMW spring calendar came to a close and BMW was planning to take it easy for a while. The Information Kiosk was repaired on July 1st, and Berks County Parks and Recreation held a Starwatch at the Monument Parking Lot on the evening of July 8th. The next event for the Kerny was to be the annual Dragonfly Walk in the Basin on August 13th. Things were supposed to slow down. Unfortunately, that was not to be.

The July 4th weekend (Friday July 1st through Monday the 4th) brought heavy traffic to the Kerny. BMW collected about 27 bags of trash on Tuesday the 5th, mainly from the area

above the Upper Parking Lot and around Pulpit Rock. While much heavier than usual, this was just a taste of what BMW would be in for during the rest of the long, warm and dry summer of 2016.

On July 7th, Nick Savino posted a video to Youtube entitled “WILD THINGS - PEACE



7/24 Camping at the Rope Swing above the Upper Parking Lot—Neven Dries



7/24 Crowds at Pulpit Rock—Neven Dries

ROCK / Cliff Jumping & Dam Sliding”. The video went viral, garnering over 20,000 views in its first two weeks. The following weekend, traffic at Pulpit Rock and The Kerny exploded. As did the amount of trash left behind at the close of the weekend.

The traffic increased again the following weekend, as visitors from New Jersey, New York and even farther started arriving. The parking area at the Appalachian Trailhead on Port Clinton Avenue swiftly overflowed and parking spread on to Port Clinton Avenue and along PA Route 61, in spite of the prohibition against on-street parking in that area.

By the weekend of July 23rd and 24th, the problems came to a head.

Crowds were now camping in a number of spots in the Kerny, in spite of the lack of sanitary facilities. Visitors by the hundreds were arriving at Pulpit Rock and the Kerny, beginning on Friday and increasing on Saturday morning. Cars were being parked on Port Clinton Avenue to the Berks County line, and on PA 61 on the shoulders and on the median. Both Tilden and the State Police were present, ticketing and towing vehicles. The parking lots at the Kerny were generally being filled to capacity and many visi-

tors, particularly those from out of the area and relying upon their GPSs to find Pulpit Rock, were often parking on nearby roads and trespassing across private property in an effort to get to Pulpit Rock. And the trash situation was extreme. Although many of the visitors made the effort to take out their trash, they were overshadowed by those who did not. Trash was strewn everywhere throughout the Kerny and across from Pulpit Rock. Volunteers were collecting trash on a daily basis and barely keeping up with the flow. There were many calls on social media, especially Facebook, to remind people to clean up after themselves, and a few people started organizing their own clean-ups to help out. But social media is a double-edged sword, and the word about the “free waterpark” kept spreading. Vehicles from as far away as New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas and Colorado were seen in the parking lots.

On Sunday July 24th, Essam Saba, 26, of Allentown, drowned at Pulpit Rock. According to a Channel 69 news report, over 500 people were at Pulpit Rock when the drowning occurred. Word of the drowning spread quickly through social media, with many local residents voicing their anger with the influx of visitors, traffic and trash to the normally quiet area, and many visitors voicing their love for the area and their want to be left alone to have their fun.

On July 29th, a number of the stakeholders in the area, including the Tilden and State Police, Tilden Township, PA DEP and Blue Mountain Wildlife, met at the Tilden Township Municipal Building in a closed meeting to discuss the issues. The meeting had been scheduled earlier, but the recent events had increased community focus on the meeting. After the meeting PA

DEP announced that it would be closing its properties on both sides of the river to the public in the near future. No trespassing signs would be posted and enforced.

The announcement seemed to please almost no one and created some confusion as to the extent of the rules. Local runner and Kerny supporter Jim Blandford organized a quick clean-up of Peace Rock Beach on July 31st and his volunteers collected a sizeable amount of trash. But another clean-up, CPR Clean Peace Rock, was cancelled the following weekend due to confusion about the “No Trespassing” rules. The crowds continued to arrive, but the word was getting out. Many people started parking at the Tilden Ridge shopping center and walking along PA 61 to get to Pulpit Rock.

On August 4th. The Game Commission placed large rocks and “No Parking” signs at the Appalachian Trailhead at Port Clinton Avenue. On August 25th, PA DEP posted “No Trespassing” signs at the newly installed gate on Kernsville Dam Road at the Monument Parking Lot. BMW had long planned to install a gate at that location and had authorized the funding of the gate in 2015. As soon as it was installed, it was closed and locked and the new PD DEP signs mounted on it. Similar signs were also installed along Port Clinton Avenue and on Peace Rock Beach. Since then, Tilden Police have cited over seventy people for defiant trespass.

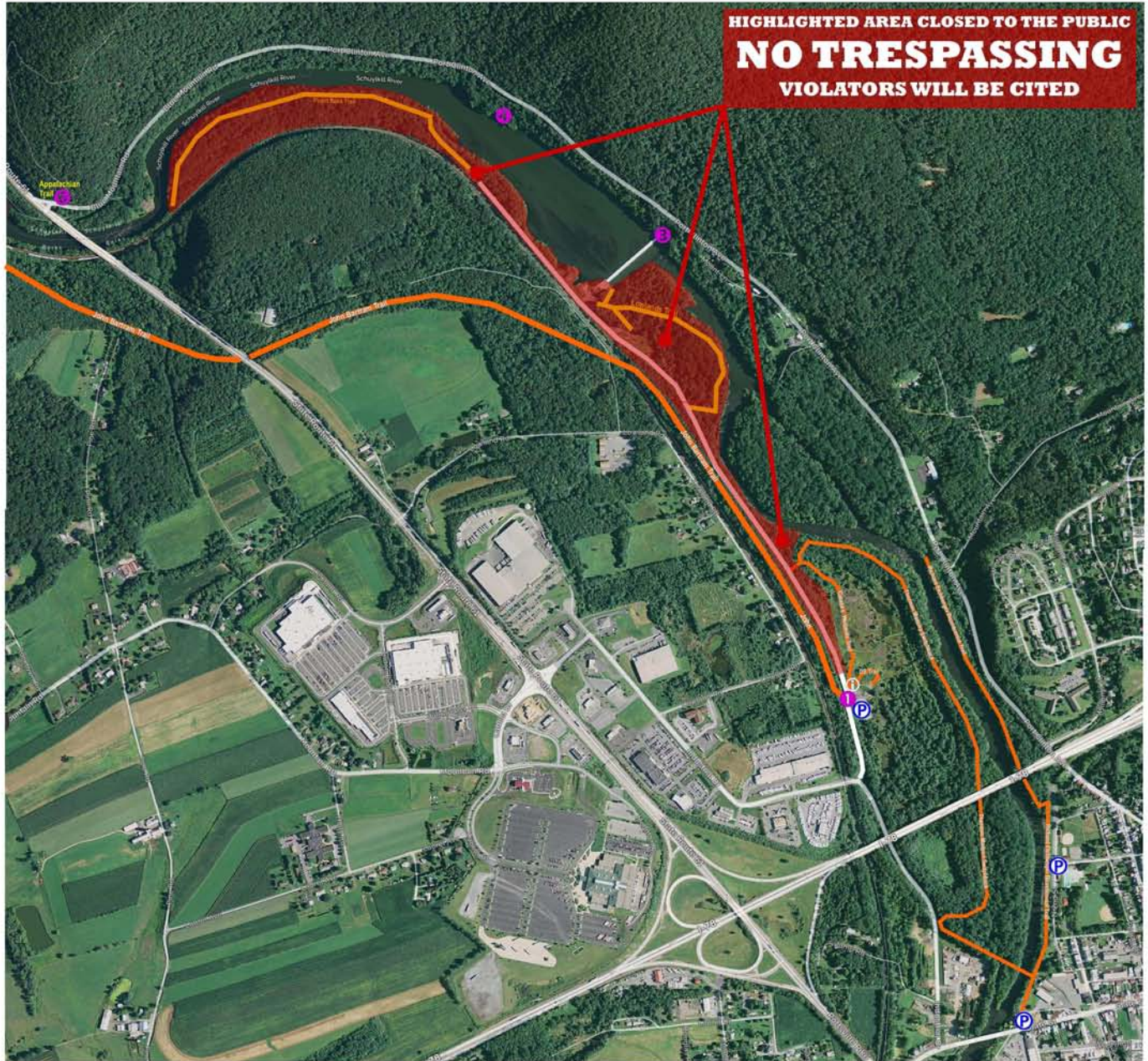
With the passing of the Labor Day Weekend, the crowds at Pulpit Rock finally dwindled and stopped. PA DEP is now working with Blue Mountain Wildlife to modify the lease agreement in place. That process still continues and BMW’s hope is to have a new set of rules in place by next spring. Look for the Fall newsletter for updates.



7/31 Jim Blandford Clean-Up at Peace Rock Beach —Neven Dries



# Kernsville Dam Recreation Area Area Trails Map



## MAP LEGEND

- Foot/Bike/Horse Trail
- Foot Trail
- Kernsville Dam Road
- P Parking Lot

## LOCATIONS OF INTEREST



**WALKING WITH DRAGONFLIES**

**NEVEN DRIES**

A dragonfly walk was again held on August 13th at the Recreation area de-silting basin. Ken Lebo, Tony 'Doc' Schock and Mike Slater led the walk and explained about the dragonflies and damselflies. Also participating were a few other

naturalists from the area who gave great information on other species of insects and amphibians we saw. About 17 different species of damselflies and dragonflies were spotted and photographed by about 25 participants.





## THE DINE & DASH AND TASTE OF HAMBURG-ER FESTIVAL

GREGG ADAMS

The Labor Day Weekend is traditionally looked upon as the end of the summer vacation season. In Hamburg, Labor Day Weekend means one thing—the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival. And for BMW, that means the Dine & Dash Burgers & Trail Race.

The fifth annual running was held on Saturday September 3rd and drew thirty-eight participants (forty if you count the four-legged runners as well). The crowds came early to sign up as the BMW crew readied the course and brought in the burgers from our sponsors, The Westy and Russo's Family Restaurant. Race Coordinators Elaine Cook and Amy Browder ensured the preparations were complete and briefed the runners on the rules before signaling the start of the race at 10:30.

At the starting horn the runners gobbled down the first burger, from Russo's, and dashed off to the Etchberger Trail and made their way north along the Schuylkill River to the turnaround, one mile away. There they finished their second burger, from The Westy, and received their beads from Alan Cook before heading back to the finish line.

This year we had plenty of fast runners and plenty of great costumes. Fastest Male went to Tom Kanger, with a time of 15:08. Rikki Smith won the Fastest Female with a time of 22:03. Winners of their age categories were: Elizabeth Schwinger (Female 0-15), Owen Groff (Male 0-15), Brooke Folk (Female 16-39), Francis Lyons (Male 16-39), Connie Buckwalter (Female 40+),

and Marc Buckwalter (Male 40+). Cody Wertz won Best Costume for his "Lumberjack" outfit. Riley Edwards' Candy won Fastest Dog. Benny Delp and Lillian Dougherty won Judges' Choice as the oldest and youngest finishers

After the race, the BMW volunteers manned the BMW stand, selling the famed tie-dyed Dine & Dash race shirts and spreading the word about the good things at the Kerny. The BMW Race volunteers also continued their tradition of officiating at the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival's Professional and Amateur Hamburger Eating Contests, with Gregg Adams, Amy Browder, Jeff Hammer, Elaine Hilbert and Amanda Kimmage keeping the burgers flowing and determining the winners.

A big "Thank You" goes out to the volunteers who made the D&D a success this year, our wonderful sponsors (The Westy and Russo's), Elaine Hilbert (for firing our prize plates), Mel and Cleta Borkey, photographers Neven, Jayde and Cain Dries and Kerry Grim, and our great racers!



Hamburg-er Festival Hamburger Eating Contest Officiating Crew





BLUE MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE P.O. BOX 389 HAMBURG, PA 19526

Your «MEMBER SHIP TYPE» Membership Expires On

«COMPANY»  
«FIRST NAME» «LAST NAME»  
«ADDRESS»  
«CITY», «ST#» «ZIP»

## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

Joseph A. Martin  
C.P.A.



170 MIDWAY ROAD  
BETHEL, PA

122 EAST THOMAS ST.  
COOPERSBURG, PA



COST EFFECTIVE, INNOVATIVE, TIMELESS, SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

29 West Main Street • P.O. Box 412 • Fleetwood, PA 19522  
Phone (610) 944-5536 • Email [you@mrda.com](mailto:you@mrda.com) • Website [www.WatkinsArchitect.com](http://www.WatkinsArchitect.com)



HAMBURG 610-562-7673

FRANCIS L. WERLEY, INC.  
Rt. 61 Hamburg, PA  
610-562-2236



Thermo Pride  
Heating Cooling

[www.werleysoil.com](http://www.werleysoil.com)

Dutch Maid  
Bakery  
Cakes For All Occasions



798 South 4th Street, Hamburg  
(610) 562-6990