



# Courier

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE CLUB

Spring 2016

## Blue Mountain Lake Courier

By Susan Macovsky, Communications Committee

Welcome to the first issue of our redesigned community newspaper, the Blue Mountain Lake Courier! Its purpose is to provide homeowners with information to help us create and maintain a community that we can all be proud of.

The Blue Mountain Lake Courier will include news about activities that can enrich our lives by bringing neighbors together. And it will remind everyone, from time to time, of rules designed to keep Blue Mountain Lake clean and safe.

We plan to include a calendar of events in the community as well as in the larger community outside our gates. For example, did you know that a Bookmobile comes to the clubhouse at 4 p.m. every other Monday, weather permitting? It is next scheduled to be here on April 4 and 18.

Or that we have a Kids Club that holds activities for children from roughly five to 16 years of age and their families? Our Garden Club already has plans to spruce up our common areas. And our Safety Committee has developed emergency preparedness and security procedures for the community.

Anyone who wants to form a club – checkers, bridge or tennis, anyone? – please contact the administration office at 570-421-2129 or e-mail Yvonne Teta at [yvonne@preferredmanagement.org](mailto:yvonne@preferredmanagement.org)

For information that is updated regularly, go to our website, [bluemountainlakeclub.com](http://bluemountainlakeclub.com), and our Facebook page, Blue Mountain Lake Owner's, where homeowners exchange information.

Make sure you sign up for important email announcements on the website. During the blizzard in late January, for example, homeowners on the list received a reminder to not park on our roads in order to keep them clear for the snowplow and other emergency vehicles.

Please bear in mind that this newspaper should be viewed as a work in progress, and this a first draft. We need and want input from the community. We want to hear from you regarding topics you'd like to see published.

We encourage anyone who wants to help produce the Blue Mountain Lake Courier, either by writing articles, taking photographs or working on its design to contact Yvonne Teta at her email address above.



## Welcome to Blue Mountain Lake Club

By Preferred Management Associates, LLC



Few events in life are more exciting than buying a home and moving to a new area. Blue Mountain Lake Club has been building a strong community since 1993 and we are so glad you have chosen us to be a part of your family and the place you call home! Here are some bits of information to help you make the most of community association living.

Because many residents share the common areas, it is necessary to have a few basic rules so everyone can enjoy the community. If you did not receive a copy of the Club's governing documents prior to purchasing and moving into your new home, please call the Operations Office at 570-421-2129. Our website ([www.bluemountainlakeclub.com](http://www.bluemountainlakeclub.com)) is also a great resource for new residents (as well as established residents). You will find our governing documents, upcoming events, community notices and announcements, maps of the community and much more!

Being a member in good standing of The Blue Mountain Lake Club allows you to enjoy all of our amenities (i.e. pools, spray park, tennis court, gazebo, play-grounds as well as the clubhouse for events). You can also attend and observe community meetings, vote in board elections, become a member of a committee or run for and become a Director of the Board.

Are you looking to install a shed on your property, add a deck, revamp your landscaping or remove a tree? Call the Operations Office at 570-421-2129 to obtain a permit application.

Blue Mountain Lake Club is managed by Preferred Management Associates, LLC. The management company's role is to assist the Board in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the association. Our office is responsible for overseeing the operation of the Club, collecting maintenance fees, paying bills, and managing contractors and maintenance services. Additionally, we have been asked to assist the Board in all administrative details, handling resident and owner correspondence, violations, service requests, etc., and the filing of required forms.

Your dedicated onsite management team is Laurie Gonzalez, Community Manager; Yvonne Teta, Assistant Community Manager; and Greg Decker, Facilities Maintenance Manager. We are available to assist you with any questions you may have about the community including dues payment information, balance inquiries, maintenance of common areas, or anything else that you may need. We can be reached by calling the Operations Office at 570-421-2129.

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Refer to the rules and regulations of Blue Mountain Lake:



page 9 numbers 44-46. Disregarding these rules may result in a violation.

## Filling Vacancies on the BMLC Board of Directors

The BMLC Board consists of seven Directors who are elected to the Board by owners who are in good standing at the time of the election. Board Directors are elected to two-year terms. Four Directors are elected one year and three are elected the next year.

From time to time it may become necessary to fill vacancies that occur on our Board. This may occur if a Board member resigns due to illness, a move away from our community, or for various other reasons.

If and when a vacancy occurs, Article IV, Section 4.5 of the Bylaws of the Blue Mountain Lake Club provides:

*“Section 4.5 Vacancies. In the event of death, resignation or removal of a Director, his successor shall be selected by the remaining Directors and shall serve for the unexpired term of his predecessor.”*

The only criteria for qualification is that the successor be an owner in good standing.

Effective December 31, 2015, two Directors, John Gumina and Antoinette (Chip) Callori, resigned their positions – giving no reason(s). A third Director, Ernie Hayfield, resigned effective January 3, 2016, for health reasons. Each resigned by sending emails to the Directors and representatives of our new management company. The resignations were effective immediately. See the Board Meeting Highlights for January at [bluemountainlakeclub.com](http://bluemountainlakeclub.com) for more details.

As a result of the resignations the remaining Directors nominated potential replacements based upon their interest in working toward effecting a united, thriving community, their community involvement and their commitment to serving our community. The process included interviewing those nominated, after which the Board selected three replacements to fill the unexpired terms of the three who resigned.

Our new Board members are Melvin Dennis, Michelle Pinnock Harper and Penny Welliver:

**Melvin Dennis** is from Newcastle, Pennsylvania, where he starred as a basketball player while growing up. Prior to retiring he spent his working career of 33 years as an independent tractor-trailer driver, an active union leader and a commercial driver instructor. He and his wife are long-time participants in the foster parent program and regularly take in physically and/or emotionally challenged children. Mel is interested in politics on the local, state and national levels and participates in political meetings and working for his party during elections. Mel and his wife Jessica moved into the Cornerstone section of Blue Mountain Lake in 2009. He is currently a volunteer at a food pantry in East Stroudsburg.

**Michelle Pinnock Harper** has lived in Blue Mountain Lake for nearly 10 years. She moved here from New York City after marrying Steve Harper, who has been a community resident since 1998. In addition to running her own part-time business, Michelle has coordinated BMLC's Kids Club activities for the past three years and serves on our Safety Committee. She still finds time to serve on the Board of Directors of the Pocono Family YMCA, as a Vice President of the Chipperfield Elementary PTA and on the Workforce Development Committee of the 2030 Monroe County Action Team. The Action Team is a small group of community leaders and volunteers focused on the county's economic development, who want to make Monroe County a thriving place where our kids and grandkids can live, learn, work and play. Michelle has two grown children and an eight-year-old.

**Penny Welliver** and her husband Randy have been residents of Blue Mountain Lake for more than 13 years. Looking for a larger house—and a friendly neighborhood for their then four-year-old daughter Dina—they were attracted to the homes and amenities in our community. Speaking on behalf of her Analomink Point (now Snapdragon Point) neighbors, Penny was instrumental in getting the Stroud Township Board of Supervisors to approve a buffer zone between their properties and a proposed solar energy overlay that would allow such a facility to be built on the Sibum's Auto Parts property that abutted theirs. Penny is a long-time board member of the Ladies Society of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church and has served as costume director for the Holy Cross Greek Olympian Dance Troupes. The Ladies Society supports such local organizations as Family Promise, the Wesleyan Church Food Pantry and the Department of Aging.

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# BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE CLUB

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Operations Office .....570-421-2129  
 FAX .....570-420-7881  
 Public Safety Guardhouse ..... 570-420-9507  
 Public Safety cell phone .....570-242-4504  
 Emergency (Police/Fire/Ambulance)..... 9-1-1

COMMUNITY WEBSITE: [www.bluemountainlakeclub.com](http://www.bluemountainlakeclub.com)

## Blue Mountain Onsite Management Team

Laurie Gonzalez, Community Manager  
 <laurieg@preferredmanagement.org>  
 Yvonne Teta, Assistant Community Manager  
 <yvonnnet@preferredmanagement.org>  
 Greg Decker, Facilities Maintenance Manager  
 <bmlcmaint@preferredmanagement.org>

## Senior Managing Partner

Amy Janiszewski, PCAM, CMCA, AMS  
 Preferred Management Associates  
 Po Box 687  
 Moscow, PA 18444  
 Phone: 570-266-5190 ext 212  
 Fax: 570-843-4758

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

President .....Steve Melnick  
 Vice President ..... Lynn Ball  
 Secretary .....Vince Ricci  
 Treasurer ..... Gary Smith  
 DIRECTORS ..... Mel Dennis  
 Michelle Pinnock-Harper  
 Penny Welliver

## BMLC Committees

Design Review Committee  
 Safety Committee  
 Budget & Finance Committee  
 Events Committee

## BMLC Clubs

Kids Club  
 Garden Club  
 Craft Club  
 Fitness & Wellness Club

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 East Stroudsburg Area ..... 570-424-8500

**County & Townships** Stroud Township ..... 570-421-3362  
 Smithfield Township..... 570-223-5082  
 Monroe County..... 570-517-3102

## STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

### State Representative 115<sup>th</sup> District

David Parker  
 411 Main Street Suite 102-E  
 Stroudsburg, PA 18360  
 570-420-2940  
 570-420-2944 fax

### State Representative 189<sup>th</sup> District

Rosemary Brown  
 143 Seven Bridges Road  
 East Stroudsburg, PA 18301  
 570-420-8301  
 570-420-8304 fax

### State Senator

Mario Scavello  
 Monroe County Office  
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 Tannersville, PA 18372  
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 570-620-4379 Fax

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## Safety Committee Update

By Steven Harper

The Safety Committee, as it is now structured, while building on its established foundation, will move in a different direction. Its primary objective is to assist the Board and Management in providing a framework to foster a safe environment for the BML community by utilizing best practices for emergency preparedness and security.

The Committee's goals for the current year are:

**1. To establish an Incident Command Structure** to clarify who does what and when. To delineate the roles of management and the board in an emergency to residents so they will know what to reasonably expect when an emergency occurs and to provide accountability.

Last summer my firm, Strategic Crisis Solutions, at no cost to the community, conducted a simulation of a major emergency incident at the factory at the bottom of Brushy Mountain Road on 447. The purpose was to determine how the individuals involved would respond and make recommendations on how we can improve our response capabilities. By all accounts, it was a great success.

**2. To strengthen our communication system** in order to improve the way information is disseminated to our management, the board, residents and local first responders.

**3. To inventory resources within the community.** We should be able to identify what resources and vulnerabilities we have within Blue Mountain Lake. Hurricane Sandy and major snow events have demonstrated how easy it is for us to be shut down and isolated for an extended period of time. So it behooves us to be able to identify neighbors who have generators that could assist others, and special needs children or seniors that might require assistance.

None of this can happen without community involvement! We need to be each other's eyes and ears so we can report situations that occur such as vandalism, kids being bullied and theft so we can assist management in harnessing our resources to address these areas of concern.

We welcome your feedback. I can be reached at [seheneter@gmail.com](mailto:seheneter@gmail.com).

## Meet & Greet a Success

BMLC homeowners who attended the Meet & Greet in the clubhouse on January 9 were able to meet with the new management team from Preferred Management.

Amy Janiszewski and Brad Jones, Preferred Management's principal associates, introduced themselves and pledged quick turnaround, transparency, and a strict accounting of the community's finances to the community.

In this regard, the team pledged to publish and make available the community's balance sheet on a quarterly basis. We intend to incorporate the balance sheet in the newspaper.

Our dedicated onsite team – Laurie Gonzalez, Manager, and Yvonne Teta, Assistant Manager – also introduced themselves and were pleased to announce new office hours that will accommodate all residents:

- **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
(closed for lunch 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.)
- **Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

A lively and friendly question-and-answer session followed the introductions. The team reassured homeowners that they will respond to homeowner questions and concerns in a timely manner. You should feel free to call the office at 570-421-2129 or send an email to Yvonne ([yvonnnet@preferredmanagement.org](mailto:yvonnnet@preferredmanagement.org)) or Laurie ([laurieg@preferredmanagement.org](mailto:laurieg@preferredmanagement.org)).

Details on the background and experience of our management team were mailed to all homeowners at the end of December along with the request for payment of 2016 homeowners' fees and contact information. If you still need to supply this information or make payment, please call the office.



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# Kids Club

By Michelle Pinnock Harper

The Blue Mountain Lake Kids Club Committee is a volunteer, resident-run group responsible for planning and executing social, recreational, cultural and educational programs aimed at engaging BML youth in positive, constructive and safe activities.

All BML youth whose families are in good standing are welcome to participate. The type and frequency of activities are driven by the ideas and time commitment of volunteers. Children can participate in programs and events, which are led either by residents or outside vendors, for free or a small fee.

The ultimate goal of the Kids Club is to foster a sense of community among BML families, deepening our commitment to and investment in preserving a high quality of life for everyone in our community.



April 18, May 2, May 16 and May 30.

With the support of the board, management and community volunteers, the Kids Club looks forward to adding new youth and family-oriented activities in the year ahead, reaching a broader age range. But remember, the programs are only as good and as frequent as community members are willing to make them.

Information about upcoming events are posted at the mail pod, in the management office, on the BMLC website and the BML Kid's Club Facebook page. The Facebook page is also a vehicle where neighbors can share information with each other about outside community events and resources.

If you would like to volunteer for the committee or have a suggestion for an activity, please email [bmlkidsclub@gmail.com](mailto:bmlkidsclub@gmail.com).

### 2015 Highlights:

- Instructional tennis clinics in the spring and fall, and a summer tennis and soccer camp provided by GV Tennis Academy
- Swimming lessons offered for a second year by the Pocono Family YMCA at the BML pool during one week in July and August
- A summer basketball clinic in July, where approximately 25 youth ages 5 to 16 learned the fundamentals of basketball with area coaches
- The 3rd Annual Winter Holidays Celebration, which brought more than 40 children and their parents together in the BML clubhouse for crafts, singing, dancing, tree decorating, treats and SANTA!
- Eastern Monroe Public Library's Bookmobile comes to the BML mail pod every other Monday. Upcoming schedule: April 4,

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## Membership Meetings

Saturday, May 14, 2016  
Saturday, August 13, 2016

## 2016 Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, November 12, 2016

Please note: all meetings are held in the Clubhouse

## Friendly Reminder

Dues payments are due no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. We accept checks and money orders or the following cards: MasterCard, Visa and Discover.



# Where Do My Dues Dollars Go?

By the Blue Mountain Lake Board of Directors

Originally published November 24, 2014; updated February 23, 2015 and January 1, 2016

The current monthly fee each homeowner pays covers the costs of maintaining all of the commonly-owned areas, including our roads, parking areas, walking trails, guardhouse, operations office, pole barn area, clubhouse, pool and spray park (including lifeguards and pool attendants), lake, ponds, gazebo, tennis courts, basketball court, playgrounds, benches, storm water facilities, and all other areas within our community not owned privately (such as the lakeside area). It also covers liability and property insurance, security services, lake management costs and other necessary services.

In addition to these costs, we set aside part of the fees to ensure we have money available to fund the repair and/or replace equipment and structures when needed (our "Reserves"). The Reserves are deposited in a separate account for this use.

Event costs such as the Fall Festival, Kids Holiday Party, and other events are paid, in part, from our fees, as are the cost of mailings, the website, other communication methods, security cameras, outside accounting, engineering and legal.

Our monthly fee also covers the contract management fee we pay to Preferred Management Associates for the costs it incurs in connection with managing our community. The management company's role is to assist the Board in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the association (i.e. collecting maintenance fees, paying bills, managing contractors, maintenance services, ensuring compliance of the governing documents and more). Preferred Management provides Blue Mountain Lake Club with a dedicated onsite management team comprised of a Community Manager, Assistant Community Manager and a Facilities Maintenance Manager.

Finally, the monthly fee includes the separate contract charges for maintaining the common areas. This includes spring cleanup, mowing and trimming, maintaining storm water facilities (for example, the storm water detention basins), mulching and seasonal plantings of common areas, and fall leaf removal. It also includes maintaining the community walking trails, roadside mowing and exterior amenity maintenance, trimming/pruning and in the winter, snow plowing and de-icing roads and common areas.

For those owners who fall behind in paying their monthly fees (or stop paying altogether) there are costs involved in actions taken to collect unpaid fees. These costs are necessary because all of us are dependent on each owner paying his/her pro rata share of the total costs of maintaining our community. This is very important to each owner as our home is likely one of our biggest investments, if not our biggest. And, if some owners are not paying their share, the rest of us have to pay more, or our services must decrease – with the result that our community becomes less desirable and our home prices drop.

This is a summary of how the money collected from all of us is spent. If you have questions, you may contact the Operations Office or any Board member.



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### Garden Club News

In the spring, the BMLC Garden Club will begin work on the enhancement of common areas. The first area to be addressed will be the signage location at the intersection of Brushy Mountain Road and Pocahontas Road. The Guard House area will be refreshed as well. This will be the beginning stage for the improvement of common areas.

We welcome anyone with expertise or interest in landscaping and/or gardening to please join us. Garden Club meetings are the third Saturday of the month at the Club House from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. You may contact us through the BMLC office or send an email to Ed Cron at [eclair@ptd.net](mailto:eclair@ptd.net)

### Wildlife Management

## Please Don't Feed the Deer

The Association understands you have a soft heart and good intentions, but feeding deer is not in their best interest, or yours.

Depending on what you feed them, deer may actually be harmed by your feeding. Some foods will kill them within a few days or debilitate them enough to be easy targets for predators and automobiles.

Feeding is a way of domesticating deer. Tame deer create a host of problems. Because they no longer fear people, they become vulnerable to hunters. They are emboldened to eat the shrubs in your vicinity. They will bring more deer into your yard and more deer ticks. And, concentrations of deer attract coyotes and wolves—which will kill your pets along with the deer.

Deer adapt very easily to people, but they don't need to be fed by them. They survive fine on their own. Better, in fact. Usually the weather controls deer populations, but deer fed by people increase regardless of the weather. This leads to overpopulation and disease.

Deer browsing in the back yard may be charming, but Lyme disease and road kill are not.

Please don't feed the deer; let nature do its job!



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## Giving Our Veterans a Helping Hand

“There’s no excuse for having nothing to do,” says Maggie Sulaiman, an active community volunteer who has lived in Blue Mountain Lake for eight years.



Maggie volunteers for several organizations, but she especially loves to talk about her work with VALOR, a nonprofit group that helps to provide homeless veterans with food, clothing and shelter.

VALOR holds a “stand down” at the pavilion in Dansbury Park in East Stroudsburg on the second Sunday of every month. A “stand down” is where volunteers like Maggie provide hot food – hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee and homemade cookies – to the homeless veterans who gather there.

But, she says, they won’t turn a needy person away, veteran or not. In addition, they give out donated clothing for men and women, as well as toiletries and canned food. Anyone who wants to donate these items can bring them to the park.

VALOR also collects household items like sheets and towels for Paul’s House, a converted hotel near Brodheads ville that provides housing for homeless veterans with PTSD while they participate in a program designed to help them readjust to civilian life.



Says Maggie, “I find doing this very worthwhile. I feel it’s God’s work.” For more information on VALOR, call 570-664-6468 or go to its website: [Valorclinic.org](http://Valorclinic.org). There you will find an updated list of the things they need.

If you’d like to be a volunteer but are not sure what you’d like to do, you can contact the Pocono Alliance, which has information on a range of volunteer programs in our area: call (570) 517-3953, or visit [poconoalliance.org](http://poconoalliance.org).

Another good resource for older residents: the Monroe County branch of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a national service organization, which matches individuals 55 and older with specific needs in our area. Call (570) 420-3747 for more information. Maggie learned that VALOR needed volunteers through RSVP.

*The photo of Maggie and the van is from the 2015 Veterans Day parade in Stroudsburg. Maggie is third from the right.*

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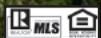
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# Storm Water Management and Maintaining Your Culverts

By Laurie Gonzalez, Community Manager

What is storm water? Storm water is water from precipitation such as rain, sleet, or melting snow. What is storm water management? Storm water management involves the control of surface "run off" from precipitation.

Why is storm water management so important? Storm water management is important to prevent physical damage to persons and property from flooding to maintain the ecological integrity, quality and quantity of our water resources. Storm water can also be considered a resource that provides benefits such as groundwater recharge and flood protection. Storm water management also assists with the reduction and prevention of many different sources of pollution, which enter our local waterways.

## Maintaining your culvert

A blocked culvert can do damage to not only your residence but also your neighbors. The buildup of sediment because of a blocked culvert pipe slows the flow of water that could ultimately affect our lake. Water damage to property or dwellings can be very costly to repair. A thorough inspection will eliminate these unnecessary costs. Maintenance to your culvert and culvert pipe should be done in the fall and spring. Following the procedures below will keep the water flowing cleanly and freely.

## Cleaning your culvert

Remove obstructions inside of the pipe. Check upstream and remove any dead branches, dead trees, high weeds or grasses and any other types of debris such as cups, bags, cans, etc. that will obstruct the pipe and flow of water. Cut vegetation that might block the flow at the inlet and the outlet. Remove any soil sediment or add soil and grass seed so the ditch bottom is level with the inlet of the pipe.

## Repairing your culvert

Repair any headwalls where stone was displaced. Repair loose stones with mortar. Fill the area above your culvert pipe (driveway entrances) if it is starting to depress. If you have old steel corrugated pipe check for rotting metal at the bottom of the pipe. Rotted piping can collapse with heavy traffic driving over it. If the pipe is rotted, make arrangements with a contractor to have it replaced with a new smooth inner wall PVC pipe (Association permit required).




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# Living with Pennsylvania Black Bears

BLACK BEARS have been roaming our forests, wallowing in our bogs and swamps, and living around our farms since the days before the earliest human settlements. Today, bears are many things to many people, from valued game animals to the highlight of an outdoor experience, to farm pillagers and neighborhood pests, to even a dangerous threat. Our perceptions of bears are a product of their mostly shy, mysterious nature and powerful presence, not to mention the timeless tales that have been told about them. Unfortunately, there's as much misinformation about bears in circulation as there is fact. And that's too bad, because bears needn't be feared, nor should they be dismissed as harmless. They simply need to be respected.

Pennsylvania's bear population has been increasing for decades, and at the same time, many people have moved into the areas where bears reside. As a result, bears and people are coming into contact more than ever. And most of these encounters occur when bears learn that where people live there's easy-to-obtain food. Learning about bears and being aware of their habits is important for people who live in bear country, which now includes most of the state.

## The bear facts

*Ursus americanus* is the black bear's scientific name; it means "American bear." Although three species of bears inhabit North America, only the black bear is found in Pennsylvania. Population estimates in recent years have ranged up around 15,000. Black bears appear heavy, but they are surprisingly agile; they can run up to 35 mph, climb trees and swim well. They may live up to 25 years in the wild.

Black bears are intelligent and curious. Studies show that bears can see colors, recognize human forms, and notice even the slightest movement. However, bears usually rely on their acute sense of smell and, to a lesser degree, hearing to locate food and warn them of danger.

Despite their common name, black bears are not always black. They may be cinnamon or, even more rare, blond. Many bears have a white blaze or "V" on their chest.

Adults usually weigh around 200 pounds, with males being heavier than females, often more than twice as much. Some weigh up to 600 or more pounds and rare individuals up to 900 have been found. Males are called boars; females, sows.

Black bears measure about three feet high when on all fours or about five to seven feet tall when standing upright.

## Bear signs and sounds

Black bear tracks are distinctive. The hind footprint resembles a human's. Bears have five toes. The front foot is shorter than the rear, which is long and narrow. Claw marks may or may not be visible.

Bears use trails, just like people do. Look for tracks in soft earth or around mud puddles, and for claw marks on smooth-bark trees or rotten logs that have been ripped apart for insects. It's also easy to recognize a black bear's sizeable droppings of partly digested berries, corn or animal hair.

Adult black bears make a variety of sounds that include woofing, growls and jawpopping. Sow's communicate with their cubs by using low grunts or huffs. Cubs whimper, chuckle and bawl.

## Feeding habits

Bears may be on the move at any time, but they're most active at dusk and dawn. Bears are omnivorous, eating almost anything, from berries, corn, acorns, beechnuts and even grass, to table scraps, carrion, honey and insects. During late summer and fall, black bears fatten up for winter hibernation. At this time they may actively feed for up to 20 hours a day, ingesting up to 20,000 calories.

## Bears and winter

Bears are usually dormant in winter, remaining in their dens, which can be rock caverns, excavated holes beneath shrubs, trees or dead falls, in hollow trees or brushy thickets. A hibernating bear's heart rate and breathing slow, and its body temperature drops slightly. During this time they do not eat or pass body wastes. A hibernating bear relies on stored fat to make it through the winter, however, they may emerge if they're disturbed.

## Mating and breeding

In Pennsylvania, bears mate primarily from early June to mid-July. Males are very aggressive towards each other at this time. Sows give birth in January; litters number one to five. The newborns, cubs, are blind, toothless, and covered with short, fine hair that seems to inadequately cover their pink skin. Cubs nurse in the den while the sow sleeps. Nurtured with the sow's rich milk, they grow from as light as 10 ounces at birth to as much as 10 pounds by the time they leave the den in early April. Males do not help rear young.

Most cubs stay with the sow for a little more than a year. They watch her every move and learn by imitating her. Cubs are playful, regularly romping and wrestling with their littermates. The sows are very protective of cubs, sending them up trees if danger threatens. Adult males occasionally kill and eat cubs. The family group disbands when the cubs are about a year and a half old and the sow is again ready to breed.

## If you live in bear country

If you live or have a summer home in bear country, you may need to make some accommodations to coexist peacefully with these large animals. Make sure you don't encourage bears to become problem bears by putting your garbage where it's available to them or, even worse, by intentionally feeding them.

Black bears will consume almost anything. They will eat human food, garbage, bird feed, pet foods and livestock feed. They also raid cornfields and beehives. Once bears find easily accessible food sources, whether on a farm or in a housing development, they lose their wariness of people and will keep coming back as long as food is available. The best way to get rid of these unwanted visitors is to remove the food source for a month or more, but even then, there are no guarantees. A persistent bear may damage property, increase the risk of human injury, or become an unwanted visitor in other parts of the neighborhood. And, all too often, fed bears become dead bears.

Perhaps the best way to keep bears from being attracted to your home is to keep them from finding food there in the first place. Store trash, bird seed and pet food inside a building, garage or secure shed. Don't put out your trash until the morning of collection day. Be sure garbage cans are cleaned regularly, with hot water and chlorine bleach.

If you have pets, bring their food pans inside at night. And when it comes to dogs, bears generally steer clear of chained or penned dogs. Unleashed dogs that approach bears, however, may be injured or killed. If you have a dog in bear country, don't let it roam far from the house, leash it whenever you hike in the woods, and keep it in the house or in a kennel at night.

Other tips include cleaning the grill after every use, and properly disposing of grill grease. Don't dump the grease out back. If you feed birds during summer (and if you're living in bear country, you shouldn't be), you may want to bring all bird feeders, including hummingbird feeders, in at night. Bears also are attracted to fruit, vegetable wastes and other tasty items in mulch or compost piles, so keep your gardens and areas around fruit trees cleaned up, too.

Beehives attract bears, especially right after the bruins come out of hibernation in the spring and during the peak honey production period of late summer and fall. Electric fences are the best way to protect bees, honey and equipment. Contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission for more information about fencing.

Black bears are also attracted to corn, especially in the milk stage. Bears can devastate cornfields. Call the Game Commission if bears are causing extensive damage; officers may be able to help.

Recreational feeding areas—dumpsters, garbage pits and wildlife feeders where people gather to see bears—are particularly bad. Bears that frequent these areas often lose their fear of humans, and they're also the ones most likely to be found climbing onto porches or even breaking into houses to investigate enticing smells. Other times they raid bird feeders, clean out dog dishes, kill domestic animals, or rifle through garbage containers.

If a bear is visiting your property, there are two possible courses of action. The first is to make loud noises or shout at the bear, like you'd react to a dog getting into your trash, but keep your distance. The second option is to leave the bear alone, and clean up the bear's mess after it leaves. Follow up by making sure you eliminate whatever attracted the bear in the first place. You may need to talk to your neighbors, as well.

If bears are regularly feeding at a site, encourage your neighbors or community to clean up and close the area. Don't wait until bears start roaming the neighborhood or spectators become a problem. Eliminate the feeding source!



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