27th Annual Swatara Sojourn, A Long Drink of Water

There are three water companies drawing water from the Swatara Creek—American Water Company, Lebanon Water Authority, and United-Water Company.

During the 27th Annual float trip sponsored by the Swatara Watershed Association, paddlers traveled 30 miles over a two-day sojourn, starting at Route 645 S of Pine Grove, meandering through Swatara State Park, lunched at Bordner Cabin where we heard Jack Hubbley with his wild animals, and camped on the banks of the Swatara at Lickdale / Jonestown KOA Campground. The upper section is quite challenging with its twists and turns and rocks. Many paddlers flipped their craft into the cool water of the Swatara, but no one complained. The safety team and others worked together to empty canoes while others caught gear washing downstream. At Lickdale Campground, we heard Brandy Watts talk about Stoney Valley Rail Trail. Sunday lunch at the Water Works, artist Craig Andrews shared his love of Water Inspired Art. We collected tons of trash; saw a bald eagle; and enjoyed an awesome weekend. The Sojourn ended at Swatara Watershed Park, 1929 Blacks Bridge Rd., Annville PA.

SWA wants to thank our many community sponsors, both old and new (Sheetz & Weis), for their tremendous support as we float and clean up litter from the Swatara.
Eagle Scout Slade Hall makes picnic tables for SWA

Slade Hall, Troop 456, raised money for the project, designed, and built a handicap access picnic table for Swatara Watershed Park. Wheelchairs can access both ends. Further, he will place wheels on other pavilion picnic tables. Thank you, Slade for a job well done.

Enjoy the Great Outdoors at Swatara Watershed Park


Seasonal Primitive Camping, & We-Tow or U-Tow canoes for groups.

Old State Road–Bear Hole Trail in Swatara State Park

For a windshield survey, drive through the 2nd Friday-Saturday monthly; & the 4th Friday & Saturday March, April, Sept., & Oct., 9AM-3PM.

One Way! Enter from Swope’s Valley Road Trailhead on the northern end of Swatara State Park. PS. The State Park doesn’t allow cars to park at Bordner Cabin.

Special thanks to stewards: Dick & June Blouch, Don & Steph Mock, Bob Arnold, Ann & Dave Lasky, Becky Soliday, Pete Silidorff, Dale & Marty Miller, Lisa Carter, Joan & Tom Hawk, Mike Willeman, Marta and Mike Trainer, LC Conservation District Bill & Genie Potters, Fred Rogers.
89-year old Armar Bordner Interview Excerpts from 1993

Knowing that SWA is researching history on Armar Bordner and his cabin, Don Rhoades pointed Jo Ellen toward a recorded 1993 audio CD of an interview with then 89 year old Armar Bordner. Did you know that his mother, Stella Darkas, was a cook for Mr. and Mrs. Horace Brock of the Coleman’s and Brocks? Yep. She was, and Armar and his sister, lived in the Brock mansion for eight winters, from the time Armar was 6.5 years old through age 14. He had the run of the house. One day, Horace called the children upstairs, and gave them each a Hershey Kiss. Neatly folded inside was a $5 bill, a lot of money in those days, according to Armar.

By the way, Stella’s signature dish was to scoop eggplant out of the shell, mix it with herbs and seasoning..., put it back into the shell, then bake it.

Concerning building of the Armar Bordner Cabin, To paraphrase Armar, he said, “My cabin home was built in 1936 from oak logs. I designed my home. I had five men one summer, and eight men another summer over a 2.5 year period. I did build a machine to cut the logs. All of the corners are hand honed. I had double deck bunks in the loft.

My wife didn't object. In fact she learned to love the place. She was upset when the State took it over. Some people say it helped to put an end to her. Olive, Peg, worked at the Steel Foundry. She was a receptionist, and put in 27 years. She was an exceptionally good looking woman.

I sold four lots that had homes on them. At one time I had around 400 acres. I practically gave about 60 acres to a farmer across the Creek. When the State took it over, I had a little over 100 acres.

The (eminent domain ) court case was in 1977, but it was 1960 when we started to fight it.”

Do you have a story to tell about the Bordner Cabin? If so, we'd like to interview you. For a link to listen to interviews recorded so far, or to set up a time for your interview, email litz@mbcomp.com.

Take A Hike! This is a free activity for all ages. From Sands Siding Trail Head 1.5M, the Appalachian Trail Bridge 2.6M, or Swopes Valley Road 3M in Swatara State Park, take a walk along Bear Hole Trail to the Bordner Cabin—on a gravel trail with some elevation changes.

Recommended Reading: "The Big Thirst" by Charles Fishman.
Quote #1: "Water itself isn’t becoming more scarce, it’s simply disappearing from places where people have become accustomed to finding it—where they have built communities assuming a certain availability of water—and reappearing somewhere else.”
1. Point of interest on the Swatara Water Trail and maps;
2. Replaced the roof;
3. Held both a 70th and 75th anniversary celebration;
4. Placed required bars on the windows;
5. Led narrated walks for the N Lebanon Park and Recreation Association consisting of Bethel, East Hanover, Jonestown, Swatara, and Union Townships;
6. Used as a lunch stop on the Swatara Sojourn every other year over a 27-year period;
7. Stewards help to maintain the building monthly;
8. Per Mike Willeman, Labor & Industry approved professional drawings, which are posted on our web page;
9. Per Mike Willeman, DEP permit recently acquired to repair the piers;
10. Picnic tables added;
11. Native plantings;
12. Mantle replaced;
13. Graffiti removed;

Summary, status of required repairs:
Beers and Hoffman Professional sealed drawings complete. Labor and Industry approval of our plan is complete. Received DEP approval of our permit in October 2014. DCNR must provide written approval of submitted plans.

Bordner Cabin 10-year lease renewal sought for 2016.