



spring
2012



Lifestyle

News, Personalities and Perspectives from

HIGHLAND GREEN

A masterpiece of Maine living for those 55 or better

Special
CONSERVATION
ISSUE

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A community
connected to nature

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Connecting our
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Nature takes center stage

As the first quarter of 2012 comes to a close, Highland Green continues to cement its award-winning reputation as the premier planned community in New England.

At press time, no less than six homes are under construction for customers and there is brisk visitor traffic in the community as folks from near and far make their decision to call Highland Green home.

There is a host of reasons why new friends sharing interests from 23 states and counting have chosen to live here. For many Highland Green residents who relocated to the community anytime during the last decade, the community's exceptional integration of conservation and nature takes center stage.

At the core of Highland Green is the unique and unprecedented

incorporation of a nature sanctuary to embrace ecology, preservation and conservation. There is tremendous working conservation land right within the security of the vast 635 acre campus, there is a non-profit environmental education organization with which many Highland Green residents are involved and there is an ecology center.

Ed and Barbara Lovely recently made the decision to relocate to Highland Green from Kinnelon, New Jersey, and their custom home is currently being constructed abutting the Cathance River Nature Preserve. The unique opportunity to enjoy



Ed and Barbara Lovely

magnificent natural beauty just outside their back door was very important. "We live in the woods in northern New Jersey, and having the Preserve so close was a big draw for us," says Barbara. "Ed's a real nature buff, so the Ecology Center is a big plus for him."

See Preserve on Page 2

HIGHLAND GREEN

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Family of geese on the Heath Sanctuary

Preserve from Page 1

Dr. Margaret Wylde of Oxford, Mississippi visited Highland Green in the spring of 2011 as part of a research project. An award-winning published author and a renowned expert in the 55+ housing industry since 1984, Margaret has served clients in all 50 states, Mexico, Canada, Europe and Asia. “Lot’s of communities around the country and world pay lip service to conservation and that they have trails. At Highland Green it is totally unique. It’s the real deal,” she says.

During her visit, Margaret explored key parts of the 235 acre Cathance River Nature Preserve, through which meanders five miles of well maintained trails, a combination of forested wetland areas, vernal pools and the dramatic Cathance River. On the 30 acre Heath Sanctuary, a prime bird watching area, she found Highland Green resident Jim Wilkes hunkered down observing hatchling geese through his telephoto lens (photo pictured above). She also visited the Ecology Center. Of her experience of conservation and nature at Highland Green, Margaret states simply: “I was completely blown away.”

Highland Green is perfectly located directly at the crossroads of Midcoast Maine. This location offers equally easy access to the college town of Brunswick, the diverse cultural offerings of urban Portland and the artful beauty of Maine coastal villages and bold oceanfront. To have all this nearby but to still have all of the open space within Highland Green is another reason why, for many, conservation and nature take center stage.

Ed and Barbara Lovely value the fact that Highland Green’s convenient location and natural beauty are just a stone’s throw from Bowdoin College and close to Casco Bay. “We’ve spent time in Maine on Harpswell Neck for the past several

summers, and the ocean and nearby outdoor opportunities are very important to us. But easy access to intellectual and cultural events adds to the attraction,” says Ed who, after a corporate career, earned a doctorate degree in philosophy of religion and has taught philosophy at two New Jersey universities. Barbara, a journalist and professional picture framer, says they were sold on Highland Green after meeting some very enthusiastic neighbors and seeing the quality of the homes. “This is an exciting move for us,” she says, “and Highland Green looks to be the perfect place for a new adventure in our lives.”

A low maintenance lifestyle combined with neighborly ambience and endless possibilities enhance the enjoyment of Highland Green inhabitants of residents. Vibrant resident driven activities at the Highland Green community center, open opportunities to participate in the governance of the community and amenities such as the fitness center contribute to a truly active lifestyle. And yet, for many at Highland Green, conservation and nature take center stage.

Sally and Jim Von Benken relocated to Highland Green in 2003 from Massachusetts. “Several years of vacationing in Maine told us we wanted to make Maine our permanent retirement location,” says Sally. “A visit to Highland Green (before there was a single resident!), included a drive through portions of the Nature Preserve to which we would have access virtually right outside our door. This was the single most important factor in our decision to move here,” she noted. In furthering her interest in conservation, Sally has served on the CREA Board of Directors and, along with many other Highland Green residents, has been active in developing and maintaining the 5 miles of trails within the Preserve. Sally has led numerous hikes for folks inside and outside the community, but she notes, “The greatest pleasure is walking with our friends here at Highland Green.” Additionally, Sally is involved with resident activities and Jim with their co-op board. For them, like many at Highland Green, conservation and nature take center stage. ■



Sally Von Benken shows some new friends around the nature preserve at Highland Green.





Highland Green: *A community connected to nature.* CREA: *Connecting our community to nature.*

The Cathance River Education Alliance is a non-profit organization that was formed as part of the development of Highland Green.

“Quite simply, CREA represents a totally unique case of environmental, educational, and developmental interests working together to benefit the community.”

- Rick Wilson,
Executive Director
of CREA and local
school teacher

In the year 2000, local Highland Green founder John Wasileski launched his visionary plan to create Maine’s only large scale active-adult 55-plus planned community. At the same time, John was approached by Topsham’s Future, a local conservation group who wanted to ensure that the development did not negatively impact the local eco-systems or the health of the Cathance River.

Chairman of Topsham’s Future, Bowdoin College professor, environmentalist, and founder of the Green party John Rensenbrink quickly hit it off with John Wasileski, a businessman who was the premier developer of retirement communities in Maine. He also happened to minor in environmental science at McGill University.

The “Two John’s” agreed to create a 235 acre nature sanctuary at Highland Green in permanent conservation through the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust. They also agreed to form the Cathance River Education Alliance to manage the conservation land, an organization to be dedicated to promoting nature based learning, to foster wise use of the Preserve, and to prepare future stewards of the Cathance watershed.

“The fact that Highland Green has all of this natural beauty, conservation land and miles of maintained trails right here has been a big draw for potential Highland Green residents,” says Director of Marketing and Sales Will Honan. He is also quick to point out that CREA can be a factor for would-be Highland Green residents. “CREA presents a totally unique proposition. It transforms open space into what we like to call working conservation land and gives Highland Green residents a whole other potential dimension of activity in their lives,” he says.

In 2006, the Cathance River Ecology Center was completed. The building’s bones are made from a recycled Civil War era post and beam barn originally located on the upstate New York farm of John Wasileski’s sister and transported to Highland Green. It was reassembled piece by piece on the Preserve integrating solar power, wind power, recycled blue-jeans as insulation, a pellet stove and other cutting edge environmentally friendly technology.



The partially disassembled post and beam barn that was transformed into the Cathance River Ecology Center.



Known as “the building that teaches,” the Ecology Center has become home base for CREA’s many programs which include nature based learning summer camps for kids, science curriculum (especially geology) for middle school classrooms throughout the state and adult programs involving all aspects of the natural world. It also serves as a sort of museum and library cataloguing the scientific findings of CREA and information on the Cathance River, nearby Merrymeeting Bay and the enormous and diverse array of plant and wildlife found on the Preserve.

See CREA on Page 5



The Two Johns





Legacies of Stewardship

Sharon MacCallum and her husband Bob lived in Connecticut most of their working lives and commuted to New York City. Bob worked for a large corporation and Sharon taught and performed music in the city and throughout the region. In their precious spare time, they bonded over his fervent pastime of rock hounding and collecting.

Jim Wilkes attained a Master of Science in invertebrate zoology and taught various biology and Marine biology courses before becoming a school superintendant. Later, a career as an educational facility planner for an architect and engineering firm kept him busy.

Lewis and Mary Brown have always been avid outdoor people. Lew's career in marketing in the paper industry took them on moves all over the country while Mary taught school. In between, they snuck in skiing, boating, hiking, and, especially canoeing into their free time.

When Bob MacCallum retired, he and Sharon moved to Brunswick, Maine

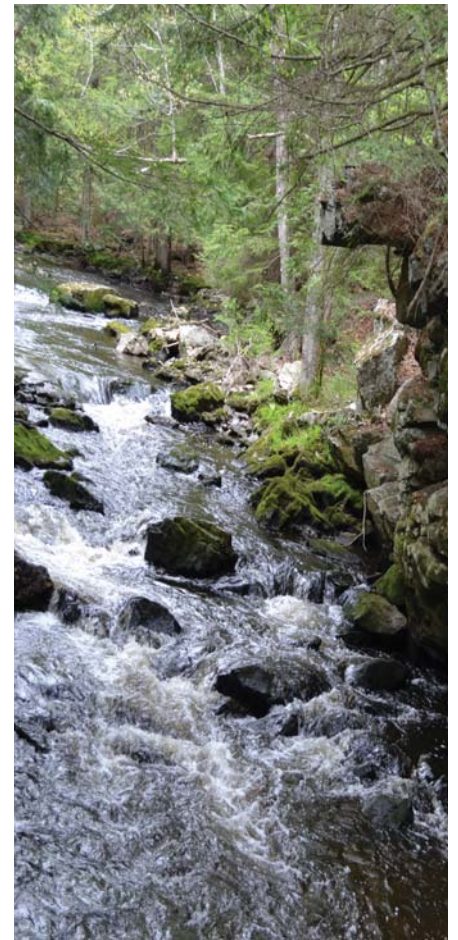
along with Bob's rocks. While Sharon had plenty of room in their house for her grand piano to teach her students, a separate outbuilding was specially built to house the extensively catalogued collection which contains samples from throughout the Northeast, including many from Maine. When Bob passed far too young the minerals remained and Sharon always wondered what she might do with the collection.

Jim Wilkes and his wife Nancy are Midwesterners but had always had a love for New England, most especially Maine. During one vacation they came upon Highland Green and it seemed like a potential ideal fit. Not only could they be perfectly located between Portland, the Downeast Maine coast and the fishing camps of Northern Maine, but the budding Highland Green campus promised a vast area to safely explore and for Jim to possibly practice his hobby of nature photography.

Lew and Mary Brown had retired and built their dream home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming where skiing and enjoying nature could be an everyday activity. A few years later, they realized that New England and Maine were in their blood, not to mention being where their kids live. They moved back to Boothbay Harbor, Maine and built a home near the water. A couple of years after that they started to think that they would like to spend less time on house maintenance and more enjoying themselves. Plus, Boothbay was pretty isolated in the winter. It would be nice to be around more culture and more people. What about their outdoor passions?



A specimen of the mineral Beryl, with characteristic hexagonal crystals; from the MacCallum collection.



When Sharon MacCallum made the decision to move to Highland Green in 2011, she would have plenty of room for her grand piano but it was not practical to bring along Bob's prized rock and mineral collection. She decided to donate it to the Cathance River Education Alliance (CREA). "It made perfect sense," says Sharon. "Not only can CREA enjoy and display the collection, it can live on in memory of Bob. He would be thrilled," she says.

Cheryl Sleeper of CREA helped Sharon box up the whole collection and is having shelving made for a rotating display at the Ecology Center at Highland Green. "This will make a beautiful display but it also has a practical purpose. One of the major components of our educational curriculum is geology. It is the perfect match," says Cheryl.

See *Stewardship* on Page 7

Cheryl Sleeper is the full time site coordinator for all activities that take place at the Ecology Center. An experienced elementary school teacher and environmental enthusiast, Cheryl works tirelessly to help organize camps and adult programs. She also interfaces with the voluminous list of volunteers, field experts and conservation groups who become affiliated with CREA. “Our summer camps are sold out year after year,” says Cheryl, “and many of our kids go on to participate in our high school environmental leadership program through Bowdoin College and go on to major in some form of environmental science.”

Cheryl has also worked with many Highland Green residents who are CREA members, who are on the CREA board, and who donate equipment and collections (see **Legacies of Stewardship, page 4**). Ann Nelson, a retired librarian, and her husband Jeff, both of whom are avid environmentalists, moved to Highland Green from Vermont. Jeff, a retired engineer, serves on the board of CREA as well as on the board of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust which holds the easement on the Highland Green conservation land. Ann has worked with Cheryl Sleeper to catalogue the CREA library collection and has edited the CREA newsletter. The Nelson’s dedication to conservation extends to

their home with a solar fed hot water system, one of many green features available at Highland Green.



Cheryl Sleeper in the Ecology Center

Eileen Martin and Kathy Connors from Topsham, Maine are having a home built at Highland Green this year just a short distance from the Ecology Center. Though their house started in March, their grandchildren have been signed up for this summer’s camps since January. “We’re really looking forward to our grandkids being part of the camps this year. But what we are really looking forward to is living at Highland Green and next year having them be able to step right out our back door, through the woods and to the center,” says Kathy.

“CREA and Highland Green have a symbiotic existence,” says Highland Green Director of Marketing and Sales Will Honan. “One of the major attractions to Highland Green is the nature preserve and conservation efforts and, by association, CREA. When customers eventually move to Highland Green, they potentially benefit from the satisfaction of involvement with CREA. CREA continues to advance their message and educational efforts to both Highland Green residents and the general public. The Cathance River Nature Preserve and the Ecology Center continue on as outdoor and indoor classrooms for all. It’s a win-win-win-win relationship,” he says.

Rick Wilson grew up in Topsham and has seen the river become more pristine over the last decade. Awareness of the Cathance River watershed and the completely unique ecosystem of greater Merrymeeting Bay have also grown exponentially since the development of Highland Green and the formation of the Cathance River Education Alliance. Says Rick, CREA’s Executive Director: “Half of all Highland Green residents are CREA members and even more use the trails. The Two Johns have always guided Will and me to maintain synergy between our two organizations and we have a completely natural fit... pun intended.” ■



The Highland Green Golf Course adds another element of open and naturalized space to the vast Highland Green campus. Golfers and non-golfers alike enjoy the opportunities that this unique nine-hole Scottish style course provides. It is beautiful to look at, gorgeous to play and open to the public. Highland Green residents do not pay for the management and operation of the course so while Highland Green is not considered a “golf community,” the course is a superb amenity for avid golfers or just those who might like to take up the game.

Featured Custom Homes

Call to learn more about great choices of existing homes.

1-866-854-1200



INTO THE WOODS 4 Siskin Drive

With perhaps the most private site in the community, this bright home backs directly into the trail system and 235 acre Cathance River Nature Preserve. Light colored oak floors throughout reflect the proximity to conserved nature while the one-of-a-kind granite kitchen counter's pattern mirror the Topsham area's rich rock and mineral history. A perfect example of the Highland Green ideal of community combined with conservation. \$350,000



WOODWORKER'S BEAMS 1 Grouse Lane

The natural world comes inside and brings to mind the Ecology Center with specially designed open beamed ceiling in this content Highland Green home. The carefully designed cook's kitchen open to the living space and the solid screened porch looking out at an expanse abutting the Heath will put you at ease. Pursue your passion in the full lower level perfect for a workshop and complete with a hand built cedar closet and an extra finished office space. \$440,000



Featured homes will be open at our special event on April 28th; see page 7 and back cover for details.

Jim and Nancy Wilkes did move to Highland Green in 2004 and Jim has been a fixture on the Preserve ever since. Nearly every day that he is home at Highland Green, he can be seen (if you can find him) finding a fresh place, a new wildlife interaction, or the latest in the endless photography opportunities available on Highland Green's 635 acre campus.

"It's wonderful to have all of this nature right out our back door," says Jim. Speaking of Out Our Backdoor, that is precisely what Jim named his first book of photography of wildlife found at Highland Green. His second published book, *Signs of Spring*, catalogues wildflowers found at Highland Green in the order which they bloom.

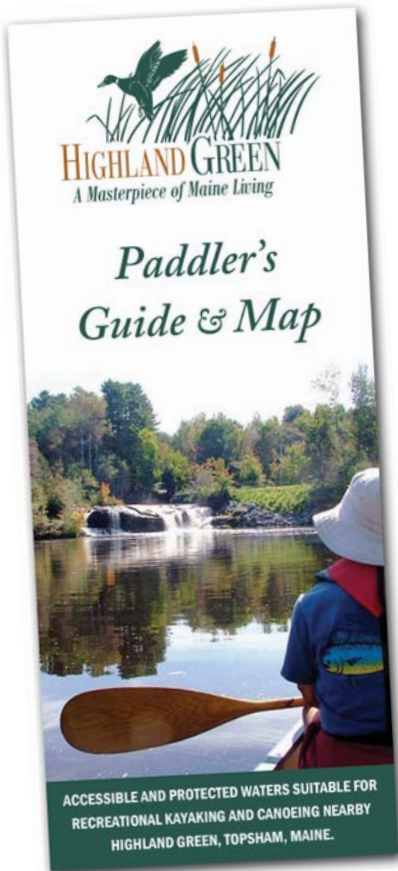


At Highland Green, Lew and Mary Brown found the perfect match where they can live a simplified lifestyle yet continue to pursue their outdoor passions. In February 2012, they moved into their new Highland Green home.

During their exploration of and move to Highland Green, the Browns also explored kayak and canoe put-in areas within a manageable radius of the community. The result of these explorations will be a paddler's guide and map to accessible and protected waters suitable for recreational paddlers nearby Highland Green. The joint effort between Lew, Mary, and Highland Green is designed to, in the Browns' words, "contribute further to the rich and varied environmental experiences available through Highland Green and CREA."

Highland Green Marketing and Sales Director Will Honan finds great satisfaction in having worked with all of the people who now make Highland Green home. "One gets to know our customers so very well, and to see them ultimately not only living happily here, but to being physically and intellectually active in so many ways is inspiring and is, to me, what this community is all about," says Will.

He also appreciates the value of such projects as the Brown's paddling guide, Jim Wilkes' photography books, and Sharon MacCallum's donation of her husband's rock and mineral collection to CREA. Says Will: "These are compelling tangible items but more importantly they represent legacies of stewardship, of enjoyment of life, of community and of appreciation of the environment that will last forever." ■



Lew and Mary Brown and the Paddler's Guide & Map, Jim Wilkes and copies of *Signs of Spring* and Sharon MacCallum with some mineral samples will be at our next special event on **Saturday, April 28th**. Our **Conservation & Nature Open House** will also include: Fly fishing expert and editor of *Fly Tyer* Magazine David Klausmeyer, celebrity fly-tyer Sharon Wright, Expert Birders Eric Berube and Doug Hitchcox, and Rick Wilson and Cheryl Sleeper of CREA. **See Back Cover for more event details.**





Come Explore...

Join Us!
Saturday,
April 28th

CONSERVATION & NATURE OPEN HOUSE

Bird Watching Expedition

8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Meet at the Highland Green Community Center

Enjoy a bird watching adventure through the magnificent Heath Preserve and the remarkable Cathance River Nature Preserve; led by Eric Berube, a graduate of CREA's Environmental Leadership Program, and Doug Hitchcox, expert birder and Maine state record holder of most species sighted in one year.

Nature Exposition & Open House

10:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Highland Green Community Center

Highland Green residents and friends display their contributions to conservation and love of the outdoors (see guest list, bottom of page 7). Fly casting and fly tying demonstrations, tours of the Cathance River Ecology Center and walks to the Cathance River complete the experience.

****Featured homes will be open during the event***

*For more information and to RSVP, please email
info@highlandgreenmaine.com or call 866-854-1200 / 207-725-4549.*



*The Cathance River on
the nature preserve at
Highland Green.*



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