

Upcoming Events:

Visit www.creamaine.org for details.

INSPIRED BY NATURE SERIES

Topsham Public Library, 6:00pm - 8:00pm

April 25: **Kris Sader**, Visual Artist

June 27: **Heather McCargo**,
Wild Seed Project

Geri Vistein Family Event

Ecology Center

April 29, 10:00am - 12noon

CREAtive WALKS

Gary Lawless and Jim McCarthy

Ecology Center

3rd Sundays, 9:00am - 11:00am

SPRING BIRD WALK

John Berry

Ecology Center

May 7, early morning time TBA

CREA ANNUAL MEETING

Highland Green Community Center

May 16, 4:00pm - 6:00pm

MEMBER WALKS

Matt Dubel, Executive Director

Ecology Center

June 4 and July 30, 1:00pm - 2:30pm

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Ecology Center

July 7, 10:00am - 12noon

Welcome New Members!

We enthusiastically welcome the following new CREA members who have recently joined our community:

Diane Belliveau

Arthur & Elaine Boatin

Dick & Carol Davis

Neil & Jeannette Gallagher

Robert Gardner

Charlene Gott

Maria Kolenda

Joan Sheldon

Ethan & Barbara Stanley

William Taylor

David & Trish Vaughn



Coming soon to the Cathance Preserve...

Painted trillium (*Trillium undulatum*) is a spring ephemeral that emerges on the forest floor between snow melt and leaf out on the Cathance Preserve. Photo by James Wilkes.

Are you Interested in Volunteering?

Please contact Andrea (snevetsaerdna@gmail.com) if you are interested in any of the following volunteer opportunities or have ideas about other ways you would like to help.

- Assist at CREA's Annual Meeting (May 16)
- Assemble mailings
- Help with spring cleaning of the Ecology Center
- Photograph CREA programs, nature sitings and landscapes at the Preserve
- Catalog the large volume of photographs we have collected over the years
- Lead a program in your area of expertise



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SPRING 2017

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Salamanders!

Every year, Glenn Evans, a biology teacher at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham, arranges his teaching schedule so that his advanced biology class of sophomores can make weekly visits to the Cathance Preserve and conduct hands-on research. Small groups within the class develop and implement their own reserach projects and are guided by mentors from CREA and the community. Here is a report from Emily Smith, Zoe Stevenson, and Tyler Bernier, a student research team from the fall 2016 semester.

Where do salamanders go for the winter? We learned that salamanders burrow underground to hibernate. Our team chose this project because we share a common interest in working closely with animals. Our mentors for this project were CREA Executive Director Matt Dubel and our biology teacher Glenn Evans. Mr. Dubel helped by providing the materials we needed for our project as well as assisting in identifying the salamanders we discovered. We found Duskie, Red-Backs, and Two-Lined Salamanders along our transects of coverboards. Coverboards are pieces of wood placed on the forest floor where salamanders can be found and counted. We placed coverboards along a line or "transect" at our research site. We are eager to return to our transect plots and coverboards in the spring. We plan to focus on the research and discovery of the Blue-Spotted and/or Yellow-Spotted Salamanders, less common species that are believed to reside in the Cathance River Preserve.

This was a phenomenally engaged group of students. They established study plots that will be used for years to come to monitor salamanders. These research projects get to the heart of CREA's mission to have students learning on the Preserve while making a contribution to our understanding of the biodiversity in our local habitats.

Matt Dubel, CREA Executive Director



Young salamanders found under coverboards by the Mt. Ararat Research Team.



Zoe, Emily (lifting a coverboard), and Tyler near their research site at the Cathance Preserve.

Red Eft
by Ann Nelson



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Topsham, ME 04086

P.O. Box 187

Cathance River
EDUCATION ALLIANCE



The Cathance River Education Alliance connects people with nature to improve the well being of both.

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Many thanks to Isabella Pols, Tyler Bernier, Emily Smith, and Zoe Stevenson for contributing to this issue of our newsletter.

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A Message from our President

Spring in Maine! Spring on the Cathance Preserve! We are blessed to live in a place that has four distinct seasons, and there is something special about every one of them. But spring wakes us up from a world of frost, snow, and ice (and mud season) into a time of renewal and hope. From the spring peepers and other amphibians waking from their frozen suspended state to the fiddleheads and burgeoning understory crowned by a vibrant sweep of green in the trees, to the music of the birds, and from the smallest bluets and violets to the profusion of spring flowers to come, we celebrate the world of living things beginning another cycle in timeless succession.



Photo by Valerie Chow

This is a great time for CREA. We are moving forward with a fine new themed series, "Inspired by Nature," which is bringing us new insights into how people, in different ways, see and express how nature stirs souls. Our April and summer camps will once again bring happy voices together to see, learn, and wonder. Our growing volunteer program has seen an expansion of open hours and new experiences, and our outreach to Highland Green, the Highlands, and the community in general is taking on new dimensions. Our gifted in-school and on-preserve teaching staff continues a 17-year tradition of excellence and partnership with local educators.

With your help, this could be CREA's best year ever! Thank you for being a member, or if you're not, for joining or supporting us. Please tell others about all of the things CREA does and means to you, and bring a friend to a CREA event. The best is yet to come!

Jan Smith, CREA President

Teaching the Next Generation of Scientists

In December, CREA Executive Director Matt Dubel and School Programs Coordinator Sarah Rodgers led a professional development workshop to introduce and model the Next Generation Science Standards for K-5th grade teachers in MSAD 75 (Topsham, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell). These new standards focus on the use of case studies, critical thinking, open-ended questions, and research as important approaches to learning and applying science to address major challenges in today's world.

CREA's approach to teaching has always focused on hands-on experiences, investigation, and modeling to engage students in the natural world. CREA educators are ahead of their time in applying the student-driven inquiry that drives the Next Generation Standards.

It's been wonderful to work with MSAD 75 as we try to help the new science standards come alive for teachers.

Sarah Rodgers, CREA School Programs Coordinator



CREA's Poet Laureate Gary Lawless and photographer Jim McCarthy on the banks of the Cathance River. Photo by Valerie Chow.

Uniquely CREA: Taking CREAtive Walks

Rain or shine, ice or blackflies - Gary Lawless, CREA's Poet Laureate, and Jim McCarthy, a professional photographer, have led monthly walks on the Cathance Preserve for over a year. Their walks are open to all and very open in format - a listening walk, a walk to admire lichens or dragonflies or a search for the rattlesnake plantain. Observations and pictures from the walks can be found in a notebook on the kiosk near the Ecology Center and on Gary's blog (www.takingwalkscrea.blogspot.com). Join us every 3rd Sunday of the month, 9:00am at the Ecology Center.

I am interested in the words, phrases, images each person chooses to talk about a particular place, and of their experiences of it. We don't necessarily choose the same words or images, and we don't necessarily pick up on the same cues, happenings or conversations within the community of that place. Sometimes our language does not have the words to express it directly.

Gary Lawless, "Poetry Walks"
October 15, 2015
myigrations.blogspot.com



Cathance Island by Ann Nelson

Volunteer Profile: Isabella Pols

Isabella Pols is the Brunswick High School representative on CREA's Board of Directors. She is a Junior and participates in the visual arts and music programs at her school. She also runs distance and pole vaults for her school's cross country and track teams. In the summer, she works for the Brunswick Parks and Recreation Department coaching track for kids. Isabella wants to run competitively in college and thinks she will pursue a career in education or physical therapy for sports injuries.

Isabella is very excited to be a part of CREA. When she was in elementary school, she participated in CREA camps and activities during the summer and with her school. She loved playing games on the lawn, taking photos by the river, and examining plants and animals on the dock. Isabella is thrilled to be on the CREA board for a second year!



Isabella Pols, Brunswick High School representative on the CREA Board. Photo by Benet Pols.

CREA Trivia

In the fall of 2014, the first and only sighting of a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) on the Cathance River Preserve was documented by students from Mt. Ararat High School using wildlife cameras. A surprise for all since bobcats are quite reclusive and rarely seen.

Thank you to the following foundations for supporting CREA's programs:

Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Humanities Council
Merrymeeting Bay Trust
Midcoast Charitable Foundation of Maine
State Farm Good Neighbor Grant