



UPCOMING EVENTS

2011 LECTURE SERIES

The last Tuesday of the month, from 6:30-8:00 pm at the Topsham Public Library.

Sept. 29 - Nocturnal Animals

The Center for Wildlife will introduce Maine's creatures of the night.

Oct. 25 - Birds

Biologists from Stantec will tell us about the extraordinary journeys of migratory birds.

Nov. 29 - Big Game

Current research on large mammals that live on the Preserve and elsewhere in Maine.

OTHER EVENTS

Saturday, September 17, 8:00 am

Guided Bird Walk on the Preserve

Meet at the Golf Club parking lot at 8:00 am.

Sunday, September 18, 8:00 am

9th Annual Golf Scramble

Held at the Highland Green Golf Club.

Saturday, October 8, 10:00 am

Photography Hike/Fall Foliage

Led by a local photographer and a local biologist.

Open Hours at the Ecology Center

The first Sunday of the month in September, October, and November from 12:00 to 3:00 pm.

**Dates for lectures and classes are subject to change. Stay tuned to our emails & website, www.creamaine.org, for updates.*

CREA is on the web!

www.creamaine.org

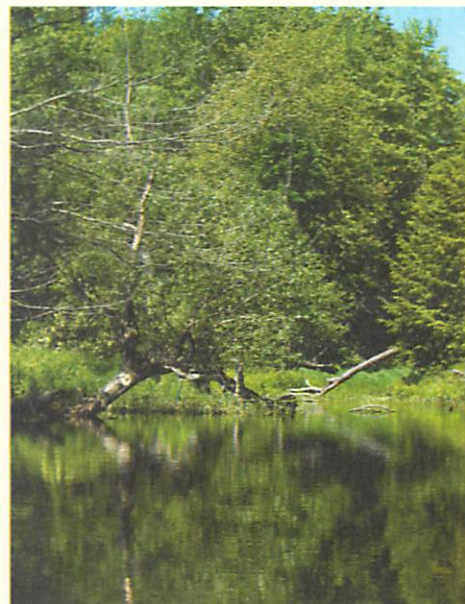
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"A" IS FOR ALLIANCE

CREA was founded as an alliance between Highland Green, a grassroots group called Topsham's Future, and area schools. In 10+ years of existence CREA, inspired by our Executive Director Rick Wilson, has continually expanded our circle of alliances, which now include Bowdoin College, programs in local elementary and secondary schools, links with the Highlands community, and joint ventures with other environmental organizations, such as the recent series of kayaking paddles on the Cathance River. Some of these alliances you will read about in this issue.

One many-layered collaboration involved CREA with town government, a local business, and the local high school. Glenn Evans' biology students, using the Ecology Center and CREA gear, were trained by Patrick Burke of Stantec, Inc., a local environmental consulting business, to help carry out a Wildlife Corridor study for the town of Topsham. The students went out on snowshoes to identify and catalogue animal tracks – supplying information that was critical for drawing up Topsham's Natural Areas Plan. According to Mr. Burke, the students learned some important new things like "the connections between



tracks, ecology, and our society." Rod Melanson, Topsham's Natural Resource Planner, says that CREA has had an impact "on the conservation ethic that now exists as part of Topsham's Town Government" and has actually influenced local policy decisions.

That is what our slogan, *Connecting Our Community to Nature*, is all about.

FROM POND TO BAY

Over four weekends in July, Michelle and Stan Moody of the local Appalachian Mountain Club hosted a wonderful water tour of the Cathance River. This series was sponsored by another alliance – among CREA, KELT, BTLT and FOMB.

The first trip covered the section between Bradley Pond and Route 201 in Topsham, including a portage over a large beaver dam. On the second outing, the group paddled from Head of Tide to the lowest rapids in the Cathance River Preserve, then hiked up to the Ecology Center for lunch and a tour, led by Cheryl Sleeper. The last two paddles began in Bowdoinham,



one heading up to Head of Tide Park and the second heading out to Merrymeeting Bay. Each of these trips featured plenty of wildlife, and gave the group members an appreciation for and intimacy with our wonderful river.

A hearty thank you to Michelle and Stan, our local land trusts, and all who participated!



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A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

One of the very first things that I did when I became CREA's Executive Director was to interview Linwood Rideout, an American original and a lifelong resident of the Bowdoinham area. Linwood had spent his life around Merrymeeting Bay, and I felt a need to wrap my personal local history with his older stories.

It was a great conversation that took place in his kitchen looking over the Abagadasset River one lazy summer afternoon years ago. He spoke of sturgeon, eels, suckers, smelts, ducks, and more as if they were in the room with us. Stories and memory are powerful influences that can teach us all about the importance of being connected to one another and our nearby natural world.

Linwood was at the grand opening of our Ecology Center back in 2005. He has since passed away. I often think about his passion for the rivers and



Merrymeeting Bay and his strong connection to these places. It is this same passion and connection that we at CREA are trying to instill in people of all ages through our programs and mission. Connecting our communities to nature is important work that we take a lot of pride in. We appreciate and need your support to help foster the same appreciation Linwood possessed for his local environment!

Rick Wilson



OUR INTERN FROM MCGILL

Once again CREA had the help of a remarkable student from McGill University in Quebec. Here is Elspeth McMurray's report: "Elspeth was involved with all facets of life at CREA, from writing press releases and arranging Open Hours at CREC to attending camps, lectures, and Board meetings. She wore hip waders with only a small leak, watched sturgeons breach, and maintains that the snapper she spied in the river should be named in her honour. Endlessly impressed with the scope and excellence of CREA's activities and also excited by its development potential, Elspeth truly enjoyed her CREA experience and sends greetings and thanks to all for the warm welcome. It was wicked fun."

EEL GRASS

CREA has a strong relationship with many of the schools in the Brunswick-Topsham area. A recent Environmental Youth Leaders' project is an example of the cooperation between CREA, Bowdoin College, and Brunswick High School. While choosing a final project for their Environmental Science class at Brunswick High School, EYL members Sam Katz and Baxter Worthing readily discovered a project that "improved the local environment in some way."

The two students worked with John Lichter, a biology professor at Bowdoin who heads an ongoing project to plant eel grass in Merrymeeting Bay. Marine plants such as eel grass are integral to aquatic ecosystems



and are being threatened in Merrymeeting Bay by invasive fish and pollution. Sam and Baxter, with other EYLs, planted over 200 seedlings in the Cathance River at the Head of Tide in Topsham. They will return regularly to monitor the site and are hoping to find improvement in the local ecosystem and thus a healthier river in the years to come.

CREA FOR LIFE!



Eric with a 10-Day-Old Bear Cub.

Eric Berube has been involved with CREA since 2005, when he was a student liaison to the board of directors. During high school, he piloted the deer cam and turtle trapping programs, and went on, during his college years, to help instruct Environmental Youth Leaders. Eric is currently working as our chief trail maintenance person, as well as running our community programming. We recently asked him a few questions about his experience with CREA.

How did you first get involved with CREA?

After my sophomore year of high school, Rick was my art history teacher. I thought that he was such an awesome, inspiring guy that I pretty much surrendered all my free time to him, at which point he put me straight to work volunteering at CREA and had me apply for the student liaison position.

How have your experiences with CREA influenced your studies/career choices/life?

CREA was 100% the reason why I chose to study Wildlife Ecology at U Maine. I enjoyed everything that I had done with CREA so much that I ultimately chose that as my career path.

Which of your contributions to CREA has given you the most satisfaction? Why?

I think all of the manual labor that I put in has given me the most satisfaction. A lot of people know me for the bridges, but actually I have put in way more time and effort around the Ecology Center than anywhere on the trails. I feel satisfied purely because the EC looks so beautiful now compared to when I started out there.

FRESHMAN ACADEMY

The BHS Freshman Academy spent three days at the Ecology Center and Preserve over the course of the 2010-2011 school year. On the first visit the students met the CREA staff and explored the Preserve. With CREA's cameras, they documented their explorations and created photo montages of the fall foliage.

The Academy returned for two days in the spring. This time, students were engaged in four separate projects. They gathered data from the river (water temps, water levels, etc.) and graphed their results with Don Glover, the Academy math teacher. With Jon Riggleman, their English teacher, they had an opportunity to solo in the woods and engage their creative side through journaling and poetry writing. Josh Levy, their geography and history teacher, took them to select places along the river and discussed land use opportunities and the changing landscape. Finally, with Andrew McCullough, their science teacher, students explored the numerous quarries around the Preserve and learned some basic geology and rock identification techniques to use for constructing a basic rock kit.

These intensive visits to the Center and Preserve allowed the students to become comfortable and familiar with the Ecology Center and more able to express themselves in ways a traditional classroom setting doesn't allow. While writing end of year reports, many participants described their experiences with CREA as some of their favorite parts of the year.

CREA AT THE HIGHLANDS

CREA has been working closely with new board member, Crystal Toothaker, the Director of Resident Services at the Highlands, to provide consistent nature-based programs to Highlands residents. On the last Tuesday afternoon of every month, residents enjoy a rich variety of presentations, which have included the movie, "Merrymeeting Bay: The Rising Tide of Stewardship"; a presentation about turtles by Eric Berube; and high school environmental study presentations. Other sessions have emerged from collaborations CREA has established with statewide environmental groups: The Center for Wildlife presented Nocturnal Animals. Hope Douglas, Founder and President of Wind Over Wings talked



about four raptors, including a wonderful peregrine falcon. Conservation Biologist Geri Vistein from Project Coyote told the audience about this very misunderstood local animal.

ADVENTURE CAMP

The final session of CREA's summer camps, led by Shane Barker, was for older kids entering grades 5-7. The campers dissected owl pellets outdoors under the awning behind the Ecology Center. Indoors, they created bird feeders and many unique art projects. A favorite activity was fishing for chub and sunfish in the Cathance River. The campers loved sprawling along the river's edge and casting a line into the serene water that flows along the Barne's Leap trail.

The "Big Hike" of three miles occurred later in the week. The campers were divided into two groups, with half beginning at the Ecology Center and the other half being transported to Head of Tide Park

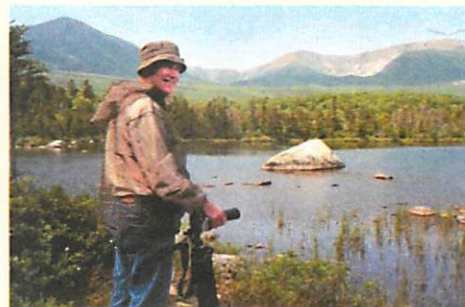
on the Cathance Road in Topsham. After learning a little about the lay of the land, each group headed out on the trail that follows the river between the Cathance Preserve and Head of Tide. The groups met in the middle, and enjoyed lunch and games along the river before continuing on to complete their respective half of the hike.

This session was a great success in large part thanks to the tremendous help and support from our five hard working and enthusiastic Environmental Youth Leaders who really make the camps possible and so much fun.

SIGNS OF SPRING

CREA Board member Jim Wilkes has enjoyed photography for over 40 years. For him, it has always been a good excuse to be outdoors. After he moved from Ohio to Highland Green, he delighted his Midwest relatives with a photographic journal of the distinctive eastern creatures found on the Cathance River Preserve and Highland Green. While prowling the trails with his camera, Jim realized that many fellow residents needed help identifying the numerous wildflowers that emerge on the Preserve in the spring. This led to his self-published book,

Signs of Spring: A Collection of Spring Wildflowers Found in Highland Green. This lovely little guide shows in blooming order the diverse flowers on the Preserve. Initially written as a handbook for just him and his wife Nancy, Jim sees the guide as a helpful tool for anyone who enjoys the Preserve. Copies may be seen at the Highland Green Community Center and the Ecology Center or email Jim at wilkesjames@comcast.net if you are interested in one for yourself.



2011 RUN FOR THE SUN 5K

98.9 WCLZ and Maine Running Company sponsored this year's 5K. Over 200 people finished the race, which grossed \$4682 for CREA programs! Other sponsors were High Point Graphics, Androscoggin Dental Associates, Dairy Frost, Maynard's Chocolates, Big Top Deli, The Great Impasta, Brunswick Professional Firefighters, Brunswick Police Benefit Association, and Fat Boy.

This year, Maddie Purcell, who founded and coordinates the Run for the Sun, solicited local

businesses to offer discounts and specials for race participants, which added to the fun and kept runners in town for much of the day. Participating businesses included Wild Oats Bakery & Café, Lilee's Public House, Wilbur's of Maine, O'Shea's, Pedro O'Hara's, Big Top Deli, Brunswick Deli, Little Tokyo, and Maynard's Chocolates in Freeport.

We hope you will all join us for next year's 5th Anniversary Event!



~ your support is vital to our Cathance Preserve legacy today!
- Jim Wilkes
"CREA's legacy today!"
- your support is vital to our Cathance Preserve legacy today!

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