

Highland Green embodies Maine lifestyle

Master-planned community values natural resources.

Marketing Department
The Portland Press Herald

Green by name, green by nature: The master-planned active lifestyle community of Highland Green is highly unusual, perhaps even unique, among developments of its kind in Maine and the Northeast.

To begin with, Highland Green's 650-acre campus contains more than 230 acres of conservation land, including the Cathance River Nature Preserve, with its seven miles of maintained nature trails and 1.5-mile section along the scenic river; and the central, 35-acre Heath Sanctuary, a noted haven for birds.

Deer, beaver, red fox and wild turkeys are among the diverse array of wildlife. At the preserve's trailhead is the Ecology Center, a classroom/meeting space constructed of antique barn timbers and "green" building supplies and technology, including solar power.

The center represents joint efforts by Highland Green, numerous corporate donors and grantors, and the Cathance River Education Alliance, an educational nonprofit founded in 2000 by a partnership including local citizens group Topsham's Future, and Highland Green owner/developer John Wasileski, who set aside the land for the preserve.

As conservation and environmental concerns reflect the community's values, so does energy efficiency embody its practices in all new home construction, with EnergyStar® certification building packages, natural gas piped and various solar options.

These qualities are among the reasons that Highland Green was named among the 14 best retirement communities by AOL, and also – three times, in fact – named one of America's 100 Best Master-Planned Communities by Where to Retire Magazine. But the community's residents, too, surely contribute to the appeal of the resort.

"Community and civic-minded within Highland Green and in the greater community," is how Will Honan, director of marketing and sales, characterizes the community's population.

"Very active. We're an age-qualified over-55 community, but a good 15 per-



Courtesy photo

Highland Green will host a Nature Hike & Photography event, free and open to the public, at the Cathance River Nature Preserve on Saturday, May 14 at 10 a.m. Meet at the community center off Route 196 in Topsham.



Courtesy photo

Above: This home at 22 Redpoll Drive features a guest suite and is listed for sale at \$510,000. **Right:** A view of the home's sunporch.



cent of the people here still work, and 80 percent spend the winter here. Half are from Maine, half are from elsewhere in the United States," he says.

"Most people come here specifically for the Maine lifestyle, year-round," notes Chris Lynch, president of Legacy Properties Sotheby's International Realty.

"They appreciate the beauty of the Maine coast – Topsham is bordered by the Androscoggin River, Merrymeeting Bay and has the ocean nearby, after all – and the many cultural amenities of the area near Brunswick, such as Bowdoin College. We're close to Freeport, have easy access up the coast and are only 30 miles from Portland."

LEARN MORE

■ For more information on Highland Green properties, please contact Chris Lynch of Legacy Properties Sotheby's International Realty at 770-2200 or at clynch@legacysir.com.

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MAINE REAL ESTATE

Ask contractor for evidence of insurance

Q. A while ago you wrote that homeowners must confirm that contractors working on their property have insurance. That certainly makes sense to me, especially during this economy.

My question is, what exactly do I ask to see? Thanks. - Bob

A. This is a crucial issue for all homeowners. If the person you hire does not have adequate insurance coverage, and there is an accident, it could make an incredible mess for you.

I contacted Steve Morris, who oversees the insurance division at Kennebunk Savings Bank. Here is Steve's response:

"First, anyone you hire should be happy to provide you with proof of their insurance. It's called a Certificate of Insurance and is issued by the contractor's insurance agent at no cost. They should carry general liability insurance and worker's compensation.

"The certificate will show evidence of that coverage and the limits (amount of coverage) that they carry. General liability coverage includes coverage for any employees hired by the contractor and will also include a provision that



Simon Says
by Randal Simon

extends protection for the homeowner in the event that the contractor brings an independent contractor (non-employee) on to the site who does not carry his or her own insurance or has insufficient limits of coverage.

"In summary, make sure that anyone you hire provides evidence of insurance before the job begins."

Q. We are looking to put our house on the market this spring and hope you can answer our question soon. We have an outdoor pool and are wondering if we are better off spending the money to fix it, or taking it down completely. Thanks. - Dorothy

A. There is no one right answer to this question. Your first step

should be to consult a broker who sells a lot of property in your location. Find out what the likelihood is of your new owner wanting a pool. That could have a lot to do with your location - would your buyer be a vacationer, family with children ...? How many buyers in your part of town have installed pools?

Research will provide data and a basis for a decision.

Q. A contract on our house will be closing in midsummer. The contract does not note that the buyers are requesting our washer and dryer, but they perfectly fit their laundry room space. It took us lots of searching to find units that fit.

Are we obligated to share that info with the buyers, or should we just

move on? My husband says we should just let it go, but I want to be helpful so that they do not have the hassle we did. - Erma

A. It is nice that you are concerned about your new buyers. Do you want to sell them your machines? You can always offer them outside of the contract. Perhaps they will be relocating these appliances somewhere else in the house. In any event, I do not see this as putting you in any kind of risk with your buyers, whatever choice you make.

■ Randal Simon, a broker/manager of Prudential Prime Properties in Kennebunk, has more than 25 years' experience in real estate. He has been a contributor to *The Wall Street Journal*, *Unique Homes* and *The New York Times*, as well as to various real estate publications around the country. He also has a weekly television show called *Simon Says Real Estate*. Please send your questions to simonsays@simonsaysre.com or to P.O. Box 1099, Kennebunk, ME 04043.



Open-concept living is part of the appeal of this Highland Green home. The property, 5 Goldfinch Drive, is listed for sale at \$330,000.

GREEN,

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In moving here, residents are buying into a community, not just buying a house, Honan emphasizes. Resident-driven activities range from dinner gatherings to croquet to bird-watching to nature/photography hikes to tennis, golf, swimming in the pool and working out at the community fitness center, the hub of the Green's social life and the meeting place for its many educational, recreational and volunteer opportunities.

While "green" can also refer to the public nine-hole, Scottish-style golf course, Honan is quick to point out that Highland Green is not specifically a golf community.

"Residents do not pay for the golf course operation. It is a wonderful amenity for those who play and it adds a great deal of green space. We see an ever-

growing trend of folks moving here for a sense of community and conservation," says Honan.

Just under 150 homes have been built to date. Eight housing types, designed to complement the rugged surrounding New England landscape, are available to choose from and are customizable. Several are now listed for sale (please see accompanying photos for details on two).

Lynch explains how ownership here works, and notes its advantages:

"Cooperative living at Highland Green is similar to condominium living regarding collective maintenance services, but with additional benefits. The ability to own a free-standing custom home is unique.

"The co-op structure helps ensure that the community grows in concert with its original vision and long-term built-in management provides experience, strength and stability throughout the development," he says.

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