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PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release

TERRAPIN GREEN APPROVED AS BIDDEFORD'S FIRST LIMITED CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

On September 3, 2008 the Planning Board unanimously granted final subdivision approval to Southern Coast Development, Inc. for a 22 lot cluster home development for folks “55 and better” off of Pool Street in Biddeford. Terrapin Green will be a limited conservation development utilizing only the front 17.5 acres of land while the remaining 31+ acres of valuable wildlife habitat will be gifted to Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary to be permanently preserved.

Dave and Peggy Ayers, owners of SCDI, developers of Terrapin Green, and founders of BPWS, propose to go even further by encouraging “green” building techniques so that all single family homes will be energy efficient, environmentally healthy, and sustainably built. The custom designed homes will be created in a park-like setting with new owners encouraged to utilize rain garden stormwater techniques, pervious surface materials for walkways, patios, and driveways, as well as yard areas kept in a natural state with the use of wildlife friendly native plantings. The new homes will offer a smaller than average footprint as well as the interior and exterior design features of wider doorways, multilevel counters, lever type door handles, energy star appliances, alternative fuel sources, maintenance free exteriors, and environmentally friendly materials throughout. “Each new homeowner is promised a gift of two rain barrels to encourage water conservation in gardening and outdoor uses”, said Peggy.

While the housing market may still be down, the consumer demand for energy efficient eco-friendly homes keeps going up, according to a recent article on the Smart Growth Network website. “Terrapin Green is positioned to take full advantage of this and, with the use of our cluster design, our well crafted deed restrictions and architectural review guidelines, we will insure this project is carried out as we envision”, added Peggy, “after all, we plan to live there ourselves”.

As land prices rise, creative low-cost conservation methods such as LCD are increasingly necessary to generate preservation results far beyond what would be possible using conventional conservation methods alone. The LCD approach is recognized nationwide as a viable way to combine land development and land conservation while providing much needed protection for valuable natural resources. “Conservation development incorporates a variety of design features to reduce negative impacts and we believe that our LCD approach is an ideal land management technique to use where conservation funding is scarce. Not everyone can afford to give money or land in these difficult economic times, but it helps when we think of

conservation as an investment in our future that continues to pay dividends long after we are gone”, Dave Ayers was quoted as saying. The Ayers adopted that philosophy when planning Terrapin Green and look forward to BPWS carrying out that goal.

So, with this in mind, and inspired by a Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Beginning With Habitat, workshop sponsored by the Biddeford Planning Board back in 2006, the Ayers decided to significantly reduce their development plans and founded Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary, a grassroots 501©3 land trust, with the goal of preserving a minimum of 500 acres in a focus area they defined as bounded by Pool, Granite and West Streets and Guinea Road. They pledged to cooperate with Federal, State and City agencies, and every landowner to achieve this goal. The BPWS focus area, as well as much more land in a corridor extending all of the way from Biddeford down to Kittery, has been designated by the State as significant wildlife habitat, home to the endangered Blanding’s turtle and the threatened spotted turtle, and an area rich in significant vernal pools.

In just two years time, BPWS has preserved 160 acres of significant wildlife habitat through the generosity of local landowners. The Sanctuary only had to purchase 10 of these acres, thus freeing up donated funds to carry on its grassroots mission of conservation, education, recreation and research.

In support of the Ayers’ approach, a research article in BioScience by Jeff Milder, states that a limited conservation development, especially when it is carefully planned and designed, can sometimes increase species richness by increasing the diversity of habitat types available on the landscape. Another article in Conservation Biology concluded that limited conservation development projects can offer a low-impact alternative to conventional development and a low-cost method for protecting land when conventional conservation techniques are too expensive.

Dave and Peggy Ayers welcome the opportunity to assist any responsible landowner interested in the limited conservation development approach. If you are willing to inventory your land’s natural resources, identify the environmentally sensitive areas, use this knowledge to save the portions of your land with the highest conservation value, while responsibly developing only those areas of lower conservation value without encroaching on the more valuable ecologically sensitive areas, then you have their respect and support. And, as witnessed by their success so far, this can truly be a win-win situation for all!

For more details or information on any of the topics discussed here, you can email: terrapingreen@maine.rr.com or bpws@maine.rr.com