



QUEST TO PROTECT LAND FROM TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT BECOMES MODEL FOR WILDERNES VILLAGE RETREATS

Great Camps of the Smokies' Land Stewardship Program Protects the Environment and Cultivates Community Life

LAKE SANTEETLAH, N.C. – Jose Rosado, developer of Great Camps of Smokies, points to a single explanation as to why the wilderness paradise of Graham County, North Carolina, was not sliced and diced into tiny pieces like other popular vacation and second home areas in the Smoky Mountains. It was hidden. Historically difficult to access and tucked into the scenic Great Smoky Mountains of the Southern Appalachian range, Graham County is comprised of 80 percent National Forest and protected land and is home to some of the highest and most picturesque mountains and lakes east of the Mississippi River. In the past few years, as the roadways to the region have vastly improved and home buyers have become more discerning in seeking a true mountain and wilderness experience, this destination is slowly being discovered. However, due to the scarcity of private land, it will never be overdeveloped.

To protect the area from traditional development, Rosado is creating The Great Camps of the Smokies, a collection of high-end wilderness retreats designed with a sustainable and sensitive approach that harmonizes luxury residences with natural settings. This approach honors the distinctive native settings of each locale and adheres to an innovative land stewardship program, incorporating the following practices:

- Designating a minimum of 80 percent of each community to be preserved as common areas for everyone's enjoyment
- Designing an extensive scenic woodland trail system throughout the communities and into the national and state parks surrounding Great Camps
- Clustering homes sensibly into small villages to preserve woodlands
- Adhering to high architectural standards to maintain the integrity of each community
- Gently enhancing the surroundings with low-impact natural landscaping
- The adoption of land stewardship program specifically designed for each property

At the heart of the Great Camps Communities will be the Santeetlah Canoe Club located on Lake Santeetlah, a pristine mountain lake with over 80 miles of shoreline, 90 percent of which is preserved in National Forest. In addition to providing access to the lake, the Canoe Club will provide a wilderness concierge and outfitter that carefully selects and creates an extraordinary combination of lake and wilderness recreation adventures. All residents will be able to enjoy these activities and create experiences that truly define the Great Camps lifestyle.

“Everyone has their own story about how they discovered Graham County and I am blessed to be one of a few who can call it home,” states Rosado. “It is unheard of that an area this pristine, untouched and protected exists so close to major urban centers. My intention is to allow the environment and the land to dictate how development takes place and create an eco-sensitive retreat worthy of the nature that surrounds it.”

Great Camps homeowners’ maintenance-free “backyards” are comprised of mountains, woodlands, rolling meadows, ponds, secret gardens and the placid Lake Santeetlah. In the Great Camps Communities, less than 20 percent of the land is developed for private residences or infrastructure, leaving the remaining portion as natural woodlands and meadows.

“By naturally enhancing the woodlands and maintaining the grounds, we allow nature to dictate the landscape of our communities,” says Rosado, “The result is an imperceptible division between the lots and the forests and the meadows within the dedicated conservation areas. The area not only has an expansive feeling but also invokes an appearance that the development has been in existence for generations.”

The communities’ amenities and common buildings also communicate the same image. For example the social center of Wildsprings is a 70-year old converted tobacco barn and the adjacent organic gardens consisting of raised beds bordered by twisting laurel twigs.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, the most desirable amenity among home buyers is walking trails. Each Great Camps’ community encompasses a system of interconnecting woodland trails, providing picturesque and adventurous routes to neighbors’ houses, common areas and village centers. Additionally, they lead to special discovery locations including meditative areas, secret gardens, hanging bridges as well as paths into the Nantahala National Forest.

Once residents and guests have parked their cars, Great Camps encourages travel by foot, trail cart or horseback. Homes in the woodland areas are required to be designed with a strong sense of arrival oriented towards the forest paths to welcome neighbors. Likewise, homes situated on the meadows have car access to the rear and the main orientation to the paths along the meadows and woodlands.

“In order to leave the lightest footprint possible, we are building very few roads and paving only what is absolutely necessary,” states Rosado. “Our owners will experience the true feeling of going ‘over the river and through the woods to grandmother’s house.’”

In various areas throughout all four Great Camps communities, homes will be clustered together into intimate villages. One example is at Twelve Moons where the land could be developed on two levels of lots overlooking Lake Santeetlah. Rosado is only developing the

upper level and clustering the homes, leaving a large part of the upper level and all of the lower level intact. As a result, homeowners will have spectacular views of Lake Santeetlah while still being surrounded by forests and woodlands.

“When designing a home, we first determine where the window to nature will be and then we create the structure around it,” states Rosado.

In order to preserve surrounding trees, land and natural elements, the size and architectural features of each home is taken into consideration. All homes require the use of natural materials – including reclaimed wood in some cases – and those on the steeper lots mimic treehouse structures. Each blends in the environment, to the point of being invisible at first glance.

Native landscaping is featured throughout the Great Camps communities. Thoughtful usage of existing elements such as fallen trees, logs and stones are incorporated to provide comfortable places to share a thought or a glass of wine and take in the sights and sounds of nature. For example, while residents are venturing through the wilderness at Wildsprings, some of the stepping stones and fallen trees on the creeks will be kept to provide a natural path from one side to another. Some boulders will also be integrated and kept in common spaces by serving as sitting areas or a natural picnic table.

***-Great Camps of the Smokies:
Exclusivity, Escape, Conservation,
Adventure and Serenity-***

Inspired by the wilderness ethic that gave rise to the Great Camps of the Adirondacks in the late 1800s, the Great Camps of the Smokies includes a collection of high-end vacation and second home retreats blending a respect and reverence for nature with careful land planning, thoughtful architectural expression and authentic adventure-filled recreational amenities that showcase the remoteness and beauty of each locale. Surrounded by North Carolina’s Nantahala National Forest, Great Camps’ communities include Santeetlah Lakeside, Wildsprings, Twelve Moons and Blue Winds. Each community will be equipped with a Great Camps Outdoors Counselor who can arrange activities as well as a dedicated concierge service. Amenities include The Santeetlah Canoe Club, which will provide amenities and access to the 3,000-acre Lake Santeetlah, Natural Havens, Organic Community Gardens and Great Meadow at Wildsprings. For more information, please call toll-free 1-866-813-5253.

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