



a Peace of Forest

A quiet wildlife movie, filmed in Maine

By

Lee Ann Szelog & Thomas Mark Szelog

Bear Brook Productions, LLC

Movie trailer [link](#)

Synopsis: Within 70 acres of Maine forest lies a world rarely traversed by humans. This is not a wilderness. There are no grand vistas. This ordinary terrain is unremarkable at first glance. Yet its subdued riches provide crucial habitat for a vast wealth of plants and animals that are often overlooked.

Each day in this secretive forest is a pulse, a rhythm; it is a world born of dynamic wonders; a masterwork of simplistic beauty and peace.

Nature speaks without words, but to hear its voice we must listen, look, and ponder.

This **first feature-length wildlife movie ever filmed and produced in Maine** is a 90-minute, one-of-a-kind cinematic adventure. Viewers will experience the wild, peaceful and mysterious world that is filled with complex relationships and ways of wonder. *A Peace of Forest* celebrates the beauty and intimacy of wildlife in Maine with surprising, tender and exquisite interactions of wildlife during peaceful moments in Maine's natural world. An original story filled with inspiration, viewers of all ages and audiences will be engaged in a fresh, entertaining and informative manner as they observe common and uncommon wildlife and the fragile balance between nature and human culture.

Starring: Bobcat, white-tail deer, American gold finch, coyotes, Cooper's hawk, red squirrels, gray squirrels, northern oriole, chipmunks, rose-breasted grosbeak, porcupine, red-tail hawk, weasel, red-winged black birds, barred owl, mourning doves, mallard ducks, red fox, red-bellied woodpecker, gray fox, wood ducks, ravens, cardinals, pileated woodpeckers, indigo bunting, muskrats, scarlet tanager, red and white breasted nuthatches, chickadees, Canada geese, hare, blue-winged and green-winged teal, turkeys, otters, northern junco, herons, sparrows, eagles, crows, iris, eastern phoebes, ants, vole, saw-whet owl, black ducks, spotted sandpipers, ruffed grouse, hooded merganser ducks, sharp-shinned hawk, hairy woodpecker, beavers, crows, blue jays, snapping turtles, robins, mink, brown-headed cow bird, common grackle, European starling and raccoons.

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Movie trailer [link](#)

a Peace of Forest - Movie Review

One minute and fifty-one seconds into this spectacular private tour of the behind-the-scenes of my beloved Maine, this amazing state we call home, I started weeping. A Peace of Forest was taking me on a tour of a simple life, without McDonald's drive-thrus, and too many people walking the pathways we call nature, with our phones and earbuds, and dogs on leashes, and our frenetic lives following us every minute. I could see the value of mirroring the animals with whom we share this incredible planet. I could see what is lost by the way I live my own life.

Then I settled in, put my chaotic mind on mute, and watched some of the best footage I've had the pleasure of seeing on the screen. During the Q&A after this film, I am sure much of the discussion will be about how the filmmakers captured what eludes us and how we can do it when we are out in nature. Oh, the birds you will see. Oh, the deer you will meet. Oh, the fun you will have watching the play, and the sadness you will feel when the brutal winter takes its toll on an uncomplaining population of animals at its mercy.

At the same time, you will be experiencing falling snow the way we thought it could be, but I certainly have never felt. You will feel rain as if you were out in it for the entire day... naked. You will see movement the way you wish your body could perform. Oh the journey you will have watching this amazing film.

Bring the children. Bring your private self. Do not let a Peace of Forest go unseen. And then get busy making sure everything it brings to us is not lost for future generations.

Christine Merser, screenthoughts.net

a Peace of Forest Sold Out Premiere!

What audiences are saying:

"Absolutely beautiful. Peace and serenity was the ultimate impression one left the theater with."

"Phenomenal film, incredible photography, saw behavior I was never aware of – unbelievable!"

"The most beautiful film I have ever seen, exhibiting our beautiful, natural world."

"A great time to slow down, breathe in and watch what's going on in the world."

"This film is a gift; it is so rich."

"Waves of beauty of magnificent nature!"

"A magnificent escape to a world of peace and tranquility."

Sentiments from an audience member

I was thrilled to be part of the sold out Premiere of the full length nature film, a Peace of Forest by Lee Ann and Thomas Mark Szelog on June 30, 2024 at the Lincoln Theater in Damariscotta Maine. When I saw the trailer I knew this was an important film to watch and talk about with others. I assumed the film would be heavily narrated, like most nature documentaries.

About 30 minutes in, I realized the limited narration was intentional and very unique. I am accustomed to hearing a human explain animal behavior so I had to calm the part of me that went looking for answers and simply take in the inner world of the wildlife, embracing the “not knowing” more fully.

Soon, I found myself immersed in the sounds of nature as the many forest animals chattered, sent out alarm bells, gossiped, and otherwise just made noises that none of us humans could fully comprehend, although we try. The footage was of stunning artistic quality as it captured the intimate, whimsical, and sometimes challenging everyday lives of the wildlife.

This film adds to an essential part of our understanding and appreciation of wildlife. It calls on us to urgently and consistently protect the wildlife, allowing for original habitats to remain intact and undisturbed for generations to come. Our very lives depend on this.

Jennifer R. Huffman

Theater Executive Director Testimonials:

“We were thrilled to host the premiere screening of a Peace of Forest here at the historic Lincoln Theater in Damariscotta, Maine. The sold-out screening, lengthy waiting list, and the many folks gathered in the lobby in the hopes of getting a ticket, were a testament to the excitement surrounding this first-ever feature length wildlife movie, filmed entirely in Maine. The beauty of the filming, the peace of the animals, and the kindness of filmmakers Lee Ann and Tom Szelog, left audiences feeling a sense of connection to their community and to the natural beauty that surrounds us every day, often going unnoticed. Working with Lee Ann and Tom was an absolute pleasure. Their passion and dedication with creating the film and desire to share it with the world is a gift to all those who view it.” **Christina Belknap, Executive Director, Lincoln Theater**

“After a major renovation, a Peace of Forest was the first movie shown in 68 years at the Johnson Hall Opera House. As evident by the audience rousing applause, and participation with the filmmakers’ Q&A after the screening, the uniqueness and high quality of the film, along with the quiet beauty was savored. The filmmakers and producers, Lee Ann and Tom Szelog demonstrate not only their lifelong advocacy and passion for wildlife in this film, but also their utmost professionalism with inspiring others about the mysterious beauty of our natural world. This film may be one of the most beautiful and serene documentaries I have ever seen and is a film you can watch over and over again.” **Michael R. Miclon, Executive/Artistic Director, Johnson Hall Opera House**

Producer's Statement by Thomas Mark Szelog

I aspire to help every person on Earth witness peace in a forest and experience nature's ways of wonders through this film; to see, hear, feel and witness a sanctuary where life coexists peacefully and productively. With minimal narration and no human presence, the movie provides viewers an intimate experience to observe life in the wild, transporting them to a place that stimulates one's senses in a manner that is rare and priceless in this day and age. Experiencing life within the wild will open eyes to nature's miracles, awakening peace within hearts and desires to protect our precious Earth, and all inhabitants, human and wild.

I know, firsthand, nature's nurturing power. I have been on a mission since I was a youngster, although I did not realize it at the time. My entire life has been carefully honed, unbeknownst to me for many years, to be a passionate voice for wildlife.

I did not seek this project. It sought me. At times this all seems like a dream of such magnitude that I cannot always believe it. Why me? Why have I been selected to speak for the animals? Why do I silently shed tears when alone in the forest?

Have you ever been spoken to, but did not hear? For decades the wildlife was speaking to me, but I did not listen. When I began listening I did not comprehend at first. When I, a non-swimmer who almost drowned on two occasions as a youngster, jumped into a brackish bay many years ago to rescue a drowning osprey I started to realize my unique relationship with wildlife. I had risked my own life to save this bird. I was quietly beginning my special bond with animals and Mother Nature. The wildlife was becoming my immediate family.

This first-ever feature-length wildlife movie, filmed and produced in Maine, under wild conditions, features many of my now cherished family members, including, but not limited to white-tail deer, chipmunks, blue jays, bobcat, and coyotes to name a few. Many members of the cast live throughout neighborhoods across Maine, the U.S., and worldwide. These creatures are often ignored or taken for granted, yet as viewers will discover, their daily behavior and antics compete with creatures of the Serengeti or Yellowstone.

Like any family, I must persevere and protect the members of my family, providing them a peaceful home, free from persecution and harassment. I want to share with mankind the behaviors and beauty of these animals and how truly fascinating they are. The wildlife in the film will captivate viewers as they behave naturally in their forest home, undisturbed by mankind. What viewers will witness is how wildlife thrives in forests when they are given the opportunity to live peacefully.

As a member of the human species, I want to remind my fellow humans that we are a species and are just as connected to nature as any wild animal. We know wildlife is suffering, therefore mankind is also suffering in numerous ways. Becoming re-acquainted and aware of nature's power to comfort, relieve stress and slow our pace is just one way we can benefit from nature. **The greater our collective wisdom, the greater our capacity to be visionaries, contributing to the protection of land, clean air, clean water, each other, wildlife, natural beauty and saving our Earth, the home we share with all species.**

I hope the greatest achievement of *a Peace of Forest* will be more peace, love and understanding by mankind towards all life on Earth. The world and every person needs more peace, more hope, and more of nature's restorative benefits.

There is a fair wind blowing in Maine and I am searching for it. Sometimes I feel I am the only human allowed in the brotherhood of wildlife. Sometimes I feel I am the only human in the world of wildlife. I feel I have returned to nature. It is time for all mankind to do so; I want to help every member of the human species return to our roots. It is time we all learn to appreciate our natural world. It is time we do more to preserve the forests, fields, ponds, streams, rivers, and lakes for the benefit of all life.

I had a beautiful dream last night. I dreamed that all of mankind cared for nature and wildlife. I dreamed we cared for all life on this planet. It was a beautiful dream. At this point, it was just a dream, but I strive to make it reality. **I want every person on this planet to view *a Peace of Forest* and experience nature's transformative power and realize that all lives matter.....all life matters.**

We are the generation that may forever be known as the one to destroy the planet. Or, we can be the generation that may forever be known as the one to save the planet. I do not want to be part of the destruction; I want to be part of the protection. Do you? I want this film to create a sense of awareness and urgency that we are not alone; we are not the only species making a living on this planet.

This film represents the views and opinions of Mother Nature. Lee Ann and I present them, as nature presented them to us. We now share them with you so you can form your own views and opinions. This is a place and a story of hope that can only be found in a peace of forest, and only if we protect it.

Lee Ann and I are grateful to have a glimpse into the lives of the wildlife who allow us to share their home in this forest, and document their intimate life cycle which we now share with the hope that you find peace in the forest and inspiration to help protect every living creature.

Nature is filled with inexpressible and glorious joy; I personally and profoundly invite you to experience pure joy by viewing *a Peace of Forest*, and continue to experience it every day for the rest of your life.

Tom



a Peace of Forest ~ A Quiet Film

Intentions

A Peace of Forest has the intention of inspiring a movement towards an informed society where:

- We recognize the importance of protecting all species, human and wild, for the welfare of all species.
- We learn to see, feel, hear, experience and appreciate the peaceful beauty nature provides.
- We acknowledge that we are not the only species making a living on Earth.
- We understand the fragile balance between nature and human culture.
- We experience nature's transformative power and recognize that not only do all lives matter, but all LIFE matters. Every insect, fish, mammal, bird, tree, moss, grass, flower, etc.; all LIFE has a purpose – all LIFE matters.
- We realize that progress is not always building the newest, most high-tech building, equipment, or device. Sometimes progress means preserving those things that do not need improvement, such as nature, wildlife and the Earth itself.
- We become re-acquainted and aware of nature's power to comfort, relieve stress and slow our pace.
- Our collective wisdom, and capacity to be visionaries, contributes to the protection of land, clean air, clean water, each other, wildlife, natural beauty and saving our Earth, the home we share with all species.
- We support connection and compassion as the foundations of a healthy environment.
- We create more hope, peace, love and understanding by mankind towards all life on Earth. The world and every person needs more peace, more hope, and more of nature's restorative benefits.
- We are the generation that saves the Earth, rather than the generation that destroys Earth.
- We recognize the protection of our environment through wildlife and land preservation, along with visionary and innovative initiatives, must be a high priority if any species, human or wild, is to survive.

About the Filmmakers

Thomas Mark Szelog has spent his entire life observing, writing and/or photographing wildlife. He has been a full-time professional photographer for 45 years, and has earned the reputation, and is often described as **“one of Maine’s most renowned wildlife photographers.”** He is a recipient of the **Philip Hyde Award**, presented annually to a photographer who is working to preserve the condition of the natural environment through the art of photography.

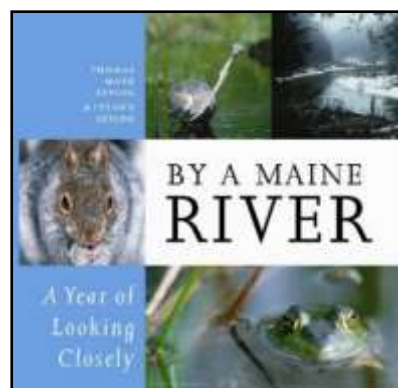
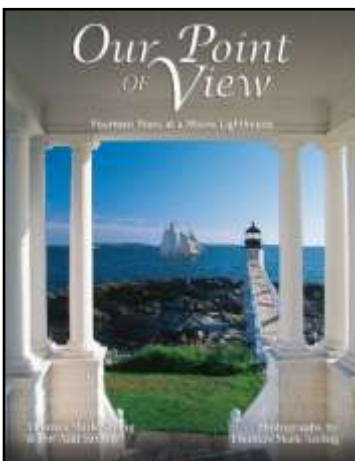
Lee Ann is the Founder of Simply Put, LLC, specializing in presentations she delivers locally, regionally and nationally on human relations and wellness, of our planet and ourselves.

Lee credits Tom for opening her eyes to the natural world; Mother Nature opened her heart. For 36 years Lee has been inspired by Tom’s art as a professional wildlife and nature photographer, and now shares the art of photography and love of the natural world with him. As passionate wildlife advocates and award-winning photographers they work collaboratively, sharing their words and photographs in narrated photography presentations, fine-art exhibits, and books to educate and inspire people about the important role the natural world plays in our lives. Their current endeavor, *a Peace of Forest*, is a feature length movie, allowing viewers to experience nature’s raw beauty and power in this quiet film, filled with complex relationships and ways of wonder.

When Tom and Lee met their mutual interest in lighthouses connected them. When they wed they began their life together living at Marshall Point Lighthouse on the Maine coast, making Lee’s dream of living in a lighthouse, from the time she was 6 years old, a reality. After 14 years, they moved to a log cabin in the Maine woods, fulfilling Tom’s childhood desire.

Living in 2 quintessential Maine homes, Tom and Lee have documented life, human and wild, in 2 books. The first, the multi-award-winning, ***Our Point of View-Fourteen Years at a Maine Lighthouse***, featuring Marshall Point Lighthouse in Port Clyde. The second, ***By a Maine River – A Year of Looking Closely***, explores the natural beauty found in their own backyard.

Our Point of View—Fourteen Years at a Maine Lighthouse, published by Down East Books, has been honored as one of the Best Photo Books by *Shutterbug* magazine and was the winner of Best Maine-Themed Book in the Maine Literary Awards from the Maine Writers and Publishers Association. The book also is a Gold Medal winner from the Independent Publishers Association.



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