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“It’s like the neighborhood we remember growing up in”

Something precious can still be found on an old mining site in Breckenridge, Colorado: the simple cottage life

IMAGINE A BACKYARD of towering peaks covered in powdery snow in winter and rainbows of wildflowers in summer. The front yard is a Victorian-clad main street full of boutique shops, cafés, and restaurants right out of an airline magazine. Sounds like livin’ the dream. And that’s the problem. In many classic ski resort towns—in Colorado and elsewhere—the demand for vacation homes and rentals has spiked the real estate market high enough to force locals to relocate to remote places a long, icy commute away. That leaves the picture-perfect town without its most crucial element: a sense of community.

In Breckenridge, Colorado, the Wellington neighborhood has changed this resort-town trend due to a partnership between a visionary affordable-housing developer and the Breckenridge Town Council. Located on a reclaimed mining site a mile from downtown, the first phase of the neighborhood is composed of 122 Victorian cottages, 98 of which are reserved for people who work 30-plus hours a week in Summit County and who agree to restrictions limiting resale value. Breckenridge’s town manager, Tim Gagen, and >

BYWAYS COTTAGE COMMUNITY



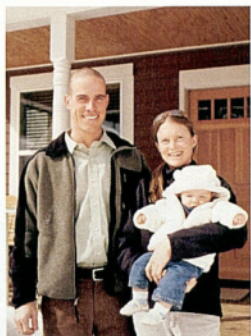
RESTORED TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY buildings, now shops and restaurants, line the streets of downtown Breckenridge, a 20-minute walk from Wellington.



MEET THE DEVELOPER

Neighborhood founder David O'Neil had a vision: Create affordable, attractive mountain housing. "This required working with surrounding property owners and the town to get approved," says David (pictured above). "The biggest challenge was that Breckenridge's Land Use regulations prohibited some of the design elements that give the neighborhood its charm: setbacks [see Glossary, below], alley widths, and road widths, to name a few."

But the difficulties were worth it, he says. "We've created a traditional neighborhood where real people—small business owners, teachers, police officers, lawyers, doctors, stay-at-home moms—want to and can afford to live. If not for Wellington, the city would have lost this important resource."



MEET THE NEIGHBORS

■ **JEFF AND HELEN COSPOLICH**, along with their young daughter, Alina, Siberian husky, Montana, and cat, Milo, have called Wellington home since 2002. Jeff is vice president of Great Western Lodging, a property management company, and Helen is marketing manager for the Town of Breckenridge recreation department.

■ **THEIR COTTAGE:** a cleverly designed farmhouse-style duplex that looks like a single-family home. It's 1,050 square feet, but Helen feels the open floor plan and 9-foot ceilings on the main level make it feel larger than it is. The house also has hardwood floors, views of the mountain, and tons of natural light.

■ **WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD:** "The location, offering close proximity to town, tons of sun, and epic trails right out the door. Also, we appreciate the fact that young locals like ourselves can live in an ideal location, in well-constructed properties," says Jeff.

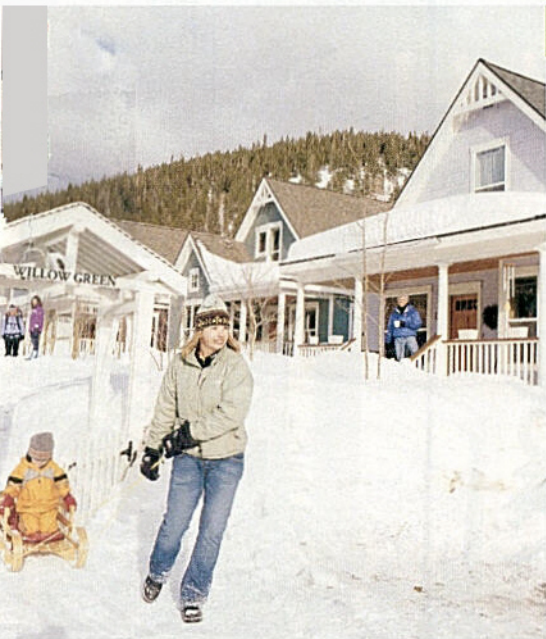
■ **WHERE YOU'D LIKELY FIND THEM:** on the hiking and biking trails around the neighborhood. Helen and Jeff both run and bike, and the trail access from Wellington "can't be beat," says Helen.

his wife, Ann, struggled to find a house until they came across Wellington.

"We looked all around the 'Breck' area for housing options, and those in our price range were less than ideal," says Tim. "But when we checked Wellington, we found the price, design, and neighborhood atmosphere we were looking for. It feels and operates like a real neighborhood that many of us in our forties and fifties remember growing up in."

The neighborhood's design fosters a sense of community: welcoming front porches, streets made for walking, cottages that face one another across common greens (or whites, as is usually the case from October to May). Efficient planning garnered the Environmental Protection Agency's National Award for Smart Growth Achievement in 2002. (See "Smart Growth—An Antidote to Sprawl," at right.) The second phase, which will add as many as 160 more homes, broke ground in spring 2006.

Ty Cortright, a resident whose appendicitis brought three of his neighbors to his door bearing food, explains what he loves best about Wellington: "In some of the communities we've lived in up here, it seems like you may know people's names—but no one brings you cookies. Here, people see and treat one another as neighbors."



THE WAY THEY LIVE

■ **HOMES** Although historic-looking and reminiscent of classic Breckenridge architecture, the cottages are designed for today's lifestyles. "I love my house because it can look gingerbread on the outside but be modern on the inside," says local David Rossi.

■ **RESIDENTS** About 245 people live in Wellington. Most people work in Summit County, but their jobs vary widely: Police officer, ski instructor, district attorney, carpenter, shopkeeper, Internet business owner, and book-keeper number the professionals who live side by side.

■ **HANGOUTS** The greens between homes are popular gathering spots. "We are lucky to live on a green," says Edward Goodman. "It's the social hub of our area. The neighbors and

children all flock to it after work and on weekends, especially in the warmer months. We compare gardening successes, discuss the next title on our book club list, share beverages, and watch our children play."

■ **NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS** Solstice parties are part of the fun in Wellington—one in summer and a chilly one in winter, complete with a visit from Santa. Other events include a community garage sale, a spring cleanup, spontaneous cookouts on the greens, Halloween trick-or-treating with roads closed for the kids, and a mountain bike race that starts here.

■ **CLOSE BY** Trail-filled Arapahoe National Forest adjoins Wellington, offering folks a wealth of recreational opportunities just minutes from their

doorstep. "Activities I do right from the neighborhood are road biking, cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, and hiking," explains Tim Gagen. If residents desire more urban outings, downtown Breckenridge is only a 20-minute walk and offers numerous restaurants and fun shops, many in restored and brightly painted Victorians.

■ **THAT EXTRA SOMETHING** A bus whisks residents from a Wellington bus stop to the slopes of Breckenridge, adjoining towns Frisco and Silverthorne, and nearby ski resort Keystone. Even when they're taking a break from the slopes, residents get to enjoy them: The neighborhood has million-dollar views of Breckenridge Peaks 7 and 8. ■

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SMART GROWTH—AN ANTIDOTE TO SPRAWL

Smart Growth is really self-explanatory. It involves thinking beyond square footage, turnaround time, and the cookie-cutter houses that form sprawling suburbs. Smart Growth means walkability, mixed land use, clever reuse of existing developments (especially in urban centers), diverse housing options for an array of economic levels, land preservation, community collaboration, and public transportation access. All of these principles foster the ultimate goal, a sense of place. To learn more, go to smartgrowth.org or smartgrowthamerica.com.

BYWAYS COTTAGE COMMUNITY

Community profile: Wellington, Colorado

■ **WHERE:** 5 minutes by car from downtown Breckenridge

■ **MEDIAN HOUSE PRICE:** \$295K is the median price for deed-restricted homes and \$479K for market homes in Wellington. (In Breckenridge, \$889K is the average sale price for a single-family home.)

■ **HOME SIZE RANGE:** 1,000 to 1,962 square feet

■ **COTTAGE TWIST:** Every winter, resident Addison Cummings and daughters Kenady and Carly construct a snow chute between their house and the neighbor's, which is used to rip-roaring effect by the community's kids on their sleds.



ANNETTA FRIES AND HER BOYS head out from their 3-bedroom, 2-bath cottage on Huckleberry Green to play. **BRECKENRIDGE MOUNTAIN** (opposite) rises into the heavens, reminding Wellington residents of their good fortune.