

Finding Common Ground

December, 2020

UP FRONT

Consult the Calendar for information and to RSVP!

- The **Simpler Living: Earth Skills Sunday** events are all about connection with nature—within and without. On Sunday, December 20, we will focus on cordage—making rope out of natural fibers. Meet you at the new barn!
- **Happy Hangout Wednesdays** start weekly on December 16th from 7-8pm. Make yourselves comfortable and Zoom in for conversation, laughter, and connection.

NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Membership & Marketing: On Sunday, November 8, a group of Common Ground members gathered under our grandmother oak tree (with masks and social distancing, of course) to celebrate the advancement of several people to higher levels of membership: Margaret Anderson to Associate, and Lisa Berley, Randy Dodd, and Marilyn Grubbs to Engaged. Guests affirmed the skills and contributions of each of the advancing members, who then symbolically “crossed the river” and tied a ribbon around the oak (13 feet in diameter!). And no Common Ground event is complete without safely sharing food and drink. Ahhh...such a charmed evening. Stay tuned to hear about our next advancement celebration—for you, perhaps?

Land Stewardship: The fall garden harvest has been wonderful, with row covers and tunnels appearing to protect the crops. Our meetings, like the land itself, are having a fruitful and abundant quality as 2020 winds down, with a focus on a rich exploration about what the future offers. The barn complex continues to be front and center. Here are the big **YAHOOs** for the month: finishing work on the bathhouse, prepping for an outdoor wash station, placing rough

COMMON GROUND CALENDAR



Gumby beholds a budding tracker on Earth Skills Sunday (photo by Maria) Banner above: Here comes the sun! (photo—and beautiful barn mural) by Margret)

GET INVOLVED!

*Contact any of the Circle leaders listed below—they'll be happy to talk with you! **Note: all events are open to everyone** unless otherwise indicated. **Most (but not all!) Circle meetings are happening via Zoom.** Observers are encouraged and **RSVP is essential!***

PLANNING, DESIGN, & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

Wednesday, November 4, 6:30-8:00pm, via Zoom

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

Observers are always welcome, with RSVP

cut timber siding on the second story, and further adorning the walls with murals, primer, and color. Many kudos to Anthony, George, Paul, and to all who have raised a hammer or a brush for bringing the project down the home stretch. This area is already becoming the community 'hub' we've all envisioned!



George, Anthony, and Paul in action (photo by Randy)

A thankful day: A cozy group of us convened at the barn for our Gratitude & Goodies Gathering. With ample food and a fire circle to warm and cheer us, we opened by sharing our favorite experiences about creating and appreciating this new community 'hub.' Speaking of appreciation, Margret inducted George into the "Order of the Hammer" with a hand-made face mask in recognition of his tireless service and iron-firm safety commitment for all concerned. Thanks to Hope and Margaret for planning this event and to all who contributed yummy food & friendship.



Thank you George! (photo by Margaret)

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

Sunday, December 6, 3:30pm on the land

Observers and prospective members are welcome

RSVP to Randy about participating:

doddDOTrandyATgmailDOTcom

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION CIRCLE

Membership & Marketing Circle

Mondays, 6:30-7:30pm, weekly

Contact Lisa to sign up and receive a link:

iberley@yahoo.com

Free of charge, & donations requested once-a-month

MEET & GREET

Membership & Marketing Circle

Wednesday, December 9, 7:00-8:15pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa for a link: iberley@yahoo.com

This is designed for people who have recently heard about us and for those who want to meet other new members. We'll get to know each other and review some history and basics about CGEV. Interested? Let's hang out!

PLANNING, DESIGN, & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

Sunday, December 13, 4:30-6pm via Zoom

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

Observers are always welcome, with RSVP

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 15, 4:00pm – 6:00pm via Zoom

RSVP to Hope: hopematrix@fastmail.com

You are welcome to observe! If this time is difficult for you, please contact Maria: 919-444-1193

HAPPY HANGOUT WEDNESDAYS

Sponsored by Membership & Marketing

Wednesdays, Dec 16, 23, 30, 7-8 pm

RSVP to Ren for a recurring Zoom link:

renenberg.cge@gmail.com

Governance & Training: Simpler Living: Earth Skills Sunday with Gumby Montgomery offered an exciting and tantalizing glimpse into the art of tracking. A dozen adults and children were invited to train all of their senses on noticing disturbances and divining the stories they tell. Is that an owl's talon print in the mud just ahead of rabbit paw prints (and did the rabbit get away)? What about that scat with persimmon seeds where the paths cross...oh yes, fox tracks nearby... are they connected? It was riveting and the time flew by. The moral of the story? EVERYTHING is a track! Come join us for the next **Earth Skills Sunday on December 20** where we will gather in the barn to experience making cordage out of natural fibers.



Photogenic fox scat with tell-tale persimmon seeds

Planning, Design & Development: PDD continues our **exploration of primary building materials**, with increasing emphasis on earthen materials. We continue to hope that we may be able to use Hempcrete as one main option, though so far supply issues have prevented us from even experimenting with it. An upcoming consult with local earth-building expert Greg Allen should bring us more clarity on this and other issues. A **definite site layout** establishing the placement and size of all buildings needs to be laid out for the whole village, even if we end up building it in phases. Site layout in turn requires us to decide on Unit Mix: how many of which kind of units we will build... which in turn relates partly to the ownership structure we finally embrace. PDD's aim is to advance our piece of this work and make ourselves as ready as possible to move into site engineering once the basic financial decisions are taken and funds become available. **Speaking of consults**, we are also in the middle of an extended consultation with the NC Clean Energy Technology Center out of NCSU to help us determine the configuration of photovoltaic arrays, which is also critical to site planning.

Financial & Legal: November brought progress on several fronts, administratively, financially and

The **NEW Land, Love, and Laughter group** invites you to the first in a series of Zoom social events. Join in every Wednesday for an hour of unstructured socializing. Relax, eat/drink, bring your latest knitting or art project, but most importantly bring you! All members, visitors and friends are welcome.

FINANCIAL & LEGAL CIRCLE

Thursday, December 17, 6:30-9:00pm, via Zoom

RSVP to Paul for a link: voss@hawkweed.net

Observers are welcome with RSVP. We encourage members to join in the work of this Circle. There are many important and exciting activities needing assistance so we encourage you to think about permanently joining in the work of our Circle. Enthusiasm is the only requirement. No need for deep background in either law or finance—just the desire to learn and contribute as you are able.

A FRESH TAKE ON CGEV!

Membership & Marketing Circle

Saturday, December 19, 4:00-5:30pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: iberley@yahoo.com

Want an up-to-date overview of where CGEV is now, what's next, and how you can get involved and contribute? Hear from other members active in our Circles? This session is for YOU!



The red, golden, and white beet parade

change

MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING CIRCLE

Saturday, December 19, 6:30-9:00pm via Zoom

RSVP to Marilyn: marilyngrubbs@gmail.com

To observe, contact Marilyn at least two days before the date to receive the Zoom link, agenda, and any other documents. In January, we will return to the

legally. We have established a productive working relationship with our new attorney and bookkeeper, and we have pushed forward aggressively on our home ownership model and financing. Progress was shared with the General Circle, and is available to all members in our meeting minutes, posted to our Only Office data system.



Sundown at the pond (photo by Margaret)

IN THE KNOW...

Have you read/seen/heard something inspiring lately that you'd like to share with the community? Please send in your recommendations to [Hope](#).

Kira recommends *My Octopus Teacher*, an uplifting documentary with beauty, amazement, and soul. Find it on Netflix or stream it for free [here](#).

LOCAL EVENTS TO EXPAND OUR SOCIAL & CULTURAL HORIZONS

Is something happening that you want our members to know about? Please send your listing to Hope by the 25th of each month: hopenatrix@fastmail.com

Racial Equity Institute Training

Sponsored by Organizing Against Racism (OAR)
We **strongly recommend** these 2-day trainings as a way to begin a shared conversation about racism and social justice at Common Ground Ecovillage. Check OARalliance.org for details.

Foundation for Intentional Communities Events December 3, 4-5pm EST

Interview with Crystal Farmer, author of *The Token: Common Sense Ideas for Increasing Diversity in your Organization*

second Thursday of the month for our main meeting and may be adding a second meeting as well.

SIMPLER LIVING: EARTH SKILLS SUNDAYS

Cordage with Gumby Montgomery

Sponsored by Governance & Training Circle

Sunday, December 20, 11:00am - 1:00pm

RSVP to Maria is a must: mariasilviapini@gmail.com

*Join us as we learn and practice techniques for **making rope or cordage out of plant fibers**, from the leaves of some plants, the inner bark of others, and the outer bark of still others. Our guide, Gumby Montgomery, will teach us the reverse wrap, the double reverse wrap, splicing and, time permitting, we may even get into some pleat braiding. Once we learn this method, we can apply it to many materials (Gumby enjoys making rope out of his paper straw wrappers in restaurants while awaiting his food), and use that rope to make bow strings, fishing line, sandals, or even a hammock—your imagination is the only limit! **Cash contributions and a barter gift for our guide are required**, although no one will be turned down due to lack of funds. Due to COVID restrictions of physical distance this event is limited to 15 people. **RSVP NOW***



Falling into winter (photo by Margret)

change

GENERAL CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 22, 7:00-9:15pm, via Zoom

RSVP to Bailey: baileygirly@gmail.com

We welcome observers. RSVP two days in advance to receive the agenda, Zoom link, and documents

December 9, 4-6pm EST

Returning to the Land: BIPOC in Conversation About Community and Self-Determination

[Click here](#) for all event details

ForestHer workshop—it's FREE

December 10, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Human-Wildlife Interactions Identifying Wildlife: Tracks, Markings, Scat. [Register here](#)

Sponsored by nine NC conservation organizations

Compassionate Connection (aka Non-Violent Communication or NVC): We will not meet in December, but mark your calendar for the fourth Wednesday in January (the 27th), 7:00 - 8:30 pm, via Zoom. This is the "Chapel Hill" NVC practice group, held remotely until further notice. Led by Marilyn Grubbs and Lila Rosa. For information or to sign up, email Marilyn at marilyngrubbs@gmail.com.



In the gloaming (photo by Margaret)

PLANNING, DESIGN, & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

Wednesday, December 23, 6:30-8pm via Zoom

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

Observers are always welcome, with RSVP



Paul applies linseed oil to the slash siding



A different point of view (photo and mural by Margret)