

Finding Common Ground

February, 2022

Up Front



Crystal Byrd Farmer joins us again (!) to offer a diversity training with additional aspects that are specifically relevant for our community. The training will focus on practical situations in community that relate to diversity.

★**ALL members are STRONGLY encouraged to come to this session,**★ on Saturday, February 12, 4-6pm, via Zoom. See the calendar description and [RSVP](#) for a link.

Update on Housing Reservations: As this calendar goes to press, we're delighted to report that we have received **28 housing reservations**. The list of people planning to live in the CGEV village is now being assembled. If you're planning (or even thinking about) someday calling Common Ground Village your home, NOW is the time to get your housing reservation (and refundable deposit of \$500) sent in. **There's still time, but the available slots are being nabbed up quickly.** Please return your reservation agreement and deposit as soon as you can. Questions can be addressed to Paul at voss@hawkweed.net. [Click here](#) for the Reservation Agreement and [click here](#) for the FAQ.



The trailcam captures a turkey by day and coyote by night.

CIRCLE NEWS

General Circle (GC): About 30 members attended the Last Saturday **BIG GC** meeting where we laid out each Circle's priorities and plans for 2022. It was heartening to behold all the excitement, energy, and initiatives that

COMMON GROUND CALENDAR



Valiant volunteers show up for a mid-winter harvest—L-R: Lara Neil, Harper, Caroline, & Amy (photo by Doug)

Banner above: Canid creature leaves tracks in the snow (Photo by Jess)

GET INVOLVED

- ♦ *Contact any of the Circle leaders listed below—they'll be happy to talk with you! **All events are open to everyone unless otherwise indicated, and you must RSVP!***
 - ♦ *Most (but not all) Circle meetings are happening via Zoom. For in-person events, masks are recommended for all and required for those who are not vaccinated.*
 - ♦ **Google Calendar Link:** <https://tinyurl.com/CGEV-Calendar>
- To add an event, email Ren at ren.enberg2@gmail.com with "Google Calendar Request" in the subject line. Thanks, Ren!*

COMMUNITY EVENTS SNAPSHOT

- ♦ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group,** Every Monday, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- ♦ **Open House!** February 5, 11-1pm
- ♦ **Heart Sharing Circle,** February 11, 7-9pm
- ♦ **★ Crystal Byrd Farmer Diversity Training ★** Saturday, February 12, 4-6pm
- ♦ **Fresh Take Info Session,** February 19, 4-5:30pm
- ♦ **Earth Connection Sundays—The Trees of Common Ground,** February 20, 12-3pm
- ♦ **Last Saturday—Bylaws, Take 2,** February 26, 3-5pm
- ♦ **Take a Hike!** February 27, time & place TBA

emerged. More than ever, we need to **focus and coordinate our efforts** to be ready to succeed with our loan application and build the village! Intrigued? Your gifts and skills are most welcome and every bit counts. **Showing up and connecting with members is the first step**, and this Calendar is your map! *(If you have access to OnlyOffice, [click here](#) to view the documents that each Circle presented. If you are a member and do not have access, contact [Hope](#).)*

Governance & Training Circle: G&T members will be contacting ALL NEW MEMBERS both to **sign up for OnlyOffice training** and to participate in a new approach to governance training, the [Empowered Learning Circle](#). These self-directed groups will learn excellent content about sociocracy AND have the opportunity to practice what they learn. We're looking forward to working with all of you towards creating a governance-literate community!



The intrepid "Take a Hike" group shares warm smiles on a frigid day.

Marketing & Promotion: After a slow December, we are picking up speed and getting a lot done. Production of the new video for the website is proceeding. We've been shepherding along website updates as circles provide them and getting to test new processes for getting this done efficiently. New member bios are going up regularly so do check that out every now and then. With the help of several wonderful contributors, the messaging and branding work is completed at long last. This means we're ready to swing open a lot of doors and start using it in ads and other promotional channels. This is very exciting! Priorities for 2022 are clear and we're starting to offer various tasks to interested volunteers to help us achieve them. If you are interested in outreach, networking, writing articles, or marketing in general, we need you now! Expect invitations to join our newly formed SubCircles in the near future. To volunteer, contact renenberg.cge@gmail.com



Paul & Jeffry join with neighbor, Ken Woods, to take down a huge maple tree trunk which fell in a winter storm.

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

- Tuesday, February 1, 6:30-8:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday, February 15, 6-7pm via Zoom

RSVP to Hope: hopenatrix@fastmail.com

We're seeking new members, particularly those interested in administration, training, & facilitation.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

- Friday, February 4, 3-5pm via Zoom
- Friday, February 18, 3-5pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

We warmly welcome visitors!

OPEN HOUSE!

Membership Circle

Saturday, February 5, 11am-1pm (rain date Feb. 6)

RSVP to welcome@commonground.eco for directions and questions

The best way to connect with Common Ground Ecovillage is to come for a visit. Let us share the beauty of the land, the thriving farm, the community-built barn and the vision and plans for the residential community. Come for a tour; talk with members; take home the latest information. We welcome you to consider Common Ground as your next home!



Jeffry sizes up the maple trunk and plans the final take-down



A noble buck's remains; River otters cavorting in the wetland

Land Stewardship Circle

Even though January is “the dead” of winter, both death and life were apparent on the land. ♦The skull of a buck was found in the woods not too far from the pavilion. Doug’s crops took a hit from the winter storm that moved through, check out [this video](#) for details. While some two-leggeds spent time hunkered down or headed south, some braved the chilly temperatures to keep the garden going or otherwise enjoy this special place. ♦ One notable accomplishment was the more or less completion of a new woodshed to protect the wood on its way to becoming biochar. Thanks to Randy for being the instigator and head honcho and to Gonzalo, Bob, Jeffry, Kathleen, Michelle, Jess, Doug, Anthony, and Paul for support in many ways. There was a well-attended biochar kiln firing as well on the 23rd that provided a little snapshot into the world of biochar and also a warm place for newer and longer-term members and guests to hang out.



Doug's winter whimsy; Altar beauty from the Imbolc celebration

♦ There was a good deal going on behind the scenes in the Land Stewardship realm to support all the planning and preparation for ecovillage emergence while also continuing with the many and varied other emerging initiatives. A few highlights

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 6:30-7:30pm

This Group is reading My Grandmother’s Hands, by Resmaa Menakem. Newcomers are welcome. To join & receive a Zoom link, contact [Lisa](#):

welcome@commonground.eco

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

- Tuesday, February 8, 7pm via Zoom
- Tuesday, February 22, 7pm (tentative)

RSVP to Randy: dodd.randy@gmail.com

Be sure to RSVP as meeting details may change!

Interested in joining? Contact Randy.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

- Wednesday, February 9, 6:30-8:30pm
- Sunday, February 20, 4-6pm

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

All meetings are via Zoom. We are seeking new members and observers are very welcome.



MARKETING & PROMOTION CIRCLE

- Every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom
- 3rd Wednesday: website work meeting

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

Please to learn if we'll be having a policy or a work meeting (specific projects). All are welcome to observe policy meetings and participate in work meetings. Seeking creatives and those with interest in outreach, visibility and marketing to share this essential and increasingly urgent work.

HEART SHARING CIRCLE

Membership Circle

Friday, February 11, 7-9pm via Zoom

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

December's facilitator is Kathleen Biernat. This is an opportunity to get to know other members on a much

included: collaboration with P&D and our Engineers; supporting the articulation of 2022 priorities; the coyotes on the land project; and, generally speaking, lots of emails, phone calls, Zooms, and musings about how we are and want to inhabit and relate to this precious land.

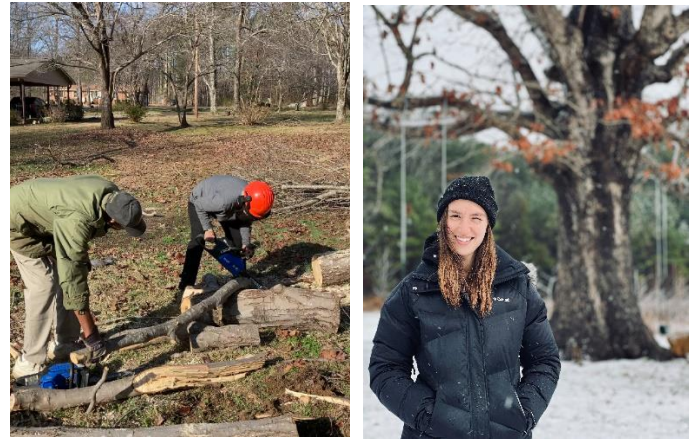
Membership Circle: January has flown by! At the top of the month 40 members came together to talk about what we mean by living in justice in our community. The rich list of ideas generated in the workshop will serve as a launching pad for future action. More to come. A second workshop, **Diversity Training**, will take place on February 12th. The details are below. ♦ Building our membership is central to the work of this circle. Towards that end, we are focused on revising the membership advancement process and also expanding the Buddy Program for visiting and exploratory members. Beginning in February we are reaching out to all exploratory-through-engaged members to **volunteer to be a Buddy** to a new visiting member. This is a rewarding way to contribute to the growth of our membership.



The tip of the beaver lodge atop the ice

♦ It has been exciting to see, in December and January, a significant increase in the interest of younger couples and families. It is also rewarding to note that 4 people advanced in membership levels in January and others are in the process for February. ♦ A new sub-circle is in the forming stage called **HeartWeavers** which focuses on cultivating and tending to relationships with each other and with the earth—all of which is at the heart of our community. This sub-circle will take on some of the work of the main Membership Circle with further depth and originality.

deeper level as we practice both compassion and vulnerability. We will offer question prompts to help us get started, and we also share whatever is alive for us in this warm and accepting environment. If you thirst for genuine connection, join us when you can.



Hope & Mr. Woods cut up maple branches; Michelle enjoys the snowfall (photos by Paul and Jess)

DIVERSITY TRAINING WORKSHOP, facilitated by CRYSTAL BYRD FARMER

Membership Circle

Saturday, February 12, 4-6pm, via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco (not needed if you have already RSVP'd via a poll)

*This workshop will provide standard diversity training with additional aspects that are specifically relevant for our community. The training will focus on practical situations in community that relate to diversity. It will be facilitated by [Crystal Byrd Farmer](#), a leader in diversity and equity training for intentional communities across the country. A recording will be available for those who cannot attend. **ALL member voices are important in this process—please participate if at all possible!***

GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, February 13, 4-6pm
- Thursday, February 24, 6:00-8:00pm

RSVP to Bailey: cgev.generalcircle@gmail.com

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

FRESH TAKE: An in-depth info session

Membership Circle

Saturday, February 19, 4-5:30pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

Planning & Development Circle: P&D continues charging along with extensive design work both for the village site and the residences and Common House. Our engineers have produced a draft village plan providing for overall site grading, swales, paths, and roads, along with house and Common House siting, as well as parking. We are working it through with them along with community members with expertise in this area and in relation to the farm edges and interface with the village. Though of necessity we have to work around some constraints and limits, there are also some exciting changes and improvements to the site plan shortly to be unveiled!



Winter-bare trees surround the pond (photo by Jess)

♦ On the architecture side, we are finalizing schematic designs for the two new unit types we have developed since working out our initial portfolio. To stay current, we recommend checking out [the “Living Options”](#) page on the website. ♦Up next: Common House, where we also have some exciting changes in process. Expect design developments to be shared with General Circle and the community soon. ♦On the financial and legal side, we continue to manage and provide for the loan application process for the multi-million-dollar loan we need to build the village. Weekly phone meetings with our Centennial Mortgage team are walking us through the many requirements to achieve a loan guarantee through HUD. It’s a lot of work. A push now is to **finalize the Co-op Bylaws by early March.** ♦Overall, we are doing our best to communicate clearly with members about the state of planning and the staging of financial. Schedules and plans also are shifting, though... so please stay tuned, ask if crucial matters are confusing, let us know if you have abilities to share that may help (for example, in legal and financial matters, building materials, etc.) ... and begin to feel it... we’re off the local now and on the express train!

Perfect for people exploring CGEV, this “CGEV 101” session includes an up-to-date overview of where we are now, what’s next, and how you can get involved and contribute. You’ll hear from other members and have a chance to ask questions. It’s a great way learn a lot, fast!

EARTH CONNECTION SUNDAYS

The Trees of Common Ground, Part 1

Formerly Simpler Living: Earth Skills Sundays

Governance & Training Circle

Sunday, February 20, 12-2pm on the land

RSVP to Hope: hopematrix@fastmail.com

CGEV is gifted with about 70 acres of forest. But which tree species are present and how can we learn to know and relate to them? In February, we’ll look at ways to identify trees before they leaf out. On Sunday, March 20, we’ll marvel at the tender leaves emerging from winter’s buds, adding this dimension to qualities we’ve become familiar with. Hope will offer what she can. You’ll co-create this event by bringing your own curiosity and knowledge. Please RSVP, as this event is weather dependent.

HEARTWEAVERS

A forming SubCircle of Membership

- Sunday, February 20, 3-4:30pm
- Sunday, March 13, 3-4:30pm

RSVP to Theresa: tjensen1952@gmail.com, 541-778-8273. *Via Zoom or in-person at the Nest in Mebane.*



Snow falling on Red Cedar



Smooth Alder tree branches over the pond (photo by Jess)

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Is there something you are offering, or something you've heard about, that you want the community to know about? If so, contact Hope by the 25th of each month: hopematrix@fastmail.com

From Jessica Cudney & Michelle Rozek:

Feb. 1: [Lunar Wisdom Circle: New Moon Ritual](#), 7- 8pm

Feb. 16: [Lunar Wisdom Circle: Full Moon Ritual](#), 7- 8pm

Gather in community every New and Full Moon to develop a committed eco-spiritual practice that strengthens your relationship to nature's cycles. Click on the links above to register.

From Melanie Yukov:

Melanie Yukov from Root 2 Rise Wellness will be a guest on *What's the Tea* Podcast, airing on February 14. She'll be speaking about all things Ayurveda, Energy Medicine, and Herbal Medicine for holistic healing on all levels. You can listen on spotify!



Trailcam snaps: (above) Great Blue Heron strolling on the McGowan Creek beach; Hawk swoops in for a wetland landing

LAST SATURDAY—Bylaws, Take Two

Planning & Development Circle

Saturday, February 26, 3-5pm

We'll be taking another look at bylaws for Common Ground. Why should you come? If you plan on living in the village, the Bylaws is one of the key legal documents you'll be asked to abide by. Come and get your questions answered.

TAKE A HIKE!

Membership Circle.

Sunday, February 27, time and place TBA

RSVP to Margaret is essential: bktitle@gmail.com

Enjoy the outdoors and get to know other CGer's and friends. Check the [google calendar](#) for place and time or email Margaret.



Sunshine gleams on the center stone circle (photo by Jess)

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: hopematrix@fastmail.com

Racial Equity Institute Training

We strongly recommend these 2-day virtual trainings as a way to begin a shared conversation about racism and social justice at Common Ground Ecovillage. [Click here](#) for information and to register.

Foundation for Intentional Community Resources

FIC offers many short events and continuing courses that are highly relevant to our work at CGEV. Visit this website (<https://www.ic.org/learn/>) to see the array of intriguing options for the months to come.

