



Finding Common Ground

December, 2022

UP FRONT

You'll see fewer meetings and events posted in this issue. Wonder why? We're taking a pause for a variety of reasons to review, evaluate, and envision ways forward in the wake of the escalating costs and interest rates that are challenging the viability of current plans. It's a time to pool our resources, creativity, wisdom, and heartfelt imaginings. And with winter upon us, we're choosing to be in sync with the season to step back, breathe, and open space for what wants to happen next.

What's most important now is to come together and deepen our connections with one another. You'll find many ways to stay engaged in ways that feed your body, mind, and spirit. Read on...

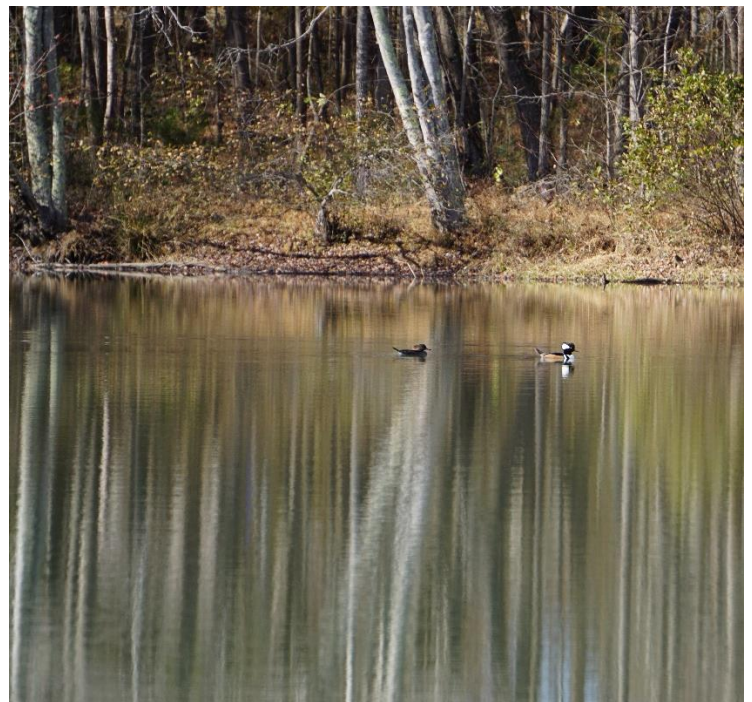


Looking up at the treetops—what will they reveal? (photo: Shells)

CIRCLE NEWS

Overall: On November 19, with the assistance of the P&D Circle and part-time Development Manager, Robyn

MEETINGS & EVENTS



If you squint, you'll see fantastically crowned [hooded merganser ducks](#) taking a leisurely swim in the pond. (photo by Michelle)

Banner: Winterberry holly brightens the muted winter landscape

GET INVOLVED

- ♦ **All events are open to everyone** unless otherwise indicated, and **you must RSVP** for details, links, and last-minute changes.
 - ♦ **COVID Safety:** Note guidelines provided in event announcements
 - ♦ **Accessibility:** At this stage in our development, terrain is unpaved & uneven, & restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
 - ♦ **Google Calendar Link:** <https://tinyurl.com/CGEV-Calendar>
- To add/change an event, email Ren at ren.enberg2@gmail.com

COMMUNITY EVENTS SNAPSHOT

Scroll down to the **"All About Events"** section below for details.

- ♦ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group,**
Every Monday, 7-8pm

Heeks, some 30+ Common Ground members were introduced to a set of provisionally revised cost estimates necessary to actualize our shared dream...or even possibly a downsized version of that dream. Due to forces beyond our control (skyrocketing building costs and interest rates) the new estimates were significantly higher than those we've been using. A general sense quickly emerged that this should be a signal to step back and reevaluate virtually all aspects of what we're attempting to do. What might we do differently to bring costs down? What can we do without? How can we generate more income needed to proceed with architectural design and site engineering? What other forms of income (e.g., grants, low-interest loans, subsidies, etc.) have we been overlooking?

We have an enormously creative and resourceful group of members capable of imaginatively addressing these questions. What's particularly fascinating is that the group of folks who heard the disappointing news on the 19th didn't panic. No Zoom squares suddenly went blank. Folks began quickly to offer their thoughts and ideas. It's abundantly clear that our remarkably resilient members (especially those who are relatively new to the community) are ready to roll up sleeves and get to work. Clearly, now is the time to mobilize ourselves (each and every one of us!) to help CGEV possibly reconfigure both the planning process itself, and the ultimate goals we set for a reimagined community (in every aspect of our community life). All Circles are dedicating themselves to this task, and they will need your help. Together we can do it!



Beech trees hold onto their leaves all winter long (photo by Michelle)

So, please, today: remind yourself what brought you to this project. What aspects most drew you to it? What have you identified as something decided years ago, by others, that you've often thought wasn't actually such a great idea? We've all had those thoughts. But you

- ♦ **Open House:** None scheduled. Contact Lisa to request a tour of the land: iberley@yahoo.com
- ♦ **Heart Share,** December 9, 7-9pm
- ♦ **Second Saturday Potluck,** December 10, 5:30-7pm. Come any time after 4pm to socialize.
- ♦ **Trail Tending Workday,** December 18, 9-11am
- ♦ **New Year's Day Hike,** January 1, 10:30am



Students from Elon University unveil the results of their engagement with the CGEV forest in an interactive and creative way (photo: Shells)

CIRCLE MEETINGS DIGEST

All Circles are welcoming new members. Visitors are encouraged to attend **with RSVP in advance.** Contact the leaders listed—they'll be glad to talk with you!

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE (MC)

- Fridays, December 2 & 16 (tentative), 1-3pm, Zoom

RSVP to Lisa with subject "Membership Circle":
welcom@commonground.eco

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

- Thursday, December 8, 7-9pm, Zoom
- RSVP to Becky with G&T in the subject line:**
blaskody@gmail.com

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

- Wednesdays December 7 & 21, 2-4pm, Zoom
- RSVP to Anthony:** weston@elon.edu

P&D-Affordable Housing Task Group

- Wednesdays, December 7 & 14, 6-7:30pm, Zoom
- RSVP to Theresa with "RSVP Aff Housing" in subject line:** tjensen1952@gmail.com

know what? Right now, there's a brief window of time to bring up those not-so-great ideas. We want to hear it. Seize this opportunity to lend your creative imagination to problems that are calling out for your help. To do that, watch for email invitations (from P&D and other circles) in the coming days and weeks seeking your input and full participation.

Membership: As the Membership Circle reflects on its work of the past year and sets priorities for 2023, we are grateful that we rest on a solid foundation. We are honest with each other, we ask each other for support when we need it, and we feel that we have each other's backs. We are a team that has happily just gotten a little bit larger with the recent addition of Shells. Thank you Shells for bringing enthusiasm and a wealth of skills!

♦ In December, we will focus on bringing members along who are ready to advance in the process. We'll take a break from some of the usual monthly activities (such as the Open House and Fresh Take) and turn our attention to creating simple ways for the community to get together. Be on the lookout for pop-up social activities!

♦ The Earth Connection Sunday hosted by the HeartWeavers Subcircle drew a crowd eager to learn about our trees, despite the chilly temperatures. EB and Hope meandered through the Black Walnut grove and into the woods, sharing stories and inviting reflections about specific species. Thanks to Doug for organizing this event!



Amazing asters, late blooming and dazzling (photo: Michelle)

Planning & Development:

Common Ground may be entering a time of "pause", and a taking of breath at the time of great seasonal turning... but P&D's dance card is still full of the usual tasks. We are on track to re-submit our loan pre-application very shortly, in the best form

GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, December 18, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom
RSVP to Hope with "GC" in the subject line, 2 days in advance for materials: hopenatrix@fastmail.com



Finding warmth on a chilly day – inside and out (photos by Shells)

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

There are no meetings scheduled for LSC and its subcircles in December at present. For information about this Circle, contact Nell: hmkriesberg@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

There are no meetings scheduled for CommC and its Subcircles in December. For information about this Circle, contact Quai: quaifranklin@gmail.com

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 7-8pm, Zoom.

To join, contact Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

This Group is reading a new book: The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present, by David Treuer

HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Circle

Friday, December 10, 7-9pm, Zoom.

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

Facilitator: Kathleen Biernat. Come and get to know other members on a much deeper level as we practice both compassion and vulnerability. We will offer

we can give it, not because we think we have fully realistic numbers at this time, but to keep the process going while enlisting the creative thinking and support networks of Centennial Mortgage, our loan originator. In the meantime we continue to work closely with Robyn Heeks, our development manager, to both reduce projected costs and locate further potential sources of support, as well as to configure or reconfigure all of our plans in the most advantageous way possible. All of us realize that this work is at the forefront of community needs, and are hoping to have a significantly clearer picture early in 2023.

- ♦ Other projects include working toward a new schematic design for the Common House.
- ♦ In circle work, we are delighted to welcome Shells as a new member of P&D. Bob McCulley has stepped off, taking with him so many thanks for the devotion and wisdom he brought to the work!



A good crowd showed up to get to know our trees!

Communications Circle: In the coming month, CommC will re-access our human resources in terms of who is willing to do what work along with realistically incorporating the priorities that GC will be setting soon for 2023. Going into October we were very excited about the influx of energy, but as we went into November it dropped off suddenly and dramatically. Many projects we thought were moving forward are now on a back burner until this situation changes. Please contact Quai if you would like to explore contributing to the efforts of CommC or any of its Sub-Circles or Task Groups: quaifranklin@gmail.com

♦ **Website Subcircle:** In mid-October we launched a Community Forum that was to be accessed via our

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.



Members talk with Elon students about their findings

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Saturday, December 10, on the land

- 4:00pm—come early to socialize
- 5:30-7:00pm potluck

Kid friendly! No RSVP needed.

Weather dependent: check email before coming out.

This is an excellent way to get to know members, see the land, learn about the community, and enjoy delicious dishes!



Young Blackjack Oak leaves paint the wetland

TRAIL TENDING WORKDAY

Land Stewardship Circle

December 18, 9-11am

RSVP to Bill: striderbill46@gmail.com

website. However, we have since received feedback that many people never received their initial invitations and passwords, and those who did ran into technical difficulty. We are working to understand the issues and resolve what went wrong, and we will try again once we do. Watch your email for updates!



Loblolly pines stretch up to the clouds (photo: Kara)

Governance & Training: This fall, our Circle has been attending to the needs of the General Circle and the full community. We've temporarily taken on managing GC meetings—creating agendas, facilitating, and ensuring that notes are taken—and are also organizing Community in the Round sessions and a GC retreat. We plan to return to offering Sociocracy and cooperative skills training early in 2023.



Land Stewardship: Efforts on the farm persist through winter frosts and despite Caleb's absence (members sent him a care package as he recovers from injuries). Thanks to all volunteers who showed up to help. All are welcome, and needed!

The land has about 4 miles of meandering trails from the pond to the wetlands and beyond. These mostly wooded pathways enjoy being touched by feet and groomed by gentle hands, which is why we are so grateful to you for offering your loving support by tending these trails!

NEW YEAR'S DAY HIKE

HeartWeavers Circle

January 1, 10:30am, the Eno River Confluence, 4214 Highland Farm Rd, Hillsborough, NC 27278

RSVP required to Margaret: bktittle@gmail.com

Meet up at the Eno River Confluence Natural Area and take a lovely hike where two branches of the Eno come together. Enjoy warm drinks and snacks afterwards.



Joy in the woods!

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Is there something you are offering that you want to share with the community? If so, contact Hope by the 25th of each month: hopematrix@fastmail.com

From Way of Belonging—Jess & Michelle

♦ **December 4:** Silent Beholding – Advent Prayer Space for Silent Meditation (pt. 2) | 8 – 9pm | Zoom

♦ **December 7:** Lunar Wisdom Circle: Full Moon Ritual | 7 – 8:30pm | Zoom

♦ **December 11:** Forest Bathing | 12 – 2pm | In-person

♦ **December 11:** Silent Beholding - Advent Prayer Space for Silent Meditation (Pt. 3) | 8 - 9pm | Zoom

♦ **December 18:** Winter Solstice Ceremony & Silent Beholding (Pt. 4) | 7 - 9pm | Zoom

- ♦ A good time was had by all of us at the Elon students' presentation of research results. We much appreciated their guided adventure imagining the future of the farm/far field and south forest. And of course, we all enjoyed the potluck dinner that followed.
- ♦ Michelle and Bill organized two Trail Tending work days. These will continue on a regular basis so we can keep our extensive trail network clear and safe.
- ♦ Land Stewardship Farm and Forest Subcircles focused on discerning priorities for 2023. All is now in flux, including our meeting schedule, as we ride the waves of the moment and give some space to allow our collective wisdom and inspiration to gestate.
- ♦ From Margret and Jeffry: At the November potluck, the Community honored our retirement from farming—and the many contributions we have made in other ways—by gifting us with a CG-themed jigsaw puzzle. Talk about FUN! We so enjoyed seeing all the familiar faces, places, and activities come together as a collage. We would like to offer any fellow puzzlers the opportunity to have a go at this. Email Margret (earthbound52@gmail.com) and we'll start a list!



Come on, give it a try!

♦ **December 22: Lunar Wisdom Circle: New Moon Ritual** | 7 - 8:30pm | Zoom



Hope and EB get up close to the trees (photo on left: Shells)

OUTSIDE EVENTS/WEBINARS/READINGS TO EXPAND OUR SOCIAL & CULTURAL HORIZONS

Is something happening that you want our members to know about? Supply title, date, time, location, links, and description by the 25th of each month to [Hope](#).

Paul, Hope, and Lisa attended the premier of [Racist Roots](#). It's a powerful 25-minute film which reveals the North Carolina death penalty's deep entanglement with slavery, lynching, and racism — and inspires people to join the movement to transform the criminal legal system. It includes the stories and voices of advocates, artists, exonerees, and people on North Carolina's death row. It is a key tool as we strive to educate the public about the injustices of the death penalty and end this cruel punishment. Click on this [link](#) to view the film. Please share it with others!

Organizing Against Racism

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/events/>) to see the array of intriguing options for the months to come.