



Finding Common Ground February, 2023

Up Front



Words for the season from Anthony: *Light itself lights up for me at this season! Sun so noticeably extending its stay above the horizon, more each day; the buds that are now beginning to swell here and there, the faintest beginnings of the fuzzy softness that soon will cover the trees and herald a richer spring.*

Sap rising! Moon has been remarkable too this cycle, so crisp and sharp in the waxing, as tonight for example, when a coyote came by and howled in our backyard here in Durham, a first for us as far as I recall, reminding me of the land too, when they travel in groups and usually howl much farther away. This old world's a-moving, as always...

Now more than ever, this is the time to build community at CGEV. **We encourage you to SHOW UP**, particularly if you haven't been around for a while. Come to at least one event and/or meeting; volunteer at the farm; make contact with a member and have a conversation; or choose something else to bring a little Common Ground into your life. Your engagement will help **build the good** for you and others.



Sweetgum seedballs hanging on 'til Spring (Photo: Hope)

MEETINGS & EVENTS



Keeping the garden growing in the cold of winter (photo: Doug)
Banner above: Azure ripples of shelf mushrooms (Photo: Hope)

GET INVOLVED

- ♦ **All events are open to everyone** unless otherwise indicated, and **you must RSVP** for details, links, and last-minute changes.
- ♦ **COVID Policy:** For your safety and others', bring a mask in case it is needed. At CGEV, we protect those most vulnerable.
- ♦ **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.enberq2@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
- ♦ **Forest & Tree Workday**, February 4, 1-4:30pm followed by a fire circle from 4:30-5:30pm
- ♦ **Heart Share**, February 10, 7-9pm
- ♦ **Community Potluck**, February 11, 4-6pm

CIRCLE NEWS

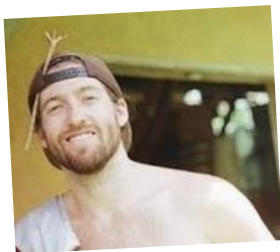
Land Stewardship: ♦ **The Farm:** Though some farms slow down in winter, activities at our Farm keep on keepin' on, despite crop damage from record cold and winds on Christmas Eve. Doug's moving essay, titled [Life on the Farm and A Day We Will Never Forget](#), is a **must read** for all to understand the rigor—and heartbreaks—that go with producing food year-round. Our dedicated Farm Crew forges ahead with its year-round production program, relying on Farmer Doug's big toolkit of "season extension" techniques.



Tucking in to tend the garden in wintertime (Photo: Hope)

♦ The **Farm Subcircle** is sprouting major plans for **vigorous expansion and improvements**, such as: plantings and CSA customer base growing by 75%; a new irrigation system connected to our Pond; development of rainwater catchment, a packing shed, and other improvements on the Barn; expanded educational programs; and experiments with a number of "staple" crops like peanuts, corn, and soybeans. ♦ Our tearful good-byes to crew-

members Lara and Natalie have been tempered by the **arrival of an enthusiastic new Intern, Lucas**. Literally 3 hours off the plane from his Permaculture Internship in Costa Rica, Lucas showed up at the Farm at CGEV,



donning an extra layer and saying, "Okay, looks great, I'm all in, show me what to do!" Within days, he was diving into Community affairs, too, with values and aspirations well-matched to the Agrarian Vision and paradigm-shifting culture of CGEV. [Read more about Lucas's fascinating life here](#). ♦ The **Forest Subcircle** opened the New Year with a **"First Saturday" Forest/tree workday**. In January, we focused on the area south of the garden as part of an exploration of a new farm/food/forest ecosystem in this little niche of the land. This series will continue through winter and spring and will entail such tasks as clearing the pond dam, thinning young sweet gum and pine trees (converting them

- ♦ **Earth Connection Sun. Online**, February 12, 10-noon
- ♦ **Beautify the Barn Workday**, February 19, 12:30-4pm
- ♦ **Community in the Round**, February 25, 3-5pm
- ♦ **Tour of the land by request:** Contact Lisa, welcome@commonground.eco

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

- Fridays, February 3 & 17, 1-3pm, Zoom
RSVP to Lisa with subject "Membership Circle": LBerley@yahoo.com
We would love to have you come and observe and then join us in this important work.

MC-HeartWeavers Subcircle

- Sunday, February 5, 3-4:30pm
RSVP to Theresa with "HeartWeavers RSVP" in subject line: tjensen1952@gmail.com



Tag Alder catkins flower early around the pond (photo: Michelle)

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

- Wednesdays February 8 & 22, 2-4pm, Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane
RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

P&D-Financial & Legal Subcircle (F&L)

- Wednesday, February 8 & 20 (TBD), 5:30-7:00, Zoom
RSVP to Theresa with "RSVP F&L" in subject line: tjensen1952@gmail.com

F&L/MC-Affordability Task Group

- Wednesday, February 1 & 15, 5-6:30pm, Zoom
RSVP to Theresa with "RSVP Affordability" in subject line: tjensen1952@gmail.com

into biochar, wood chips, and wildlife thickets), and attending to the big oak that fell by the pavilion. **The next Forest/Tree workday is on February 4.** We also presented our Domains, Aims, and Priorities to the General Circle.



Winter beauty shines in the wetland (Photo: Hope)

Communications Circle: CommC is starting 2023 with regrouping and refocusing our energies on providing the policy and technical infrastructure for communications within the Common Ground community. We are a small functional circle of four people and **we're looking for more folks who feel called to be a part of facilitating the use of the most important skill in intentional community – communication.** ♦ The **Marketing & Promotion Subcircle** and task groups are not currently planning to meet until the General Circle makes some key decisions specific needs for marketing. ♦ The **Website Subcircle**, under the leadership of Zeke, is currently working hard on a **Members-Only Forum** solution for the website that will enable all of our members to share ideas, information, and discuss what's important to them. Reach out to [Zeke](#) if you have questions or are interested in observing a work meeting or helping out. Quai leads the **IT Subcircle** and is working with Zeke on building a relational database that will enable us to better track all of our members and their many interests and activities as well as their membership status. Reach out to [Quai](#) for ways to get involved.



The evergreen Christmas Ferns perk up the forest floor (Photo: Hope)

We continue to work closely with Robyn Heeks Development Manager, in exploring funding options, such as a USDA [mutual self-help program](#) that could support low-income members in building their own homes, among other opportunities. We're excited & hope that more people can join us in this important work.

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

- Sunday, February 12, 3-5pm, Zoom
RSVP to Becky with G&T in the subject line: blaskody@gmail.com

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE (LSC)

- Monday, February 20, 7-8:30pm, Zoom & perhaps in-person.
RSVP to Nell: hnkriesberg@gmail.com

LSC-Farm Subcircle

- Tuesday, February 14, 7-8:30pm, Zoom & perhaps in-person.
RSVP to Nell: hnkriesberg@gmail.com



A bluebird pauses in his search for sustenance (Photo: Jess)

COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

- Wednesday, February 22, 6:30-8pm, Zoom
RSVP to Quai: quaifranklin@gmail.com

GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, February 25, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom
RSVP to Hope with "GC" in the subject line, 2 days in advance for materials:
hopenatrix@fastmail.com

Membership: This time of “unknowing” presents obvious challenges for increasing our membership and retaining existing members but surprisingly it also brings with it movement forward. The Community as a whole sees the beauty of what we are trying to create and the urgency of working together. Members are drawing closer, newer members step up with fresh ideas and join in the tasks, and priorities are reassessed—all very positive developments ♦ In January, we welcomed 5 new visiting members. Several members are in the process of stepping up to the Engaged level. (If you are not sure how to advance to the next level of Membership please reach out to anyone on this Circle.) In partnership with CommC, we launched a promising new avenue for member communication, the Member Forum. It is available to all Exploratory, Engaged and active Visiting Members and accessed under the Membership Tab on the Website. [Click here](#) for a direct link. (The slow speed of the Forum is an issue being addressed.) The **HeartWeavers Subcircle** is offering a wonderful new program: **Earth Connect Sundays Online**. Led by Maureen (Momo) Freehill and Jessica Cudney, it starts on February 12 from 10-noon ET. Members from near and far can expect an active, enlivening, creative experience with each other and the natural world. ♦ Forbidding winter weather derailed the monthly potluck in January and we look forward to the next one on Feb. 11th. Newcomers can take a tour of the land before the Potluck. Check the Calendar for details.



A skunk visits Jess & Michelle by McGowan Creek ([click here](#) for video)

Governance & Training: Mark your calendars for the next Cooperative Skills Training on Friday, March 31, from 7-9pm! Learning to cooperate is a foundational skillset for all members, and training is vital if we wish to realize our vision to live in justice and harmony with each other and the land. This is lifelong work, so plan to come even though you’ve been to prior trainings. ♦ We continue to lead and facilitate the General Circle. In January, some Circles presented their Domains, Aims, and Priorities for the coming year for feedback. This essential task helps us all to think through, organize, and coordinate our work together. ♦ The **Community in the Round** session in



Winter treetops catch the sun (Photo: Michelle)

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 7-8pm, Zoom.

Contact Lisa to join: 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. We welcome additional participants from CGEV and the wider community.

FOREST & TREE WORKDAY

Forest Subcircle

Saturday February 4, 1-4:30pm followed by a Fire Circle until 5:30, on the land; rain date February 11
RSVP to Randy for details: dodd.randy@gmail.com
Meet at the Barn. Given the weather forecast, this could be postponed until the following week. Check your email to confirm the plan.

BEAUTIFY THE BARN WORKDAY

Membership Circle

February 19, 12:30-4pm, at the Barn

RSVP to Lisa: lberley@yahoo.com

RSVPs will help us to plan improvements and beautification tasks. This is a great way to contribute and get to know other members! More details to follow.

HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Friday, February 10, 7-9pm, Zoom

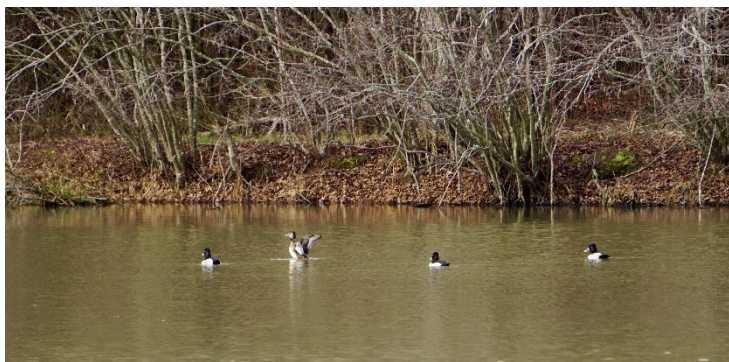
RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

January offered a rich tapestry of topics ranging from a slide presentation by Doug about farm goings-on, to our current development process, to an interactive and connecting activity exploring how we are all leaning into the unknown at Common Ground. Plan to be present at the next session on February 25!



Home of the master builders of the wetlands—beavers (Photo: Hope)

Planning & Development: Robyn Heeks, our able and energetic Development Manager, continues to take the lead in pinning down construction costs, seeking out and engaging potential General Contractors, and working to reduce site work costs. She is exploring multiple funding opportunities, in tandem with P&D's **Financial & Legal Subcircle** and very active **Affordability Task Group**. New possibilities with USDA and elsewhere continue to turn up. Robyn is now running increasingly detailed and inclusive, but still tentative, models delineating the big financial picture. We've just offered an overview of this process as part of January's Community in the Round and are aiming for a fairly comprehensive and reliable



Ducks congregate in the pond (Photo: Michelle)

model (though it will always be a moving target) by middle February. At that point we are going to have to decide if any kind of affordable Plan A meets at least our minimum conditions for full-scale commitment. Big decision! Overall, can we achieve enough of our goals and aspirations to

Come and get to know other members on a much deeper level as we practice both compassion and vulnerability. We 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.

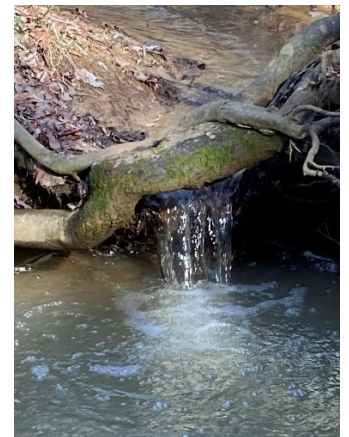
COMMUNITY POTLUCK & FIRE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Saturday, February 11, 4-6pm (winter hours), on the land. Kid friendly! No RSVP needed.

Weather dependent: check email before coming out *Dress warmly. Weather permitting there will be a fire! Come and dance around it together. Bring the kiddies, marshmallows, a dish to pass, and chairs.*

[Click here](#) for a flyer with more information.



Michelle dons waders in the wetland; Winter rains swell the stream running from the pond to the wetland (Photos: Jess & Hope)

EARTH CONNECTION SUNDAY ONLINE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Sunday, February 12, 10-noon, Zoom

[Click here](#) to RSVP

Created to include those who cannot attend gatherings at the CGEV land, this month's theme is Living Landscapes: Home Ground. Maureen (Momo) Freehill and Jessica Cudney will lead us in an exploration of our most intimate and accessible living Earth landscapes—our own bodies and immediate outdoor natural environment. Then, we'll share what we've experienced. [Click here](#) for a flyer.

COMMUNITY IN THE ROUND

Governance & Training Circle

Saturday, February 25, 3-5pm, Zoom

make the immense costs and efforts worth it? To that end, P&D is working out an explicit formulation of (what we take to be) our minimum conditions, along with a rough sketch of the widest range of alternatives at this point. All of this we'll be working through in the next weeks ourselves and with the General Circle.



A sweet Hepatica was sighted on the New Year's Day Hike (Photo: Hope)

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

EVENTS OFFERED BY WAY OF BELONGING

(WayOfBelonging.com) Jess & Michelle

February 1: Imbolc Seasonal Ceremony, 7 - 9pm EST, Zoom

February 2: Wheel of the Year: Intro to Seasonal Living, 7 - 9pm EST, Zoom

February 5: Leo Full Moon Ritual, 7 - 8:30pm EST, Zoom

February 19: Pisces New Moon Ritual, 7 - 8:30pm EST, Zoom

February 26: Forest Bathing, 10-noon EST, in person, Mebane, NC



The flower-like remains of a pinecone after squirrels have extracted the nuts. (Photo: Michelle)

RSVP to Hope: hopematrix@fastmail.com

This is an opportunity for the full community to come together, connect with one another, and focus on emergent issues that affect us all. February's topics are TBA. More information will be coming soon.



All's quiet in the winter wetland (Photo: Jess)

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](mailto:hope).

Living Futures Saturdays is a monthly event series (February through May) in Durham, NC, featuring climate-engaged local presenters from a variety of disciplines. Listen, learn, and create community and new knowledge. Jess and Michelle of *Way of Belonging*, are on the program for March 4, along with Crystal Cavalier. <https://www.schoolforlivingfutures.org/events>

Relationship Summit, February 14-16, self-paced online, free event

<https://www.relationshipwisdomsummit.com>

This is the perfect opportunity to gain insights into all your relationships, guided by some truly gifted and compassionate experts.

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.