



Finding Common Ground

May, 2023

Up Front

Spring is full swing and things in the natural world—and at Common ground—are changing fast. Our plans for developing a cooperative community ecovillage are evolving into a new expression of our core vision and values. **This fresh direction opens space for your voice and creativity now more than ever.** Read about it—and click a link to a presentation—in the Planning & Development section below. This calendar outlines many ways to engage and grow relationships with each other and the land. We hope you'll feel inspired to contribute in ways that inspire and nourish you.

CIRCLE NEWS

Land Stewardship: Our Farm Crew, with support from many CGEV members, hosted a **highly successful 2-day Farm Tour on April 22 and 23.** We were one of 31 farms participating in the Piedmont Farm Tour, a major event in the Triangle organized by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. Despite some rain on Saturday, we had over 200 visitors over the weekend! In addition to how we grow over 80 different vegetable, fruits, flowers and herbs, many of them learned a lot about our



Lucas, our intern, led many groups into an exploration of the farm

MEETINGS & EVENTS



Doug takes one of many groups on a riveting farm tour (photos: Hope) Banner above: Heartleaf Foamflower, a first sighting on the land!

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.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
- ♦ **Forest & Tree Workday,** May 6, 1-4pm
- ♦ **Community Potluck,** May 13, 5-7pm
- ♦ **Heart Share,** May 19, 7-9pm
- ♦ **Fresh Take Information Session,** May 20, 4-5:30pm
- ♦ **Community in the Round,** May 27, 3-5pm

Community. Special thanks to all those Members who helped us beautify the Barn and grounds over the past few months, giving us a vibrant appearance to be proud of. ♦ Anthony continues his work of improving the Barn, most recently by creating an awesome **new, large, highly-functional privy** in the Bathhouse. After months of equipment preparation, attending classes, and networking with local experts, **our Honeybee Team has set up 3 new hives** in the field above the Pond. This is an important step forward in developing our diversified, Ecosystem-friendly farm operation. ♦ **Our "Full Table CSA" has grown by over 60% in the past 2 months**, in both membership and crops planted. Our CSA members also contributed **over \$3,500 for our "solidarity fund** (subsidizing shares for families experiencing food insecurity) and "staple crop initiative" (experimental crops like peanuts, sorghum, and flour corn). ♦ There's a **Forest Workday** coming up on May 6. Learn this Circle's many life-giving initiatives and how you can get involved—contact [Doug](#) and come to our meeting on Tuesday, May 9, 7pm!



It's a beautiful day to enjoy the tour! (Photo: Jane)

Planning & Development: At the Community in the Round (CIR) in March, our Development Manager, Robyn Heeks, presented her overview and final report on the likely costs of "Plan A" (see links below). Following up on her report, P&D conducted three Listening Sessions in April where members could ask questions and offer their thoughts and feelings for consideration. Having done all possible due diligence, **P&D will be recommending to the General Circle that Common Ground no longer pursue developing the community all at once through a HUD-backed blanket mortgage.** That path promised to be an enormously cumbersome and confining and, despite our best efforts, prohibitively costly. It's been hard to let go of this

- ♦ **Take a Hike!** May 28, 10:30am
- ♦ **Tours of the land by request:** Contact [Lisa](#)



This honeybee is in the clover—a favorite nectar source (Photo: Bill)

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!*

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

- Tuesday, May 2, 2-4pm,
- Wednesdays, May 17, 31, 2-4pm

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

All sessions are via Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane. We encourage observers.

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

- Tuesdays, May 9 & 23, 5:30-7:00pm, Zoom

RSVP to Theresa with subject "RSVP F&L":

tjensen1952@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

- Sunday, May 14, 5-6:30pm, Zoom & in-person
- 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, May 14, 5-6:30pm, Zoom

RSVP to Theresa with subject "HeartWeavers RSVP":

tjensen1952@gmail.com

beautiful, integrated concept that has been years in the making. ♦ Clearly, it's time to seek strategies that are aligned with our vision and values yet promise to be do-able in a shorter period of time. **Hence, our efforts have turned toward researching and developing an alternative plan – CGEV 2.0.** While still in the early stage, this option offers more flexibility and lower infrastructure costs. Broad brushstrokes of the plan were presented at the April CIR (see links below). The bones of this preliminary plan include holding the bulk of the land in common yet allowing for private ownership of small plots and homes. Building will happen in phases. The community will finance only the minimum necessary infrastructure, like roads and wells and probably a community septic system, allowing eager first-wavers to get early onto the land without having to bear full development costs. This plan allows for a great deal more freedom in design, materials, DIY, and timing for member-residents who want it. Others may band together to share co-living and co-borrowing, with significant community logistical support. Affordable small units like Plan A's suites can be built in. ♦ **CGEV 2.0 is still in its early stages, but we are excited by the new prospect of a fast start and more individual initiative in all aspects of the building.** Stay tuned!!
April CIR links: Recording [here](#), slides [here](#)
March CIR links: Recording [here](#), slides [here](#), cost documents [here](#).



The Farm Tour sparked a lot of interest in the Ecovillage

Membership: The Piedmont Farm Tour (April 22-23) was a great marketing experience for CGEV. The Membership Circle along with Hope, Paul, Rachel and of course Doug and Lucas, connected with over 200 visitors of all ages and backgrounds! We are following up with a number of people who resonated with the CGEV Mission

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

- Tuesday, May 9, 7-9 pm
Contact Doug about getting involved:
dr.tobagopepper@gmail.com

This Circle's project range from field to forest. Your involvement is needed and makes a difference!



It's strawberry time!

COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

- Wednesday, May 10, 6:30-8pm, Zoom
RSVP to Quai: quaifranklin@gmail.com

CommC-Website Subcircle

- Every Thursday, 6:30-8pm
RSVP to Zeke for a Zoom link and agenda:
busykiel+community@gmail.com

CommC-IT Subcircle

- Reach out to [Quai](#) if you have questions or are interested in observing a meeting or helping out with current projects (see the newsletter).

Marketing & Promotion Subcircle

- We are taking a pause until key decisions about development & marketing needs are made. However, if you are interested in working on this Subcircle or any of its task groups (Outreach, Visibility & Promotion), please contact [Quai](#).

GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, May 21, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane
RSVP to Hope with subject "GC", 2 days in advance: hopenatrix@fastmail.com

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

- Thursday, May 25, 7-9pm, Zoom
RSVP to Becky with subject G&T:
blaskody@gmail.com

and Aims. ♦ The newly cleaned up Barn enables us to hold potluck gatherings rain or shine! Potlucks are a prime way for the local community to get together in person to socialize. Members who are visiting from out of town can meet a lot of members at once and take a tour of the Land. **Please put the potluck dates on your calendar.** They are typically scheduled for the second Saturday of each month. ♦ A strong collaboration is developing between Membership and the Communications Circle (CommC). A working group met twice in April and more work sessions will follow. Our project involves developing an integrated system that will better track our membership and generate reports to help us to know and describe who we are. An enhanced spreadsheet database exists now and is being improved through the work group and a relational database is in the research stage.



The April 29 potluck culminated with a beautiful sharing circle.

Heartweavers: The original date of the April potluck was rained out leaving some disappointed would-be egg-hunters. Not ones to fret, Heartweavers hosted a potluck fire circle after the Community in the Round on April 29th. A departure from the usual, the fire-and-fellowship format gave members an opportunity to further discuss the ideas, thoughts, and feelings which bubbled up as we processed the rich news about village development together. **Look forward to May's potluck on the 13th where we will celebrate the season of abundant life with food, conversation, a singing circle and dancing** for those so inclined - no musical background required! It will be a time of true connection indeed! ♦ Ren and Quai hosted a truly engaging Heart Share on the topic of friendship, both in the context of community and in general. **Heads up—they are moving to the third Friday of the month** (next one is May 19). Oh, and there are rumblings of interest

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

TOURS OF THE LAND—by request

Membership Circle

Contact Lisa with subject "Request a tour":
welcome@commonground.eco

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? You can schedule a tour of the Land! A good time for a tour is in conjunction with a 2nd Saturday potluck supper.

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 7-8pm, Zoom.

Contact Lisa to join: welcome@commonground.eco with subject, "Racial Awareness Book Group"

The format is reading aloud and breaking between paragraphs to share personal reflections, questions, and ideas. We welcome additional members any time. This Group is reading, The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present, by David Treuer.

FOREST & TREE WORKDAY

Forest Subcircle

Saturday, May 6, 1-4, on the land

RSVP to Holly for details: hollyculton@gmail.com
*Meet at the Barn. **Weather dependent:** check your email to confirm the plan.*

COMMUNITY POTLUCK & FIRE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Saturday, May 13, 5-7pm on the land. Kid friendly!

No RSVP needed. **Contact Lisa for information:**
iberley@yahoo.com

*Come dance with us around a crackling fire. Please bring chairs and a dish to pass. **Weather dependent:** check email before coming.*

Note change to third Fridays

HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Friday, May 19, 7-9pm, Zoom

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

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



Hikers had a great time at the Eno Confluence! (Photo: Margaret)

of an in-person Heart Share soon on the land—more details to come. ♦ Heartweavers also hosted a hike on the Eno River organized by Margaret Anderson. Here is a reflection from Margret Mueller: *It was the quintessential Spring morning—cool and sunny with wildflowers galore. Two hikers were even moved to go barefoot! We identified many blooming or almost-blooming wildflowers; notably atamasco lily, spring beauty, Jack-in-the Pulpit, and teeming slopes of lavender wild geranium. The woods were alive with birdsong and we identified the voices of the yellow-rumped warbler, ruby-crowned kinglet and scarlet tanager. Fungi were represented by Devil's urn and bright yellow dog-vomit slime mold (yes, that is a thing!). The highlight of our hike was coming across a very long black rat snake which was sunning on the trail. They are superb climbers, and at our approach it made its way nonchalantly toward and up a small sapling, from which it eyed us at our own level. [Click here](#) for a short video. Forests are always interesting and I encourage more of you to join us!*

Communications Circle: The Website and IT Subcircles are working together with Membership Circle to improve the quality of our [Member Forum](#) and to provide essential reports that Membership is requesting. Collaborative meetings are ongoing for this important work. Reach out to [Quai](#) if you have questions or are interested in observing a work meeting or helping out.

Governance & Training: Becky offered Sociocracy training to a large and enthusiastic group in April. More members now know the basics and are empowered to participate in governance with more understanding and skill. How about you? Contact [Hope](#) if you want to be included in the next wave of trainings.

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.

FRESH TAKE INFORMATION SESSION

Membership Circle

Saturday, May 20th, 4-5:30pm, Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

This general overview of Common Ground Ecovillage includes the membership process, governance system, stewardship of the land, and plans we are considering for building the village. It is geared to visiting members and those who are considering joining. Come and learn a lot, fast!

COMMUNITY IN THE ROUND—

Save the date

Governance & Training Circle

Saturday, May 27, 3-5pm, Hybrid (Zoom & in-person)

RSVP to Hope with subject “CIR”:

hopenatrix@fastmail.com

These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved. The May topic will speak to what's most relevant when the time comes.



Our hearts were glowing as brightly as the fire at this sharing circle

TAKE A HIKE!

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Sunday, May 28, 10:30am, Cox Mountain Trail, Eno State Park, 6095 State Rd. 1569, Durham, NC 27705

RSVP is essential to Margaret: bktitle@gmail.com

These hikes are a great way to connect with other members while taking in the beauty and variety of the natural world. We'd love to have you join in!



Exuberant wild geraniums dot the forest floor

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](#), Jess & Michelle
May 2: Beltaine Seasonal Ceremony, 7-9pm EST, Zoom
May 4: Scorpio Full Moon Ritual, 7-8:30pm EST, Zoom
May 18: Taurus New Moon Ritual, 7-8:30pm EST, Zoom

Nick is starting a curbside food waste collection service in Hillsborough! Help prevent food waste from going to the landfill. Now is the time to get the word out. Your first month of service is 100% free. Food waste will be collected in five-gallon buckets and brought to local farms to be composted. If you or anyone you know lives in Hillsborough and wants to compost their food waste, contact Nick at livingsoiltreefarm@gmail.com.



Cheerful star chickweed—another lovely Spring ephemeral

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

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.

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. [Click here](#) for information.

ForestHer 2023 Theme: All about Pollinators

July 27, October 26, 1-2:30pm, Zoom webinar
Want to catch the buzz about pollinators? In this introduction we'll go beyond honeybees to learn the astonishing diversity of native pollinators and the vital roles they play in healthy ecosystems. [Read about it here.](#)

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.



Jack-in-the-Pulpit plants grow in perfusion all over the land