



# Finding Common Ground

## February, 2024

### Up Front

It's official — a new covered wash & pack area next to the barn is under construction! A small crew of community members are at work digging footers and erecting our first posts. Contact [Caleb](#) if you'd like to pitch in and help to build this game-changing structure for the farm CSA!

**CGEV has completed our part of the process to create and fund two conservation easements on the land.** The Eno River Association will pull the final grant application together and submit it to the North Carolina Land and Water Fund by March 1. We will hear about the result in September. Let's all visualize success!

The OC Board of County Commissioners will be filling District 2 seat on election day, March 5. **Look under Member Happenings** to read about a meet-and-greet for one candidate, Phyllis Portie-Ascott, at the Nest on February 9<sup>th</sup>.



Revelling in a good day's work on the ship-&-pack Station

### MEETINGS & EVENTS



Growing and harvesting food is a year-round operation (Photo: Doug)  
Banner above: Purple Archangel (*lamium purpureum*) licked with frost

### GET INVOLVED

- ♦ All events are in Eastern Time and open to everyone unless otherwise indicated. **You must RSVP** for details & 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](mailto:ren.enberg2@gmail.com)





## CIRCLE NEWS

**Land Stewardship:** We began the new year with a lot to look forward to out on the land and we even started some long-awaited projects! In addition to building the wash-&-pack station, **we may be moving the garden fence further south** to open up more space for veggies, forest gardening, and other permaculture projects. Lucas hopes that this area will begin to blur the forest/farm boundary, becoming a much more fluid edge space. ♦ **The first prescribed burn on the land was postponed** from January 13th because of high winds, but the community hasn't let that stop us from continuing the prep work for future burns. Both burn-prep days were very well attended in January, and a final session is scheduled for February 10. Stay tuned for an update about our first planned burn on the land! ♦ **Doug offers this reflection about January at the Farm:** *Our insistence on farming year-round has once again resulted in a lot of weather challenges. Chief among these were some very windy days, including the 40mph gusts that fairly tore up our 2 newest "caterpillar" tunnels, requiring a lot of extra repair time. The extreme cold wave that came through in mid-January cost us only minor damage - because we spent a huge amount of time fussing with multiple layers of protective covers to get the crops ready! In the meantime, we are scheming about even more expansion of our plantings and CSA membership this year, and new experimental crops and planting patterns, as we work toward a farming system that will both feed our Village and provide some of us with a living wage!*



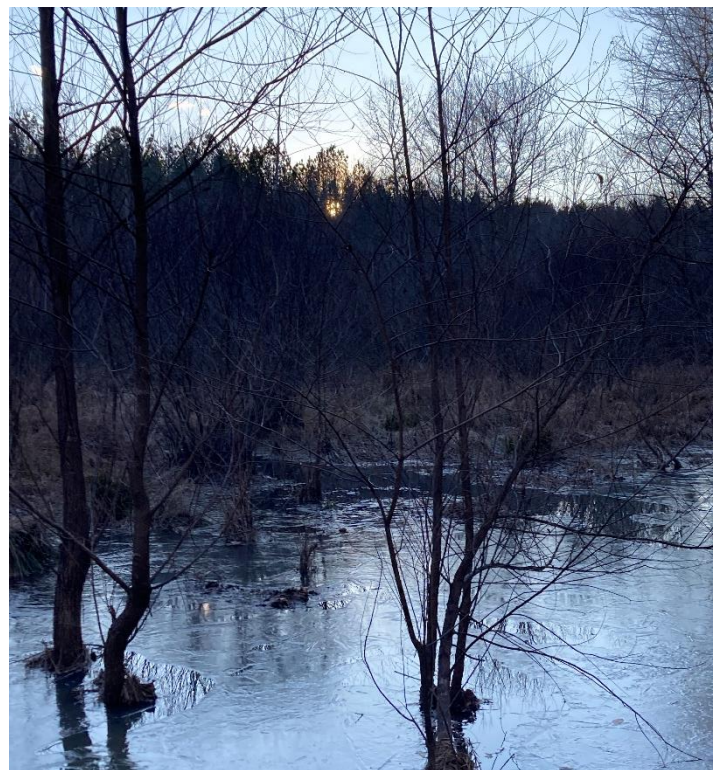
*Undulating waves of plastic protect tender winter greens*

**Planning & Development:** Anthony supposes it's progress in that we are progressively clearer about the sticking-points. One is the septic arrangement for the

## COMMUNITY EVENTS SNAPSHOT

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

- ♦ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group,** Mondays, 7-8pm
- ♦ **Building a Wash & Pack Station:** Tuesdays, Saturdays, & Sundays beginning at Noon
- ♦ **Prescribed Burn Work Day,** February 10, 2-4pm
- ♦ **Tentative Burn event:** February 11, time TBD, Weather permitting
- ♦ **Heart Share,** February 16, 7-9pm
- ♦ **Community in the Round,** February 24, 3-5pm
- ♦ **Community Potluck,** February 24, 5:30-7:30pm
- ♦ **Tours of the land by request:** Contact [Lisa](#)



## 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, February 20, 6:45-8:45pm; 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting TBA, Zoom and in-person at the Nest

**RSVP to Anthony** with subject "P&D":

[weston@elon.edu](mailto:weston@elon.edu)

*There may be more meetings called as development decisions emerge. Email Anthony for updates and links. We encourage observers.*



village. Our master plan calls for a collection of all “wastewater” from the village and conveying it to a subsurface distribution system in the Far Field. This has major advantages: it allows tight clustering of the village, and works the so-called “wastes” fertility back into the land rather than trying to just bury them. On the downside, it is somewhat costlier (we think) than individual gravity-fed septic systems adjacent to the houses, would have to be built mostly as a whole upfront (raising costs for first wavers), and could tie up a significant chunk of the Far Field that might otherwise be used to expand the Farm. Currently we are trying to find any way to locate enough individual systems close to the houses, without spreading the houses too far apart or extending the road too much (more \$\$). Complicating this also is that much of the ground south of the proposed village area doesn’t perc well enough for septic. Stay tuned...



*Glimpsing a barred owl silently pausing on a beech tree branch*

♦ Second: the nexus of questions and issues around co-buying, financing, and the possibility of a partial co-op. Under Flexible Development/Conservation Cluster zoning, we are restricted to 12 residential lots, but these could be used quite intensively (including houses with suites and accessory dwelling units (ADUs)). Members are now beginning to think about who might want to live with/near whom, and all the legal and other arrangements that might be required (perhaps varying between co-buying groups). Since it *may* be difficult or impossible to obtain affordable individual construction loans or mortgages on cooperatively-owned property, we might have to begin with fee-simple ownership for those who need financing, and transition these into the coop later. More complication...

## MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

- Thursdays, February 8 & 22, 4:30-6:30pm, Zoom

**RSVP to Lisa** with subject “Membership Circle”:  
[LBerley@yahoo.com](mailto:LBerley@yahoo.com)

*We are very interested in having new members and welcome Visiting Members to observe and join us in our work. There will be time on alternating Thursdays for taking care of tasks. We would be delighted to have you join in on these as well!*

## LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

- Tuesday, February 13, 7-8:30 pm, Zoom and in-person at the barn

**RSVP to Doug** with subject “LSC RSVP”:  
[dr.tobagopepper@gmail.com](mailto:dr.tobagopepper@gmail.com)

*This Circle’s projects range from field to forest. Your involvement is needed and makes a difference.*

## GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

- Thursday, February 15, 7-9pm, Zoom

**RSVP to Hope:** [hopematrix@fastmail.com](mailto:hopenatrix@fastmail.com)

*We heartily welcome visitors and new members!*

### CommC Subcircle

**Contact Quai:** [quaifranklin@gmail.com](mailto:quaifranklin@gmail.com)

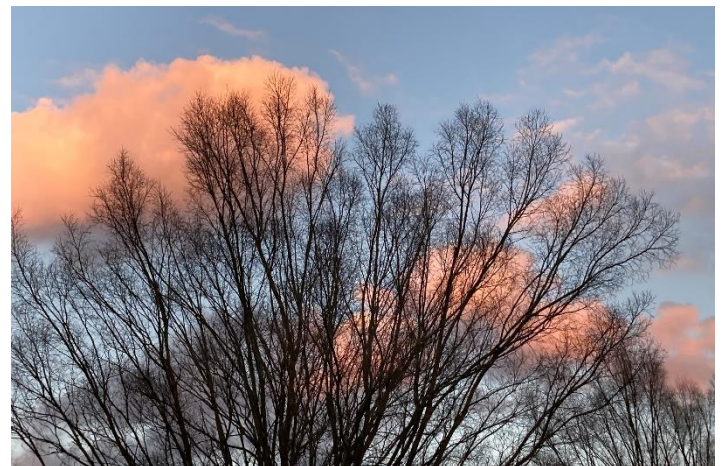
*We are looking for new members interested in helping to shape communications policy, systems, IT and the Website. If this sounds like YOU, contact [Quai](mailto:Quai)*

## POTENTIAL RESIDENTS ADVISORY TASK GROUP (PRAG)

- Alternate Sundays, dates/times vary.

**RSVP to Momo** with subject “PRAG” for dates:  
[momo@commonground.eco](mailto:momo@commonground.eco)

*If you are a member who is seriously interested in*





♦ Finally, the Farm would be separate from the 12 allowed residential lots. This could mean another house (or more), east of the current farm area, including or in addition to community eating and gathering space although pretty rustic. We need to be clarifying exactly what would be allowed under what conditions, and also, crucially, *what we want!* ♦ All of this being said, it is also possible that plans could come together quite quickly, so if you are waiting to see what might happen, don't! Instead, jump into help, and in particular, if you are picturing yourself a first-waver, start connecting with people, find ways to help, up your membership status, and doing some good imagining too!

**Membership:** We are inspired by what happened at January's Community in the Round. Twenty-two members, on zoom and in person, meeting in small groups, put into words their personal preferences for co-buying and co-living as future residents on the land. We were guided by a list of questions to be specific and it all got to feel a lot more real. We are learning that, as we shared our individual paths, the sense of community grows. As we identify what we want and what our questions/struggles are to reach those goals, we find ways to help each other reach them and there is a sense of coming together. ♦ How do we continue this process of getting to know each other through sharing our personal paths to residency? A number of suggestions flowed from the meeting:

- ♦ Add a structured activity to the potlucks.
- ♦ What about a potluck over zoom?
- ♦ Continue the conversation over a cup of coffee, talking over zoom.
- ♦ Take the opportunity to reach out to someone you want to know better.
- ♦ Look through the Almanac for opportunities to join zoom meetings and/or work groups on the land. Right now, There is a building project going on for a veggie packing shed next to the barn.
- ♦ Volunteer to work on the farm with others.



*living at Common Ground, this task group needs your voice, your energy, and your creativity!*

## GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, February 18, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane

**RSVP to Becky** with subject "GC", 2 days in advance: [Blaskody@gmail.com](mailto:Blaskody@gmail.com)

*Come and observe to find out what's happening with all Circles at CGEV—and how you can be involved.*



*Mart Baumgarner, OC Extension Agent, demonstrates PPE to an avid group of budding prescribed burners*

## ALL ABOUT EVENTS

### TOURS OF THE LAND—by request

Membership Circle

*Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? You can schedule a tour of the Land! **Contact Lisa** with subject "Request a tour."*

### RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 7-8pm, Zoom.

**Contact Lisa** to join with subject, "Racial Awareness Book Group": [iberley@yahoo.com](mailto:iberley@yahoo.com)

*We will be starting a new book soon, so this is a great time to join. In keeping with our vision of living in justice and harmony with each other and the land, we formed this group to increase our awareness and understanding of racism in its many forms. This is a*

♦ The Membership Circle is inviting members to begin the advancement process to the Exploratory status, and we are excited to be supporting the process of discernment for Lucas Babinec who has submitted materials for advancement to the Engaged Level of advancement.

♦ We continue to invite members to **increase their dues** commensurate with their Member Level and activity in the community.

♦ Finally, we thank Lucas and Quaye for their contributions to the Circle and we welcome other members to join. We can sure use more help and are requesting 1-4 hours/month.



## MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Is there something that you want to share with the community? If so, contact Hope by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month: [hopematrix@fastmail.com](mailto:hopematrix@fastmail.com)

### Happy Hour “Meet and Greet” for [Phyllis Portie-Ascott](#)

February 9, 5-7pm, the Nest (next to the CGEV land)



#### RSVP to Hope:

[hopematrix@fastmail.com](mailto:hopematrix@fastmail.com)

Phyllis is a District 2 (Hillsborough and North Orange) candidate for the OC Board of County Commissioners. She is coming to the Nest so that we can get to know each

other before the March 5<sup>th</sup> election. We'll enjoy refreshments and the chance to learn what she stands for and share our views.

**From Paul—Important election information for Orange County residents.** (Others may ignore it, although a similar dilemma may apply in your NC county as well.)

**March 5<sup>th</sup> is Primary Election Day**, and things are complicated this year Since Joe Biden is running unopposed, some (perhaps many) Democrats will take the lazy way out and simply not go to the polls. BAD IDEA... for two reasons: First, there are several state and local races on the ballot, and everyone should plan to make an informed vote on each of these. Two, and **far more important**, the ballot will contain the election of

*safe place to learn together. The weekly format helps build trust and a habit of paying regular attention to this work. People attend as much as they can. The book group is for CGEV members as well as the larger community. The format is reading aloud and breaking between paragraphs to share personal reflections, questions, ideas. Please join us!*

## BUILDING A WASH & PACK AREA

Land Stewardship Circle

Tuesdays, Saturdays, & Sundays at noon

**Reach out to Caleb** with interest in participating:

[calebbuchbinder@gmail.com](mailto:calebbuchbinder@gmail.com)

*CGEV has received a \$10,000 grant to upgrade our current area for washing and packaging healthful and fresh produce for customers of Full Table CSA. Want to help construct it? Various skills and talents are needed, and no experience is necessary. Come and be a part of this big improvement to our barn.*



## PRESCRIBED BURN PREP WORKDAY

Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday, February 10, 2-4pm, parking lot

**For info. and to RSVP, contact Hope**, subject PBA:

[hopematrix@fastmail.com](mailto:hopematrix@fastmail.com)

*There's a little more work to do in order to fully prepare the woodland unit for burning. Mostly leaf blowing and some chainsaw work are needed. There will be a gathering afterwards at the Nest next door. Wear appropriate clothing and bring your own water/snacks. If the weather cooperates, we will undertake a burn sometime in mid-February.*



Orange County Schools Board of Education. For our Board of Education, this is **not a primary** – it is the **actual election**. While Democrats may be inclined to stay home, Republicans will (and should be) out in force. This could mean that outcomes of our school board races will be determined by an artifact of turnout. This would be terribly sad, as the slate of school board candidates contain some truly fantastic Democrats.

**Don't let this happen! Vote on March 5!!**



*Emerald and ruby lettuce thrive in the heart of winter (Photo: Doug)*

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

### **Foundation for Intentional Community**

#### [Death and Dying in Community](#)

Tuesday, February 20, 11-1 CST

Join seasoned and end-of-life educator Lee Warren for a 2-part exploration of end of life literacy, death positivity, and the conscious dying movement.

#### [Best Practices in Membership Recruitment](#)

Wednesday, February 21, 11-12:30

In this session, Yana Ludwig will provide you with detailed guidance for how to create a seamless and transparent process for both your community and potential members.

#### [7 Directions of Service \(7DS\)](#)

#### [Water Walk, Saturday, February 17](#)

7 Directions of Service and the 17 Rivers AIM Chapter are in the beginning stages of visioning a day-long Water Walk in Rockingham and Alamance Counties NC to celebrate our grassroots power and commitment to protect water and transition off of fossil fuels.

### **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.

## **HEART SHARE**

Membership Circle

Friday, February 16, 7-9pm, Zoom

**RSVP to Ren:** [Heart\\_Share@commonground.eco](mailto:Heart_Share@commonground.eco)

*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.*

*Organized by Ren Enberg & Quai Derr.*

## **COMMUNITY IN THE ROUND**

Governance & Training Circle

Saturday, February 24, 3-5pm, Zoom & in-person

**RSVP to Becky,** subject "CIR": [Blaskody@gmail.com](mailto:Blaskody@gmail.com)

*These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved. We'll speak to what's most relevant when the time comes and follow the meeting with a potluck supper.*

## **COMMUNITY POTLUCK**

Membership Circle

Saturday, February 24, 5:30-7:30pm, location TBA

**No RSVP required**—watch for an announcement about location or contact Lisa: [lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:lberley@yahoo.com)

*Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes chew over the Community in the Round meeting content. Please bring something to share. Typically vegetable dishes predominate but all sorts of food are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients or jot them down when you come. Location will either be on the land or at an indoor location. Watch for an email.*

