



Finding Common Ground

JUNE 2024

Up Front

In late-breaking news, Planning and Development and General Circle have just consented to establish a **First Wave Working Group**, to consist of members who intend to buy a lot at CGEV and have demonstrated the financial capacity to do so. Please go [here](#) to read the detailed announcement.

Individuals or partners/couples or pods who intend to buy a lot are invited to formally declare that intention and to indicate their financial capacity either by having at least \$20,000 invested in the LLC or by pre-qualification with Community Home Trust or other demonstrable financial support. The Working Group may also include current Operational Leaders (OL) or Elected Representatives (ER). It will help to set architectural

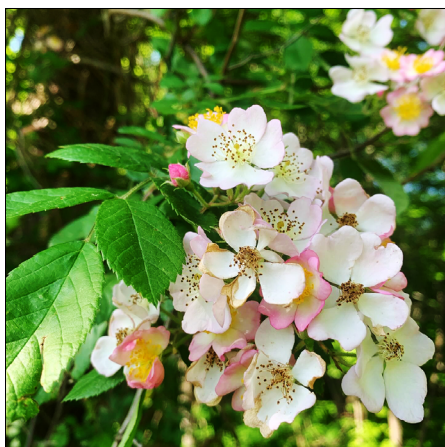
standards, finalize site layout, recommend lot prices, and organize joint design and contracting, if desired. Then, the group will forward all recommendations to P&D.

Also now available is **BUILDING at CGEV: Basic Information Sheet**, a very short guide for members planning to build at CGEV, which you can access [here](#). Actually, we urge *all* members to have a look for an up-to-date overview of planning for the built residential ecovillage!

EVENTS & MEETINGS SNAPSHOT

See the All About Events and Circle Meetings sections for more details.

- ◆ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group**, Mondays, 7-8 p.m.
- ◆ **Planning & Development**, Tuesdays, June 4 & 18, 2-4 p.m.
- ◆ **Membership**, Tuesdays, June 4 & 18, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Farm Visioning Retreat**, June 8 & 9
- ◆ **Governance & Communication**, Thursday, June 13, 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ **Heart Share**, Friday, June 14, 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ **Wellness Retreat**, Saturday, June 15, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
- ◆ **General Circle**, Sunday, June 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Community on the Ground**, Saturday, June 29, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Community Potluck**, Saturday, June 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Tours of the land by request**, Contact [Lisa](#)



Multiflora rose,
captured by Kai.

BANNER ABOVE: Third-graders from a local Waldorf school spread compost on future sweet potato beds under Farmer Doug's direction. More photos on page 6.



CIRCLE NEWS

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

Working in collaboration with Membership Circle, Quai presented the outlines of our Community Cultural agreements at the May 25 Community on the Ground to get questions and feedback from those in attendance. G&CC will be working on Community Policy Agreements in parallel with Membership Circle's work on our Community Cultural Agreements. These critical agreements will cover how we'll handle such key and potentially controversial topics such as vaccinations, pets, noise, nudity, smoking, etc. MC member Amy H. drafted these Agreements based on earlier research of a PRAG task group.

Join the discussion on our (members only) Community Forum. Here's a [link to the topic](#) and a

[reply](#) about our Cultural Agreements.

Please check out our [Common Ground Community Forum](#). You'll find important community discussions, information sharing, and ways to get to know your fellow Common Ground members. If you're having any trouble with the forum or with any of our technology (such as OnlyOffice, RiseUp, [commonground.eco](#), etc.) reach out to support@commonground.eco.

If you're a new or returning user to our member forum, [CGEV Community Forum – Instructions to Get Started](#) should answer most of your questions. If you still have questions or need help, please reach out to support@commonground.eco.

If you're interested in contributing to the work of the IT task group, please email IT@commonground.eco. (Hint: You don't have to be a techie ...).

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

What a prodigious amount of rain we received in May! The land was soaked to the brim and growth in the garden took off!

Caleb and Lara hosted a really sweet Kinship in the Apocalypse evening featuring our wonderful ally: Sweet Potato. A group of about 25 young folks learned all about sweet potatoes — key characteristics, propagation, planting, curing, storage, and more.



Quaye shows the Sweet Gum Root Monster that he and Doug wrangled and removed as they cleared the new south addition to the garden.

Lucas and Robby put shelves together to hold bins in the wash-and-pack area next to the barn.



LAND STEWARDSHIP, continued

On top of that, **a class of third graders** (see photos, page 6) from a local Waldorf school stayed on the land for a two-day overnight event. They had three sessions with the farm crew, learning about everything from sugar snap pea harvesting, biodynamic mix application, seed cleaning, DIY origami seed packets, and the glory of barn-made banana ice cream.

Work continues under the barn and the CSA wash-and-pack area. Kathleen and Anthony have put their carpentry skills to work and have created some terrific shelving and table space for the packaging workflow.

Caleb and Lucas continue to push to finish the first iteration of the barn floor. Expect a tidy country kitchen and hangout spots under there by the end of June. Perfect for more community meals!

Finally, **regarding our Conservation Easement application**, site visits are a part of the grant application process.

- On May 1, Misty Buchanan and Nathan Shepherd from the **NC National Heritage Program** came out to evaluate our wetland. They paid particular attention to the plant and amphibian species present. We traversed the entire McGowan Creek portion as well as the pond. They will send a report in due time.
- On May 2, Chelsea Blount from the **NC Land and Water Fund** (the granting agency), Kim Livingston (**Eno River Association**), and Chris Hirni (**OC Legacy Lands**) came for a site visit.



Photo by Anthony

The wash-and-pack area features colorful spandrels painted by Anthony.

The NCLWF staff has reviewed our application in detail, and the site visit helps them to get to know the project better. The decision about the grant is set for the first week in October.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

P&D is returning to architectural questions in a big way by **drafting Design Guidelines** as well as a specific guide to our development plans especially for members thinking about designing and/or helping to build their own houses. We are also revisiting our old architecture with an eye to bringing forward some of the existing schematic plans for use by those who would prefer a standard plan.

P&D continues to fine-tune the site plan, septic layout, and cost estimates, and consolidate building and financing plans. We're also managing the



Misty Buchanan and Nathan Shepherd, from the NC National Heritage Program, take a tour of the land.



Lucas and Doug put up a trellis to support tomatoes on the Farm.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, continued

rezoning of the land to enable CGEV to develop an alternative site plan using the county's new Flexible Development — Conservation Cluster framework.

We are actively engaging with County comprehensive planning. A group of us (Becky, Lucas, Doug) just presented the CGEV project to County Commissioner Sally Greene's Whole Orange initiative meeting. Meanwhile, Anthony and our site engineer and hydrologist Bobby Tucker represented CGEV at an Orange County Development Advisory Committee meeting, the first step in the formal rezoning application process.

We have also shared with the community a detailed outline of the **development-related tasks** before us [here](#). We urge all community members to have a look and join in (something for everyone!)

Pod planning also needs to continue — forming co-buying groups and clarifying preferences and possibilities for alternative living arrangements.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

In May, we welcomed **Marilu Keller** as our newest Exploratory Member. She joined CGEV as

a Visiting Member in May 2023. She has been a regular observer at the MC meetings and has taken on communication tasks. Marilu will be moving from Louisiana to North Carolina in August. She is looking forward to getting to know other members face to face, pitching in on the farm, and helping in new ways.

If you are considering living in the village and you are not yet an Engaged member, we would like to assist you through that process. Contact Lisa or Amy and look at the handy guides at commonground.eco under the **Membership tab**.

Nourishing relationships with new members and contacts is an important task of the MC. We do our best to follow up with new people who have come to potlucks and other events, who zoom in on meetings or volunteer on the Farm. If you enjoy person-to-person communication, we can use your help. Contact [Lisa](#) or [Amy H.](#)

A task group is working hard to establish a **501-c3 nonprofit** to support many of our educational goals. We are planning to submit the application in July. Please help with this exciting effort by contacting [Amy H.](#) to join the task group.

CIRCLE MEETINGS DIGEST

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays, June 4 and 18, 2-4 p.m., via Zoom or hybrid.

RSVP to Anthony with subject P&D: weston@elon.edu

MEMBERSHIP

Tuesday policy meetings, June 4 and 18, 3-5 p.m. via Zoom, with task meetings as needed on alternate Tuesdays.

RSVP to Lisa with subject "Membership Circle": LBerley@yahoo.com

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Because of the Farm Visioning Retreat weekend, we'll skip our regularly scheduled meeting this month.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Thursday, June 13, 7-9 p.m., Zoom
RSVP to Quai with G&CC in the subject line: quaifranklin@gmail.com

If you're interested in observing or helping with G&CC work, please send your request to gov-com@commonground.eco.

GENERAL CIRCLE

Sunday, June 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Zoom and possibly in-person at the Nest in Mebane.

RSVP to Becky with subject "GC", 2 days in advance: Blaskody@gmail.com

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



Photo by Kai

A butterfly alights on wildflowers.

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

GET INVOLVED

- ◆ All events are in **Eastern Time** and open to everyone unless otherwise indicated. **You must RSVP** for details 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 and uneven, and restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
- ◆ **Google Calendar Link:** [CGEV Calendar](#)
- ◆ To add or change an event, email Ren at ren.enberg2@gmail.com

TOURS OF THE LAND

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? We regularly hold tours of the Land on the last Saturday of the month (June 29) at 1:30 p.m. You can also schedule a tour at an alternate time. Contact Lisa and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line: Lberley@yahoo.com.

RACIAL AWARENESS BOOK GROUP

Membership Circle
Every Monday, 7-8 p.m., Zoom
Contact Lisa to join with subject "Racial Awareness Book Group": Lberley@yahoo.com
Our current book is "**How to be an Antiracist**" by Ibram X. Kendi. This group was formed in 2021 to help increase our awareness and understanding of racism in its many forms. This is a safe place to learn



Photo by Robby

Community members enjoy a potluck on the Land on May 25.

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!

WEEKLY FARM LUNCH

Land Stewardship Circle
Every Tuesday, 1 p.m.
Please RSVP to Lucas (**301-767-6720 / lucas.babinec@posteo.net**) by Monday evening if you plan to attend, and let us know about any dietary restrictions. All are welcome!

FARM VISIONING RETREAT WEEKEND

Land Stewardship Circle
June 8 and 9
Agenda and more details forthcoming. Let Caleb, [Doug](#), or [Lucas](#) know if you plan to attend!

POTATO HARVEST

Land Stewardship Circle
Date to be determined in the second half of June.

WELLNESS RETREAT

Membership Circle
Saturday, June 15, from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on the Land
Shannon Trudeau, a Visiting member and licensed massage therapist, is offering a Wellness Retreat with the goal of **experiencing what living at Common Ground might feel like**. Activities will include grounding and centering exercises, yoga, foraging, learning about medical teas and bitter tinctures, nature walks, and sharing lunch. There is a suggested donation of \$25 (25% of the proceeds will go to CGEV for future projects). **The retreat is limited to 10 people**, and there are still a few spaces left. RSVP to Shannon right away: shannontrudeau101@gmail.com.

MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle
Friday, June 14, 7-9 p.m., Zoom.
Note: This is a one-time change from the usual 3rd Friday of the month.
Organizers and co-facilitators: Ren Enberg & Quai Derr, Heart_Share@commonground.eco
This month's theme is **Identity**

The Farm shines as host for Waldorf School third graders



Children pick sugar snap peas on the Farm.



Anthony H. talks to students under the trees on the Land.



Caleb (seated, center) leads the children in a song.



Farmer Doug teaches the kids how to thresh.

EVENTS, continued

and Belonging, Part 2: Are These My People? This month's theme is a continuation on last month's because we have so much more to share! So, if you missed it, here's your chance to join in and get to know other members on a much deeper level as we practice both compassion and vulnerability.

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle
Saturday, June 29, 3-5 p.m.,
Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane.

RSVP to Becky, subject "COG":

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. You'll get to know each other and learn a lot! Make it a habit to come.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Membership Circle
Saturday, June 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m., following Community on the Ground. Location TBA.
Watch for an announcement or contact Lisa: Lberley@yahoo.

[com](http://www.heartweavers.com). No RSVP required.

Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes discuss the Community on the Ground meeting content. Please bring something to share. Typically vegetable dishes predominate, but all sorts of foods are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients. Watch for an email announcement for location.

SAVE THE DATE:

HeartWeavers is exploring the possibility of having a **Summer Solstice Gathering on Friday, June 21**, on the Land. If you're interested in co-creating a wonderful celebration, contact Jane.