



Finding Common Ground

JULY 2024

Up Front

On June 8 and 9, our farmers and interns hosted an amazing **Farm Visioning Retreat Weekend**. Caleb, Lucas, Kai and Doug organized and facilitated the event with about 18 members of all levels and visitors attending.

We enjoyed shared meals cooked in the in the new first floor country kitchen underneath the barn, featuring mostly ingredients grown on the land or on neighboring farms. There was even a pizza night to cap off the first day! We also enjoyed lots of singing together, a particularly harmonizing highlight of the whole experience.

Read all about it in **Land Stewardship Circle News**.



Photo by Hope

Common Ground members who attended the Farm Visioning Retreat Weekend on June 8 and 9 pose for a photo.

BANNER ABOVE: Folks attending the Summer Solstice circle up for some community fun on June 21.

Caleb speaks in front of visioning boards covered with sticky notes filled with fabulous ideas.

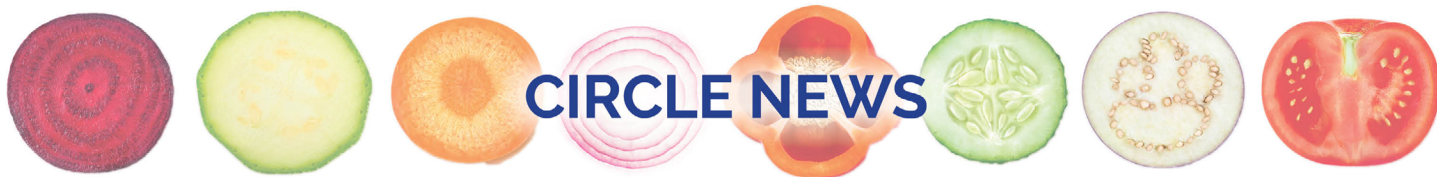


EVENTS & MEETINGS SNAPSHOT

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

- ◆ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group**, Mondays, 7-8 p.m.
- ◆ **Weekly Farm Lunch**, Tuesdays, 1 p.m.
- ◆ **Planning & Development**, Tuesdays, July 2, 16, & 30, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Membership**, Tuesdays, July 2 & 16, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Land Stewardship**, July 9, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Governance & Communication**, Thursday, July 11,

- 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ **Heart Share**, Friday, July 19, 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ **General Circle**, Sunday, July 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Tours of the land**, Saturday, July 27, 1:30 p.m., or by request. Contact [Lisa](#).
- ◆ **Community on the Ground**, Saturday, July 27, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Community Potluck**, Saturday, July 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Movie Night at the Barn**, July 27, after the potluck.



MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

June has been a hot month! But that hasn't stopped the community from coming out for some wonderful programs on the land. The **Solstice Celebration, Farm Vision Retreat, Potluck Supper, Tuesday Farm Lunches, and Wellness Retreat** were enjoyed by many, including two sweet babies. Spending time with each other, looking up at the expansive sky, listening to sounds of the birds and insects, train whistles, (even the traffic on I-40), and Zooming in for **Heart Shares** is the glue that knits our community together.

In a funny way you could say the community has been going through a kind of pregnancy for the past 12 years — growing and evolving as it gets ready to give birth to a village. The Membership Circle is focused on **orienting visiting members**, following up with visitors who come to the farm and other events, advancing established members to **Exploratory, Engaged, and Affiliate levels of membership**, supporting the formation of **residential pods**, and drafting community agreements. In addition to these, and more so in July, we are finding ways to refocus dialogue and action on living in a diverse community with attention to racism.



Photo by Roshana

Amy asks a question about a plant in the herb garden during the Wellness Retreat, led by Shannon (standing, center) on June 15.

Nourishing relationships with new members and contacts is an important task of MC. If you enjoy person-to-person communication, we can use your help. Contact Lisa, Lberley@yahoo.com, or Amy H., amy_halberstadt@ncsu.edu.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

P&D is in high gear! We continue to manage the rezoning of the land back to R1 conventional zoning to enable us to develop an alternative site plan using the county's new Flexible Development – Conservation Cluster framework. We're also continuing to work out a Conservation Cluster-based site plan and gather infrastructure cost estimates.

The work to conceptualize the eventual organizational structure of the whole project and the movement of responsibility and money through it is ongoing. And **we're supporting the Groundmakers (formerly "First Wave") Working Group**; these are members who intend to buy a lot at CGEV and have demonstrated the financial capacity to do so. There's detailed planning involved, including consolidating **Design Guidelines** for members thinking to design and/or help build their own houses.

These are all initiatives that affect the entire community. Accordingly, **we have created forum posts for them** (very shortly to post draft Design Guidelines in their own thread also). Go [here](#) to find them.



Photo by Hope

Folks gather to experience the summer solstice together on June 21 under the Grandmother Oak Tree.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, continued

We urge all community members to **ask questions and offer reactions**. Many things are taking shape quickly now, so if you have suggestions, feedback or questions, **this is the time!**

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

The big news for LS Circle was the **Farm Visioning Retreat Weekend** on June 8 and 9. Caleb masterfully led us in group-building activities, and our community of retreat friends grew closer and more creative as the retreat progressed.

Kai led us through many grounding practices throughout the weekend and on a meditative hike that left us all feeling more connected to the land. Down by “Crossing Over,” we listened and then shouted out many qualities and emotions this land wants us humans to bring forth, all the while basking in the bird song, some of us with stream mud between our toes.

At the edge of the far field, Doug spoke about his **vision of an integrated agriculture** taking place before our eyes. Other folks chimed in with their own visions: a pond in that depression over there, a community-dug well, more prescribed burning, many kinds of staple crops, big lush trees, animals, a few more natural building structures ...

Back in the barn, we got down to business as small groups discussed various aspects of the farm, forest and community, putting all the pieces in play on sticky notes moving around the visioning board. We generated many ideas in our group discussions, and cohesion and trust grew as we relaxed more into this process of building a sustainable agrarian community.

The clear need arose for **greater clarity about the agreements and relationships between farm/community entities and initiatives**. A transition from Doug’s sole-proprietor farm business into something more representative of our community’s mission is also a high priority.

Another common thread brought up repeatedly was the desire to see more members on the land, sharing joyful moments and engaging in meaningful work together. **The land is our core**, and we agreed that time on the land by more and more of our members will move us forward.



Photos by Hope

Lucas rolls out pizza dough during the Farm Visioning Retreat Weekend.



Checking on the pizza ...



.. and eating the pizza!

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE, continued

The weekend energized and grounded all of us and increased our commitment to the land and each other. **Big thanks to Caleb, Lucas, Kai and Doug for giving us this firm foundation of unity and trust** to build on as we move forward with future retreats, hopefully quarterly.

Come and join us on the land at any opportunity you can. We will have a job board with tasks that can fit into any schedule or skill level. In the field or in the barn, there is always something to do. Make a commitment to support our farmers and our mission today!

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

We continue to work with General Circle to plan and facilitate meetings, and we're currently working with them on a more integrated collaborative planning and facilitation program.

We're also involved in planning Community on the Ground (COG) meetings on the 4th Saturday of each month.

We've kicked off the start of our community's much-needed Community Policy Agreements. You'll hear more in upcoming COG gatherings, but starting now you can join the conversation in our (members only) [Community Forum](#). The discussion is [Community Policy Agreements](#).

If you have any trouble on the Forum, OnlyOffice, or any of our technical platforms or soft-



Photo by Kai

Robby tests a stove to make sure it's working properly. It was a very welcome addition to the kitchen area in the Barn!

ware, please send an email to support@commonground.eco and someone will reach out to you with support. If you're interested in contributing to the work of the IT task group, please email IT@commonground.eco.

CIRCLE MEETINGS DIGEST

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays, July 2, 16 & 30, 2:30-4:30 p.m., via Zoom or hybrid.

Hybrid meetings (often having lunch at the barn first). Observers are welcome. Email Anthony for updates and link with subject P&D: weston@elon.edu

MEMBERSHIP

Tuesday policy meetings, July 2 & 16, 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

Tuesday, July 9, 7-8:30 p.m.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Thursday, July 11, 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, July 21, 6:30 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.

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



Photo by Robby

Hope, Janey and Lara are at the beehive checking for mites on June 10.

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



A bouquet awaits our new intern.

many forms. This is a 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!

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!

MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle
Friday, July 19, 7-9 p.m., Zoom.
Organizers and co-facilitators: Ren Enberg & Quai Derr, Heart_Share@commonground.eco
This month's theme is **Open Check-in and Connection.**

EVENTS, continued

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle

**Saturday, July 27, 3-5 p.m.,
Zoom and in-person at a
location TBA.**

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, July 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.,
following Community on the
Ground. Location TBA.**

Watch for an announcement or



Mama red-eyed vireo keeps a watchful eye on her two nestlings.

Photo by Margret

contact Lisa: Lberley@yahoo.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.

TOMATO CANNING PARTY

Date to be determined, in the second half of July.

MOVIE NIGHT AT THE BARN

Saturday, July 27, after the potluck.

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

CGEV Members may list their events not sponsored by CGEV Circles as an FYI. Supply title, date, time, location, links, and description.

Common Ground member **Melanie Yukov, of Root 2 Rise Wellness**, is leading **medicinal plant walks** on the riverwalk in Hillsborough on Saturdays, from 9 to 11 a.m. We will explore nature's bounty, including medicinal and edible plants, and identify plants as we go. Participants receive detailed notes on plants we cover, and we'll celebrate the walk with a wild edible treat and delicious herbal beverage. For more info and to register, visit root2risewellness.org/plant-walk

We are bringing Herbalicious Explorations to the Common Ground land! These fun family-friendly classes are built on learning about and engaging in medicine making, plant identification and exploration, along with herbal mocktail making. Use your senses to explore nature's bounty. Details and registration here: root2risewellness.org/herbaliciousexplore

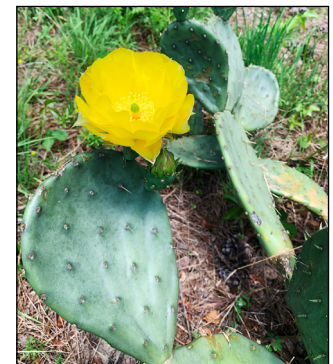
OUTSIDE EVENT

REALationship 101 Class by Steve Torma

The first [REALationship 101](#) class is a seven-week blended IN-PERSON AND ONLINE option. It starts TUESDAY, JULY 9, from 7-9 p.m. Eastern Time, ending August 27. We will be skipping August 13.

The second is a two-day Saturday class, ONLINE ONLY, being held AUGUST 3 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time.

As always people are welcome to pay whatever they can afford by using the "By Donation" option when they register.



Prickly pear, our resident cactus, bloomed at the end of May.

Photo by Kai