

Finding Common Ground

DECEMBER 2024

Up Front

On Tuesday, November 26, during the last Farm Lunch of the year, we celebrated Kai's "graduation" from Farm Apprentice to Farmer.

The Farm Team asked Kai some time ago if she would stay on after her apprenticeship ended November 27, and this fall she decided to do so.

At the Farm Lunch, Kai talked about the blessing of living in Cob Haven, a tiny cob structure on the Land, which she calls Pachamama's Womb.

Kai arrived at Common Ground Ecovillage from Mexico this past spring. We're so glad she's decided to stay on as a member of the Farm Team. And we so appreciate her talents displayed here in the Almanac, where she has offered beautiful photos of the Land and kept a record of many magical moments at CGEV.



Photo by Robby

Kai puts on an official "farm hat" during the Farm Lunch while we celebrated her decision to stay on with the Farm Team as an official Farmer.



Cob Haven, or Pachamama's Womb, as Kai addresses it, is a tiny cob building on the Land.



Kai receives appreciation from Caleb and others at the Farm Lunch.

BANNER ABOVE: The woods are carpeted with the beautiful colors of autumn. / *Photo by Kai*

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

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 fourth Saturday of the month (**December 7**) at **1:30 p.m.** **RSVP is required.** You can also schedule a tour at an alternate time. Contact Lisa and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line: Lberley@yahoo.com. Or text 919-619-2979.

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
This is a great time to join because we recently started reading a new book: *The Rage of Innocence – How America Criminalizes Black Youth*, by Kristin Henning. The book group is for CGEV members and the larger community. The format is reading aloud and breaking between paragraphs to share personal reflections, questions, and ideas. People attend as often as they can.

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle
Saturday, December 7, 2-5 p.m., Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane.
RSVP to Becky, subject "COG."
These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved.
NOTE: Due to the holidays, this will be the one COG meeting for November and December. Also, December's meeting will extend to three hours to have more time

for Grounders to discuss issues in small groups around the construction and financing schedule. Meantime, new visitors will meet instead with longtime members to be apprised of current events and development plans. The meeting will be followed by a potluck at the Nest.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Membership Circle
Saturday, December 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m., following Community on the Ground at The Nest.
No RSVP required.
Please bring something to share. Vegetable dishes typically predominate, but all sorts of food are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients or jot them down

We'll miss the Farm Lunches over the winter months and look forward to these sweet gatherings when warmer weather arrives.

Photo by Becky



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

when you come. Make it a habit to come to these events!

MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle
Friday, December 20, 7-9 p.m., Zoom. Organizers Ren Enberg & Quai Derr. RSVP Heart_Share@commonground.eco. This month's theme TBD.

WINTER SOLSTICE CEREMONY

Land Stewardship Circle
Saturday, December 21, in the evening
Lucas and Hope are collaborating on this offering. More details are forthcoming.



CIRCLE MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP

Friday policy meetings, **December 5 & 19, 12-2 p.m. via Zoom.** Task meetings, as needed, on alternate Thursdays. RSVP to Lisa with subject "Membership Circle": LBerley@yahoo.com. We welcome visitors and encourage Exploratory Members to join the circle and Visiting Members to help with tasks.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Tuesday, December 10, 4:30 p.m. RSVP to [Doug](#). Meeting followed by a supper at the Barn. We'll focus on a listening session about the Far Field as we finalize plans for how our tending of the field will evolve in 2025.

FINANCIAL & LEGAL SUB

Thursday, December 12, 2-3:30 p.m., in person at Arcadia Community in Carrboro. RSVP to Randy (rdodd.cgev@gmail.com), at least two days prior. Zoom/remote option pending interest. Randy will convene Finance and Legal for the last time

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Subscribe to our [Common Ground calendar](#) or view it in your browser. Send calendar requests with a subject line of "Calendar Request" or "Calendar Update" to calendar@commonground.eco.

And share your voice in Our Community Forum: <https://discourse.commonground.eco/>

as leader of this Subcircle. Then it will become a task team looking for more members. Contact Becky at blaskody@gmail.com to offer your participation.

GENERAL CIRCLE

Sunday, December 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m., on Zoom.

RSVP to Hope with subject "GC", 2 days in advance: hopenatrix@fastmail.com. Come observe to find out what's happening with all Circles at CGEV and how you can be involved.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Tuesday, December 19, 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.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

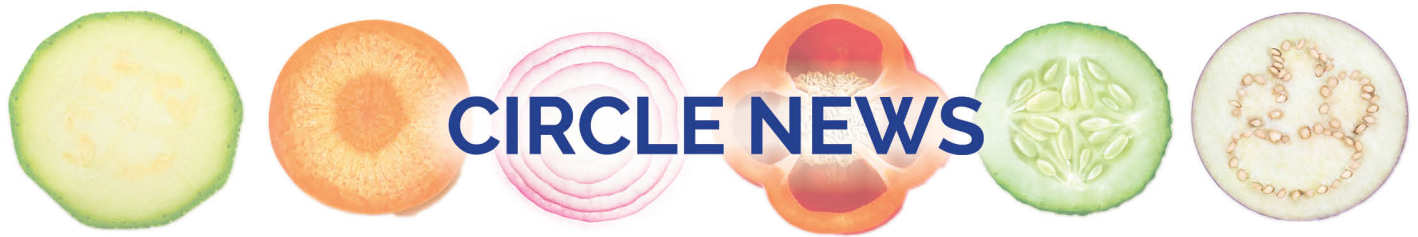
Meetings for December not set at time of publication.

Email Anthony for updates and link with subject P&D: weston@elon.edu. Observers welcome.



The forest appears magical with its muted colors on this early November day.

Photo by Kai



LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

The Farm Lunch is hibernating now that the temperatures are lower. We've grown heaps of community-ness during our weekly meals, with 15 attendees on average each Tuesday since June. We'll see about restarting on a warm day in February. In the meantime, keep practicing those community cooking skills because in 2025 we will be asking other community members besides the farm crew to be in rotation for cooking!

November was an unusually warm month and the garden is bursting with happy veggies. But the hard frosts have now arrived and many beds are covered to protect the plants. The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) business is working with Farmer Kai to get clearer about our offerings and grow our customer base. We're also pondering how to evolve past the sole-proprietor entity into something more cooperative and perhaps community-held.

If you've hit the trails lately, you've noticed that autumn has blanketed the forest floor with leaves. This makes the trails beautiful but tricky to navigate. **We're calling community mem-**



Photo by Becky

Folks gather for a Tuesday Farm Lunch, including special guests Joanna, an early Common Ground member now living in the Netherlands, and Alana, from whom we're purchasing the Land.

bers to wield rakes and leaf blowers to tidy up the trails to make them safe and enjoyable. Contact Hope if you can spare some time for this enriching and important task.

The Far Field is slated for a prescribed burn in the first half of December. Stay tuned!

If you've ever wanted to be a Beekeeper, now is a perfect time step forward. Our current beekeepers are stepping down due to changing life circumstances, coincident with the fact that all three beehives failed this fall for various reasons. If you decide to participate and tend hives at Common Ground, you will inherit all the makings of three vibrant beehives including wax comb on all of the frames. All that's missing is the bees. **The Orange County Beekeepers Association is offering [an 11-week course](#), starting January 7, where you'll learn everything you need to know to get started.** We highly recommend doing this as a team, so bring your collaborators with you. Jane, Lara, or Hope will



Photo by Kai

A cart is filled with an abundance of cabbage.

[See CIRCLE NEWS, page 5](#)

be glad to talk with you about their rich experiences tending to these extraordinary creatures. And the flowers and fields will thank you!

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

Common Ground's Flexible Subdivision / Conservation Cluster Concept Plan application with Orange County has been approved, pending a few small revisions that Bobby Tucker, our site engineer, is now making. This approval is preliminary and advisory to the major commitment to moving ahead with platting, surveying, and full-scale review. Once finished with this somewhat complex and expensive step, we will achieve the final regulatory approval needed to begin infrastructure work and offer lots for sale and house sites for building.

On November 21, we held a Neighborhood Information Meeting at the Efland Community Center, as required by Orange County for our development process. We met two curious neighbors who liked the plans we showed them, delighted by the relatively small development size (12 lots) and our conservation plans.

The proposed site plan has been shared with the community at Grounders retreats and COG meetings. **Please review the Community Forum thread [here](#)** which outlines the steps to take from here toward building. At the same time, there is a vigorous discussion both in the Forum and at the last Grounders meeting of whether and how we might be more ambitious or differently oriented in our development plans. Go [here](#) for a full read.

No matter what direction we take, **a vision is forming to build a Common House first**. This will help us to both build human community and jumpstart the actual construction process. No further approvals or large amounts of money will be necessary to build one such building on an unimproved road. It would, of course, need to be carefully integrated with future residential development. Please go to the Forum threads (there are two) on [Building the Common House](#) for more information and a challenge to step forward to take active leadership roles!



Photo by Kai

The sun rises behind the trees of the Far Field in early November.

THE GROUNDERS GROUP

The Grounders are folks planning to build in the first wave of house construction at Common Ground. On December 7 from 2-5 p.m., the monthly Community on the Ground meeting will extend to three hours to have more time for Grounders to discuss issues in small groups around the construction and financing schedule. New visitors can meet with long-time members to be apprised of current events and development plans. That meeting will be followed as usual by a potluck at the Nest. See the Events section for more details.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

Our small circle is growing! **Quaye Trimble is in the process of joining**. He brings his unique self, perspectives as a parent, and expertise in IT. We are excited.

In the past month, five people have submitted JOIN forms and received Welcome Letters inviting them to connect to the community. We are exploring both additional ways to get CG event information in front of new folks and ways to better track our new members.

Member advancements are in the works for a number of the Grounders. The newest category of membership, Affiliate Member, is proving to be a satisfying choice for active members of the community who do not plan to live on the land.

[See CIRCLE NEWS, page 6](#)

We're harvesting red corn!

After the final Farm Lunch for the season, Janey harvested six ears of stunning red corn. The story is, Jane's daughter gifted her with a small bag of heritage corn seeds from Mexico. The family that generously provided the seeds has been growing this corn on their land for more than 200 years.

Even though it was late in the season, Doug planted a handful of these seeds on the Land. The corn stalks miraculously grew to 12 feet and sent out many ears. And then the squirrels came and nearly decimated the crop!

Jane and Doug put their heads together and devised a method to save the remaining six ears by encasing them in a cone-shaped metal cage. We now have gorgeous seed corn for next season.



Photos by Hope

Janey opens a cob of red corn, grown from heritage corn seeds from Mexico.



CIRCLE NEWS, from Page 5

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

This Circle is tackling a variety of issues from **training in Sociocracy and Non-Violent Communication, to developing a membership database, to overseeing IT issues.** If you're interested in contributing to the work

of the IT task group, please email IT@com-monground.eco. **We need many different kinds of skill sets** such as customer relationship management, writing, editing, record and form design, etc., along with information-technology-based skills. If you are attracted to learning more about these issues and our work, then we want to include you! Come join our next meeting and let's get started.

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

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

Melanie of Root 2 Rise Wellness empowers anxious women over 40 who are struggling with reflux to understand their body's

needs, rewire their nervous system, and release stuck energy, thus building the foundation for inner peace and confidence. She has a free vagus nerve training to get unstuck, decrease inflammation, and help improve digestion.

Visit root2risewellness.org/vagusnerve.

Carrots cuddle in Kai's hand in early November.

Photo by Kai



MORE PHOTOS!



ABOVE: The table shows what a weekly CSA share might look like. RIGHT: Kai and farm volunteer Laura Raduenz sell veggies and talk with folks about our Open Table CSA at the [Saturday Slowdown at Ramble-Rill Farm](#).



Photo by Randy

Farmer Doug moves a tree that crashed onto the road that leads to the Barn, right before the last Farm Lunch of the season.



Photos by Kai

Abigail, Hope, and Kai commune with, harvest, and re-plant a few black cohosh roots in the woods.



Even Bubbles the farm dog is chilly on this November day.

Photo by Kai





Photo by Kai

Persimmon Pond is peaceful on this mid-November day.



Photo by Becky

Colorful leaves lie on the forest floor.



Photo by Kai

Gonzolo and volunteer Santi work in the field while Caleb maneuvers the tractor as they prepare for sweet potato harvest.