



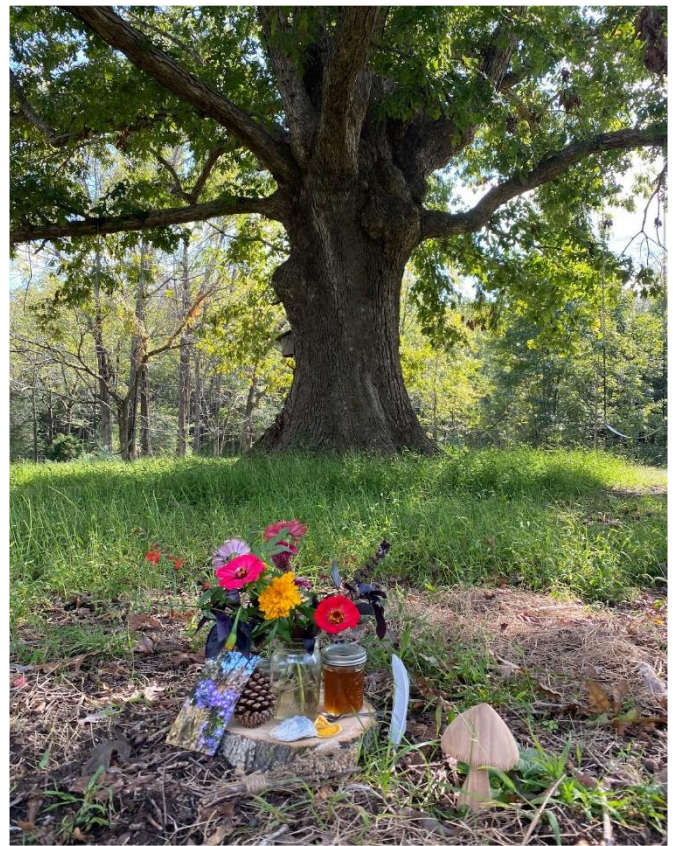
# Finding Common Ground

## October 2025

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### Up Front

**Huzzah!! Our application to create the Many Turtles Learning Collective is now approved by the IRS as a 501(c)3!!** Many thanks to Karin Jacquin and Becky Laskody for marching this initiative to the finish line! This nonprofit entity is important because it allows us to begin fundraising to support with tax deductible contributions the educational, scientific, and artistic endeavors that CGEV members have been longing to offer. The Collective is planning workshops and fundraising for 2025 with a goal of gaining \$50,000 in 12 weeks. We're looking to fund educational spaces in our community house, help defray the costs of helping our two grand oaks weather the stress of infrastructure installation, and relocating the many turtles and other creatures from the pond as it is drained and resurrected. **Our first fundraising training will be Oct 7 from 4:30-6:30pm.** We'll be clarifying our goals for 2026 among other things. **See the Events section for details.** We hope you will contact [Amy H](#), [Lucas Babinec](#), [Lisa Berley](#), and/or [Becky Laskody](#) with your ideas and donations.



*Top: Spicebush berries ripen in the woods (Photo: Hope)*

*Above: Complementing the Grandmother Oak (Photo: Lara)*



*Excavators are parked and ready to go (Photo: Randy)*

**Infrastructure construction is imminent!** Task Teams to prepare the land and all its creatures for development are still forming and working NOW. We need EVERYONE to volunteer to bring tender loving care to the land as we proceed. Contact [Janey](#) and/or sign up at [this link](#). Many ideas are listed in this spreadsheet and there's room for more.



## Circle News

### Planning & Development

#### **Front-page news!! Extra!! Extra!! Read all about it!!**

September was another hugely eventful month in the grand epic of Common Ground Ecovillage. **The big news is that we have given MEC (our main infrastructure contractor) the green light to start construction and have received approval from Orange County Erosion Control to begin work.** Equipment and materials are already showing up on the land. Randy and Anthony are coordinating with MEC. We have given them approval to pursue their first tasks of erosion control protection work, including fencing, two new temporary drainage basins, and ditches to convey water to the basins, all of which should take 3-4 weeks.



*The development team and Doug review where the erosion control silt fences will be located (Photo: Becky)*

We can do this because we have generous members who have helped us to get some money “in the bank”. But we are not yet able to green-light the actual clearing or new installations—roads, wells, septic—because uncertainty remains about when we will be able to draw on the Housing Assistance Council loan funds. **An essential message to all potential residents is that we will only be able to give MEC approval to continue when we have confidence that we can access the loan funds by executing the pre-sales agreements.** There is a ripple effect with planning work with other contractors and beyond. **If you are ready, or close**

## Meetings & Events

- ♦ **All gatherings are in Eastern Time** and open to everyone unless otherwise stated.
- ♦ **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, terrain is unpaved and uneven, and restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
- ♦ **Google Calendar Link:** CGEV Calendar  
To subscribe, add or change an event, email Ren at [calendar@commonground.eco](mailto:calendar@commonground.eco)
- ♦ **Members Discourse Forum Link:**  
<https://discourse.commonground.eco/>

### Circle Meetings

#### **Financial & Legal Subcircle**

Every Tuesday, 3:30-5pm, Zoom  
[RSVP to Theresa](#) with subject “F&L”

#### **Planning & Development**

Every Wednesday, 4:00-5:30pm, hybrid  
[RSVP to Anthony](#) with subject “P&D”

#### **Membership**

Thursdays, October 2 & 16, 5:15pm, hybrid, at the home of Amy H. Task meetings, as needed, are on alternate weeks, same time.  
[RSVP to Lisa](#) with subject “Membership Circle”

#### **General Circle**

Sundays, October 5 and 19, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom  
[RSVP to Hope](#) with subject “GC” in advance

#### **Land Stewardship**

Tuesday, October 14, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed)  
[RSVP to Doug](#) with subject “LSC” for details

#### **Governance & Communication**

Tuesday, October 21, 7-9pm, Zoom  
[RSVP to Quai](#) with subject “G&CC”

**to ready, to execute a pre-sale agreement, or have questions, please contact Anthony, Becky, or Theresa ASAP.** If you are *not* ready or close to ready, please do the same, even more urgently. Circle members will be reaching out soon to Grounders, but don't wait!

So let's talk about Money!!! **Mid-month we finally got acceptance of our loan application to Housing Assistance Council (HAC) for \$700,000 to help finance infrastructure building.** HAC is a national non-profit devoted to affordability. Theresa and Becky deserve huge credit for leading this work—a full-time job in fact—in close coordination with Robyn Heeks, our development manager. We'll be repaying this short-term loan out of sales funds. Meanwhile, we're seeking a \$150,000 additional long-term loan primarily to enable LLC members to apply their equity as part of their purchases and to enable LLC members with higher levels of equity to donate it to help out other members' purchases. We have good leads for possible lenders for this purpose, including one specifically supporting co-ops, **but if anyone knows any potential mission-driven investors interested in supporting this work, please be in touch with Theresa or Becky ASAP. Now's the time!**



*Autumn stillness at the pond (Photo: Kai)*

Elaborate organizational scenarios are now being worked out also to nail down the legal structures for a land co-op to own the land and lease the village area to an HOA, which in turn will lease lots (for 99 years!) to occupants. Multiple lawyers and



*Reema & Chris of the Eno River Asso. walk the Conservation Easement borders with Randy & Hope (Photo: Hope)*

## **All About Events**

### **Tours of the Land**

#### **Membership Circle**

*Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? Contact Lisa and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line: [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com). Or text 919-619-2979. We usually have a tour each month at 1:30pm on the same day as the Community on the Ground (COG) meeting and Potluck.*

### **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](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com)  
*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. **We are at the start of a new book:** Pushout: the Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools by Monique W. Morris*

### **Community Farm-to-Table Lunch**

#### **Land Stewardship Circle**

#### **Every Tuesday at 1:00pm at the Barn**

[Contact Lucas](#) if you plan to come: 301-767-6720





*Tuesday Farm lunches are delicious fun—join us! (Photo: Kai)*

accountants are working this over, and members got a broad-scale intro to it at the Sept. COG meeting.

Another active topic for P&D is coordination of all the contracting work and plans with the CGEV teams that are being created to support the work. A cohort of members is actively figuring out how the teams can cross-pollinate, and also communicate with other members and neighbors about development as it unfolds, as well as preparing the land and the creatures for the disruptions. One plan is to have on the land discussions after the farm lunches on Tuesdays, at least through October. All members are, as always, and especially right now, invited and encouraged to come out to the land for work, play, communing with each other and the land, celebrating this fruitional moment, grieving the imminent impacts, and much more.

### **Task Teams to prepare the land and all its creatures for development are forming and working NOW.**

The intensive and vital work of tree protection for the two Grand Oaks described elsewhere in this Almanac is honored and appreciated in P&D planning. **Here are some cool groups that have formed/are forming/could be formed:** • Neighbor Relations Coordination Team to reach out to immediately adjacent neighbors • Tree Milling Team to plan for and coordinate milling of several dozen trees • Tree Protection Team to protect trees on the edge of disturbance • Tree Planting Team to plan for and plant trees required under zoning permit • Pond Team to relocate fish, turtles and frogs from the

*Come enjoy a simple, nourishing meal prepared straight from the garden plus thoughtful conversation with good humans who care about the earth. **In order to put these meals on every week, we need support.** This can be a chance for you to learn the skill of cooking for a community with what's seasonally available. Lucas can help you plan the menu and get everything ready to put on a yummy farm-to-table meal for other community members and visitors. Please sign up to support the cooking or the post-meal dishwashing [here](#). And remember to offer donations—cash, Venmo, or pantry staples are much appreciated (olive oil, rice, beans, lentils, GF flour, etc...)*



*Box Turtles like Muscadine grapes, too, (Photo: Margret)*

### **Many Turtles Learning Collective: Fundraising Training**

**Tuesday, October 7, 4:30-6:30pm**, hybrid at the home of Amy H. [RSVP to Amy H](#) with subject "Many Turtles."

*Join us for our first fundraising training for this brand new 501(c)3 to brainstorm goals for 2026! We are also looking for a media specialist (advertising, coordinating efforts), someone to*





*Spiral of feelings and needs at an NVC event (Photo: Becky)*

pond before it is drained and refurbished. • Wildflower Re-location Team • Wildlife Thicket Team to create thickets adjacent to areas of tree felling, Etc.!!! More volunteers are needed— Contact Janey [meadows.maryjane@gmail.com](mailto:meadows.maryjane@gmail.com) and/or sign up at [this link](#). Many ideas are listed in this spreadsheet and there's room for more.

Following up on site development, a number of members took part in a design consultation and charette with Anthony on an early September Saturday. We'll do another again soon. It's easy to focus on the excitement of the moment, but remember what comes next—houses! Our Design Subcircle is also up and running and welcomes inquiries and proposals. Contact Anthony at [weston@elon.edu](mailto:weston@elon.edu).

## Governance and Communication

Over the Fall Equinox weekend, our friend and NVC mentor, Steve Torma, traveled from Earthaven (near Asheville) to lead us in two sessions to help us both with current growing pain challenges and also teach us how to do it on our own. On Saturday, we experienced a practice session to express our feelings and needs and request someone else to reflect them back in their own words. We also learned about the impact on our nervous systems from expressing gratitude often during this

develop a web page to highlight our goals and clarify why and how to donate, and an Organizer to keep everything and everybody on task.

## Community on the Ground (COG)

*Governance & Communications Circle*

**Saturdays, October 11 & 25, 2-5pm**, on the land  
RSVP to [Becky](#), subject "COG."

*If you want to play a part in what's happening here, this is the place to be! This gathering will be for in-person conversations. We will have a zoom link for folks to call into for audio only. Stay tuned for further details.*

## Community Potluck

*Membership Circle*

**Saturdays, October 11 & 25, 5:30-7:30pm**,

following Community on the Ground, on the land by the Grandmother Oak Tree.

RSVP is helpful for set-up and location. Contact Lisa at [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com) or 919 619 2979.

*Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes chew over the Community on the Ground meeting content. 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 when you come.*



*Work to complete High Tunnel construction is nearing completion (Photo: Kai)*



## Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful

*Governance & Communications Circle*

**Focus:** Mourning Practice - Miki Kashtan, a well-respected teacher of NVC has suggested that to stay in integrity when there is a gap between our vision and reality, we need to mourn, to fill that gap with tears (symbolically or literally). This practice "helps soften the tendency to either suppress one's wanting or force the world to conform, thus reducing the chances of resorting to violence in thought, word, or action."

**Invitation:** When you feel disappointment, loss, or frustration because your desires and expectations aren't matching your reality, allow yourself to sit with that sadness, to wrap yourself in compassion as you would a sad or disappointed child and observe a gentleness come into your heart. Notice any shift in your body or emotions and possibly even your perception of whoever or whatever you believe to have stimulated those feelings.

process. On Sunday, we learned how to use the NVC dance floor setup to hear and understand each other on an even deeper level when working with complex issues. It was an emotional and impactful experience and we are so grateful to Steve for making himself available to us all weekend!

Steve expressed his appreciation for the sweet care he was given and how much he enjoyed resting at Heart's Ease, getting some quality sleep, and having a reprieve from electronic connectivity while there! He relayed feeling joy to be resting while listening to our celebrations in the distance. Steve has also gifted us with a wealth of materials to continue on our journey, including the NVC Dance floor cards. If you feel moved to thank Steve with a donation, watch for an email from Ren for details. G&CC will shortly be sending a survey about your experience with our NVC course last Spring and what you would like to have happen next. **If you did not take that**

## Full Table Farm Dinner

*Land Stewardship Circle*

**Thursday, October 16, 5pm onward (we eat at 6:30pm)**

RSVP to Farmer Caleb: (323) 561-1960

*Every third Thursday of the month, come out to the farm and join us for a simple, nourishing, farm-to-table meal prepared by your favorite farmers from the abundance of what's in season, shared with other wonderful humans dining al fresco beside the garden. Feel free to come as early as 5:00 to stroll in the garden, settle in, maybe pick some flowers for the table, and work up an appetite for the 6:30 meal. Children are most welcome, too.*



*Goni's parents came for a visit and prepared a beautiful and symbolic Rosh Hashanah Farm Lunch (Photo: Hope)*

## Two Monthly Heart Shares Membership Circle

*These monthly gatherings offer a meaningful*



course and/or are due (for membership advancement) for cooperative culture and NVC training, then please [contact Ren](#) to schedule it.



Peeping through the High Tunnel door (Photo: Kai)

## Land Stewardship

Tree ecologist Matt Archibald from Leaf and Limb met with Theresa, Anthony, Lucas, Kai, and Rachel B on Wednesday, September 10th. The meeting focused on the elder Grandmother and Grandfather Oaks trees by the pavilion. Matt was surprised at how healthy Grandfather Oak is based on the stress incurred throughout the tree's life. He wondered if the two trees are actually the same age (roughly) and represent how loving conditions shape a tree's outward appearance and expression.

Common Ground members met on Tuesday, Sept 16th + Wednesday, Sept 17th with a focus on processing everything resulting from the meeting on Sept 10th. Folks included Randy, Janey, Becky, Momo, Theresa, Hope, Doug, Caleb, and Lucas. [Matt sent us a proposal](#) for the work to be done for the trees by Leaf and Limb.

Randy created a rough draft of steps to take as a community to care for these trees:

- Mark tree protection areas around grandmother and grandfather Oaks. These areas will need to be marked out in coordination with MEC's fencing efforts.
- Schedule time for Matt to come out again after the tree protection areas are marked
- Finalize the scope of the work for each tree

*way for CGEV members to connect on a deeper level than our usual gatherings allow. New members often explore this way, so committed members are encouraged to welcome them.*

**Sunday, October 5, 10am, In-person on the land, meet under Grandmother Oak.**

Contact Lucas with any questions (301-767-6720) *You are invited to come and sit in a circle to be enveloped and supported by the beauty of the land and each other.*

**Friday, October 17, 7-9pm, Zoom**

RSVP to [Heart\\_Share@commonground.eco](mailto:Heart_Share@commonground.eco). *Ren & Quai will be out of town, so we need a volunteer to organize and facilitate this month. Contact Ren at [ren.enberg2@gmail.com](mailto:ren.enberg2@gmail.com) if you can help! We'll support you in this effort. Watch for a detailed email or just RSVP now. Facilitators are needed; we'll support you and you can choose the theme!*



Marlene delights in picking a bouquet for the Farm to Table dinner (Photo: Kai)



- Cost for 100% protection zones of 69ft radius around grandfather Oak and 81ft radius around grandmother Oak is roughly \$14,600 and involves soil aeration, leaf compost and monthly compost tea applications.
- Cost for 40% protection zone around grandfather Oak and 70% protection zone around grandmother Oak is roughly \$8,500
- Discuss and decide if other trees would like special care such as black walnut and pecan.

In other news, the Common Ground Growers Farm is **announcing enrollment for the Cold Season CSA (December-April)**. It's filling up fast! [Click here](#) to read more and to join. Also, Lucas and Randy will be picking a weekend day in early October for a **biochar burn**—stay tuned!

The Land Stewardship Circle, working often with Common Ground Growers, has been focusing lately on several planning and research projects. Chief among them is our ongoing design work for our 9-acre Far Field. We had a good potato crop in the current cultivated area but a meager harvest of grain corn, winter squash, and sweet sorghum. The stunting resulted from a combination of low fertility, historical compaction, and droughty weather.

Besides cover-cropping, we plan to add heavy additions of rotted leaves courtesy of Mebane Public Works. So far, only about one acre has a land-use designation in our design process. We hope to do enough design work soon to know where we can start planting some of the many trees we hope to locate in that field.

LSC is also integrating efforts with the many task teams preparing for construction in the Village area, especially the "Tree Milling Team," which plans to make sure that many of the trees that need to be removed are going to be sent to a sawmill, so we can know that those trees will become part of our buildings and furniture. Some of us are also carefully monitoring and guiding the contractors to achieve results best aligned with our ecological and land-use values.



Steve Torma guides members through an NVC Dance Floors process (Photo: Becky)

## New Member Coffee Meet Up Membership Circle October date TBD

Contact Lisa for more info or to sign up:  
[Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com) or 919 619 2979.

*This is a great opportunity for those who are curious about CGEV and want to make connections with other members.*



Just another delicious farm-cooked dish (Photo: Kai)

## Member Offerings

*Lara Struckman, former farm intern, beekeeper and beloved CGEV member has written a beautiful essay on what the land teaches us about living and dying. It was published by the*



## Membership

**Membership Advancements:** Congratulations to Karyn Miller and Eric Scheier for becoming our newest Exploratory members and to Momo Freehill for advancing to the Engaged level. The members of the Membership Circle have the privilege of sharing with these folks a summary of feedback from community members. This includes perceptions of their alignment with CGEV principles and intentions and acknowledgments of their contributions of time, skills and personal style. In addition, ideas for future growth and challenges are expressed along with curiosities and wishes. Karyn, Eric, Momo, and other folk have offered thoughtful feedback for the community about assets, challenges, areas for growth and appreciation.

The Membership Circle is currently reviewing the various requirements of the membership advancement process to be clear about the goals of each element. **We welcome comments from those of you who have experienced the process.** If you have questions about the steps of advancement, Lisa, Amy and Kathleen are here to support you. Don't hesitate to ask.

In the month of September there were seven JOIN forms submitted by new visiting members one of whom is an original co-founder of our community. Every new member receives a welcome letter with ideas for learning more and getting involved. **We are holding new member coffees and all are welcome.**



*Many Turtles sun themselves on a pond log (Photo: Kai)*

[Resource Center for Ministry in the South](#) where she is currently an intern. [Click here](#) to enjoy it.



*Marlene celebrates plentiful peppers (Photo: Kai)*

## [Outside Happenings of Interest \(Not Sponsored by CGEV\)](#)

**There will be another No Kings Day event on October 18.** *The invitation is to show up and show the world that America has no kings and the power belongs to the people. Visit <https://www.nokings.org/> to find an event near you.*

**The Triangle Prescribed Burn Association** is offering a free training about how prescribed burning can improve habitats for wildlife and plants. John Isenhour and Gabriela Garrison of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission will illuminate the roll of fire in early successional habitats and how fire affects bees. **The training is on October 23, 6-8pm, at the [Bonnie B Davis Environment and Agricultural Center](#) in Hillsborough** (on Hwy 70 across the street from the DMV). [Contact Hope](#), TPBA Chair, to register.