



# Finding Common Ground

## November 2025

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### Up Front

*"The care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all, our most pleasing responsibility."*

— Wendell Berry

Infrastructure construction focused on erosion control is proceeding on the land, molding swales, berms, and pond basins to channel and retain water. We've removed trees on the edge of the woods, shifted tons of earth, and there's more to come. It's a challenge for us to hold the tension between disruptions on the land and our value to love and care for all beings. **In this spirit, we'll be holding a gathering on Sunday, November 2, from 2:30-4:30pm to honor the trees and land in ways that are meaningful to each of us.**



Randy & Goni witness the construction site (Photo: Hope)



Top: This is a banner year for Black Walnuts--come and help process them at the barn on November 1 (Photo: Hope)

Above: Oh, the joys of playing in the mud! (Photo: Kai)

**This is but one of the beautiful events happening on this coming potent Nov. 1-2 weekend, dedicated to celebrating the harvest season.** We'll dig up Sweet Potato gems, process Black Walnuts and Elderberries, enjoy a Samhain potluck and observance, deepen into heart-to-heart sharing with each other, revel in a rollicking volleyball game, and then answer a call to be present with the trees and land in a good way. **Go to the Events section for all the details.** May they inspire you to join us in ways that resonate!

## Circle News

### Planning & Development

Infrastructure construction has begun! We started with surveying and staking work to translate the many elements in the plans to on-the-ground locations. Equipment and materials arrived soon after, and then workers got to work putting in the erosion control measures to contain any sediment resulting from the disturbance. This included a lot of fencing, two new water-retention basins, and long ditches to divert runoff into the basins.

Concurrently, we had a very productive meeting with Orange County staff in which many of our "down in the weeds" questions were addressed very satisfactorily from our point of view. These included our future legal structure and requirements for final plat application and approval, among others. Our surveyor made good progress on preparing our final plat for review, and other related work to check regulatory boxes is proceeding.



*Jacob climbs a mound of stockpiled topsoil (Photo: Hope)*

Though all the above represents the culmination of many years and much blood, sweat, money, and tears, it isn't really the biggest news. After working extremely diligently for so, so long to crack the nut of our

## 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

#### Planning & Development

Every Wednesday, 1:30-3:00pm, hybrid  
[RSVP to Anthony](#) with subject "P&D"

#### Membership

Thursdays, 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, November 2 & 16, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom  
[RSVP to Hope](#) with subject "GC" in advance

#### Land Stewardship

Tuesday, November 11, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed)  
[RSVP to Doug](#) with subject "LSC" for details

#### Governance & Communication

Tuesday, November 18, 7-9pm, Zoom  
[RSVP to Quai](#) with subject "G&CC"

enormously complex and aspirational financial and legal puzzle, we seem to have reached a place where the light at the end of the tunnel is becoming oh, so bright. The professionals (Robyn Heeks and a team of attorneys) have helped P&D "move the train through the tunnel" so that we are in the process of closing on a loan with the Housing Assistance Council (HAC). A myriad of boxes to check having been checked, money is expected to start flowing from HAC in a month. The last box to check is demonstrating that we have \$400k flowing into the infrastructure work from our side and have 12 pre-lease agreements with future residents executed. The many details to make it all come together are miraculously gelling.



The MEC construction team came to a Farm Lunch (Photo: Hope)

November promises to be more momentous, if that is possible. Presuming that the community gatherings and collaborations at the end of October continue in the direction underway as of press time, this is what can be expected:

★**For infrastructure**, clearing and grading will be the primary activities. This means many more trees will come down to make way for the main road, spur road, and farm access road. Trees that have to come out that are millable will be sent to a mill, providing wood for future use.

★**The pond draw-down** will happen and rehabilitation work could be pursued. That's all if the money flows, weather cooperates, and our contractors remain available.

★**There also workdays** being planned (VOLUNTEERS THIS IS YOUR CALL) related to the infrastructure work to help clear two of the future septic areas (tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 11/8); prepare for the lumber returning from the mill; move the pavilion, privy, and fire circle; cut up future firewood; and maybe more. Infrastructure

## 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? Email [Lisa](#) and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line, or text her at 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.*

### **HARVEST PARTY WEEKEND!**

#### Land Stewardship Circle

**November 1 & 2**, on the land

**Contact Lucas for information: 301-767-6720**

*It has been a very full-on October with several formal gatherings. This weekend the Land Stewardship Circle is inviting you to come together in an informal fashion for many seasonal happenings filled with chances to connect and weave our way forward.*

### **Harvest Hang-Out at the Farm, Saturday**

**November 1, 1-5pm at the barn**

*Digging sweet potato gems, processing black walnuts and maybe even making some elderberry syrup. Working together is the best contact nutrition you can get, so come by! This will be the last farm event for the winter so get your hands dirty while you can! It will also be a good chance to connect and chat over work about where we are in the development process and clarify any questions you may have about the pre-sale agreements.*

### **Samhain/All Souls/All Hallows Eve Wheel of the**

**Year Celebration November 1, 5:30pm potluck, 6:45 celebration, at the Grandmother Oak.**

**Contact Kai: [kaimadrone@pm.me](mailto:kaimadrone@pm.me) or [click here](#) for complete information**

*This weekend marks the mid-point between Fall Equinox and Winter Solstice. This moment of the year's turning signals the end of summer's harvest and the beginning of winter. Come celebrate the season together on the land!*

### **In-person HeartShare, Sunday, November 2,**

**10am at the fire by the Grandmother Oak.**

**Contact Lucas at 301-767-6720, or just show up**

*A great chance to settle in together and connect in a deeper way.*



Milkweed seeds fall among the Winged Sumac (Photo: Hope)

related workdays will happen as people step up to coordinate them. **NOTE: these may or may not be posted on our listserv**, so connect with one of the teams to participate.

**\*Events are being** planned to be in right relationship with the land as all this is occurring. Honoring the trees that are coming down, lifting up the soils that are moving, apologizing to the creatures who will find their routes and waters in flux, and also holding the vision of the new patterns of interaction and interwoven human and more-than-human life toward which we are headed. **\*Though much is underway**, there is yet bridging to craft with those who see a different way forward to build community. More heartfelt conversations will take place to reveal the way towards co-creation. And in the meantime, we'll continue to nail down further legal and financial frameworks aligned with our values to ensure current and future well-being.

## Land Stewardship

Our Land Stewardship Circle has been focused on three main areas: the crops, CSA, and infrastructure improvements at the Farm, coordinating our D.I.Y. community work, and honoring of the many trees that are being sacrificed to create space for the new infrastructure of the Village.

In October, the Farm Team worked hard to prepare the fields and new infrastructure for winter farming while simultaneously enrolling members for the next phase of the eating-in-season journey: Cold Season. **Cold Season at Full Table runs December through April and will feed 80+ households this year.** One especially exciting highlight of the month was the completion of the new high tunnel. This structure will both increase the veggie yield this winter and provide kinder work conditions for

## Volleyball at the Nest (next door)

Sunday, November 2, 12pm

Contact Lucas at 301-767-6720, or just show up

*All ages and abilities welcome. It's a hoot!*

## Gathering to Honor the Trees

Sunday, November 2, 2:30-4:30pm, meet by the Grandmother Oak. No RSVP necessary

*Trees provide us with many benefits* necessary for survival, including [clean air](#), access to [clear water](#), shade, and food. They also give us hope and insight—and courage to persevere. Trees teach us to stay rooted while soaring to great heights. Come gather in Community to honor the trees in ways that are meaningful to you. Bring yourself along with poems, songs, prayers, hugs, mandalas, paintings, offerings, silence and walk the land together. All are welcome!



Titled Diversity, this is Margret Mueller's apt entry for the [Paint it Orange](#) Plein Air Paint-Out last month.

## 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*



Finishing the plastic cover installation (Photo: Kai)

our frozen-fingered farmers in the winter months. Thank you, Goni, for heading up this building project that provides an optimal space for the Farm Team to do their vibrant-veggie-growing magic.

Year-round CSA's are rare in the Piedmont, and it takes dedication + stamina to keep growing and delivering a wide variety of veggies through the winter months. **If you haven't already signed up for Cold Season, email Marlene at [FullTableCSA@gmail.com](mailto:FullTableCSA@gmail.com) to see if there is still space.** As of this writing, there were a couple of Harvest Shares left, so you might be in luck! If they've been claimed, just jump on the waitlist and you'll be first in line when a CSA spot becomes available.

The schedule of the extensive village Infrastructure work has been a moving target, so we are doing our best to honor the trees that have to be sacrificed and organize many uses for a large percentage of them. Those uses include sending the best logs to a sawmill to make lumber for our buildings; using the oaks for shiitake mushroom production; and using many species for firewood, Biochar production, woodcarving, wood chip mulch, and wildlife habitat. We're coordinating with the contractor to stockpile - for our reuse - the large volume of topsoil being stripped from several areas. The Farm is also sacrificing about 10% of our crop area for the Village infrastructure.

**Everything you have just read about the Farm and Village requires a huge effort!** Please come to the Land often this Fall, to pitch in and help! Talk to Doug, Randy, or Jane about scheduling.

## Community Farm-to-Table Lunch

Land Stewardship Circle

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

**\*Weather Dependent\***

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

## Biochar Learn-and-Burn

Land Stewardship Circle

**Tuesday, November 4th, 3-5pm, by the Farm**

**No RSVP needed**

Come make Biochar with Lucas and Randy! Biochar is an emerging method to burn wood in a way that keeps carbon cycling on the ground rather than escaping into the atmosphere as CO<sub>2</sub>. This process helps mitigate climate change and super-charge soil for the benefit of plants and more. It will be a great way to keep warm on a November day!



Sunday noon volleyball at the Nest is a ton of fun. (Photo: Hope)



Huge thanks to Rachel for preparing delicious stuffed farm peppers for a lunch crowd of 22 people! (Photo: Kai)

### Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful Governance & Communications Circle

**Focus:** Is it a feeling or a thought? Feelings are experienced as physical sensations or emotions. Feelings serve as our guideposts to met or unmet needs, and once recognized, we can celebrate (met needs) or seek healthy ways to satisfy (unmet needs). A feeling of hunger points to a need to eat; a feeling of sadness may point to a need for comfort. Often, what we think is a feeling is really a thought, and one easy indicator is the use of the phrase, "I feel like..." We can test if it is a feeling by taking away that phrase and seeing what's left. For example, "I feel like you're telling me what to do!" becomes "...you're telling me what to do!" and you can see now that it is a thought, not a feeling. The person it is directed toward is likely to hear it as an accusation and respond defensively.

**Practice invitation:** The next time you hear yourself or someone else saying "I feel like \_\_\_\_\_", see how it stands up after you remove the phrase. Look at a [Feelings and Needs List](#) and explore what the feelings and needs behind the thought might be. "I feel like you're telling me what to do!" might turn out to be a feeling of frustration because of an unmet need for trust or autonomy. This awareness frees you to express it in a more connecting way or guess what someone else's unmet needs might be.

### Golden Hour Fire Circle

Land Stewardship Circle  
Tuesday, November 11th, 4:30 pm, at the Grandmother Oak

**No RSVP needed, offered by Lucas and Randy**  
*Consider making a day of it, starting with the 1pm Farm Lunch onward. Help on the farm, walk the trails, hold space for the trees, and then share and connect around a fire!*

### New Member Coffee Meet Up

Membership Circle  
**Sunday, November 16, 11am-12:30pm at Caribou Coffee, 1408 E. Franklin St, Chapel Hill**  
(Look for a sign on the community room door)

**Contact Lisa for more info or to sign up:**  
lberley@yahoo.com or 919 619 2979  
*This is a great opportunity, for those who are curious about CGEV, to ask questions and make connections with other members.*

### Monthly HeartShare

Membership Circle  
**Friday, November 21, 7-9pm, Zoom**  
[RSVP to Heart Share@commonground.eco](mailto:RSVPtoHeartShare@commonground.eco).

*Organizers and facilitators-Ren & Quai, Theme TBD. These monthly gatherings offer a meaningful 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. Watch for a detailed email or just RSVP now! Facilitators are needed; we'll support you and you can choose the theme!*

### Forest Therapy Guided Walk

Land Stewardship Circle  
**Saturday November 22nd, 9:30 AM-12:00 pm, at the Grandmother Oak.**

**RSVP to Randy by November 20th:**  
[randydodd@pm.me](mailto:randydodd@pm.me).

*Come and experience the beauty and benefits of spending relaxing and mindful time with Nature at Common Ground.*

### Community on the Ground (COG)

Governance & Communications Circle works with Circles to set the agendas.  
**Saturday, November 22, 1-5pm, at the Nest**

## Membership

Potluck suppers are a well-loved tradition at Common Ground. Our last feast in October brought a welcomed time of relaxation, being together with children, and filling our bellies with amazing food (including a full expression of homemade desserts!) Whoever thought to place the big drums under the pavilion deserves a hug. Children jammed to their hearts delight, providing a lovely background and an occasional concert. We basked in the joy of being together on the land, with the sun setting, the feeling of the air cooling off, and the mesmerizing fire.

Shifting to the business side of MC, we are thrilled to welcome Jacq as an Operations Member of the circle. Thanks to Quaye, the revised JOIN form found on the Common Ground website is now linked to a new member portal (database). Our next New Member Coffee Meet Up will take place on November 16th from 11am-12:30pm. Details can be found under event listings. Everyone is welcome!



Great gratitude to fine artist, Margret Mueller, for generously designing this enchanting logo!

## Many Turtles Learning Collective

The Many Turtles Learning Collective 501(c)3 is turtling forward! We had our first fundraising session in which we developed not one but three projects that we could put forth for fundraising conversations, and we began practicing our fundraising skills. Please consider how you can describe the incredible value of contributing to the educational and ecological missions of Many Turtles and share with at least two others who might surprise you with a contribution to our charitable efforts. And, of course, a pitch is always strengthened by having made

RSVP to [Becky](#), subject "COG."

*It's a dynamic time, and communication and collaboration are more important than ever. Topics include "Bridging:" exploring 'yes-and' ideas raised in an alternative development proposal from the Farm Team, and everything Common House! These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved we encourage all who want to be a part of this community are come.*



Common Ground Growers, LLC, superstar farm team (L to R): Marlene, Doug, Lucas, Caleb, Kai

## Community Potluck

Membership Circle

**Saturday, November 22, 5:30-7:30pm, after Community on the Ground, location TBD**

**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.*

## Friendsgiving

Land Stewardship Circle

**Thursday, November 27, time TBD, on the land  
RSVP to Lucas via text-301-767-6720**

*There will be a potluck meal on the land for those who do not have plans on Thanksgiving Day.*



Goni stirs the hearty Farm-to-Table Dinner stew in Bradley's cast-iron cauldron (Photo: Hope)

your own contribution! Please contact [Lisa Berley](#) (to donate by check or Paypal. Send Venmo donations to @Amy-Halberstadt-2.

To help visualize our goals, we are working on a website (if you have ANY skills in that regard and can help launch the website, [Amy Halberstadt](#) would be incredibly grateful. We began writing text for the website co-created with our friend and guide, Chari Smith, and a team of Many Turtlers; we have a set of photos curated by Izzy Mitchell; and we have a beautiful logo created by Margret Mueller, an affiliate member and artist. We are on our way!



Doug hoists giant Daikon Radishes, ready for [Full Table CSA](#) members (Photo: Kai)

## Gathering of Gratitude and Goodies

Membership Circle

**Saturday, November 29, 3-6pm, Nest in Mebane**

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

*Each year, we share bounty and warmth with each other through food, conversation, and connection. Bring along your favorite songs and games. This event will be as amazing as you are!*

## Member Offerings

Hope and Goni invite you to a Sonam Concert on **Saturday, November 15, 7:30pm, United Church of Chapel Hill, 1321 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Chapel Hill, NC.** We'll be singing music from across the world in support of [UCCH's Peacemaking Scholarships](#), which are awarded to local high school seniors who aspire to a career in peacemaking. The concert is free. Donations are accepted at the door in lieu of tickets.

## Outside Happenings of Interest (Not Sponsored by CGEV)

**FALL FORAGING WALK** with Kim Calhoun

**Saturday, November 15th, 1 – 4 pm**

**Chatham County**

*Celebrate the abundance of autumn as we ramble fields and gardens greeting plant and tree friends, learning sustainable foraging skills, and sampling wild treats! Go home inspired to weave wild food and medicine into your daily life with gratitude and reciprocity.*



Broccolini is coming soon! (Photo: Kai)

