



Finding Common Ground

May 2026

Up Front

May marks the mid-point of Spring, and everything, everywhere is exploding with fertility, new growth, and sparkling aliveness. Such is the case at Common Ground. We're fresh off the Piedmont Farm Tour, where we introduced scores of visitors to our flourishing farm and coming residential village. This weekend sports **three events**, beginning with the Friday Farm dinner, Saturday's Beltane Wheel of the Year Celebration, and a Persimmon Grafting Workshop on Sunday. As of May 15, you can come pick your own flowers any day of the week. Want to learn how to grow Shiitake mushrooms? Farmer Doug will show you how on your schedule. Every day, it seems we're welcoming more members and volunteers who are intrigued by this agrarian ecovillage-in-the-making and want to be a part of it.



*Top: A pair of geese paddle in a wetland pond (Photo: Hope)
Above: Baby joy on a Spring afternoon (Photo: Hope)*



Laura greets visitors at the Farm Tour table (Photo: Kai)

Now that infrastructure construction is almost complete, members are on the cusp of coming together to sign 99-year leases on lots, opening the door to building homes. This in itself is huge; the outworking of a vision cultivated since the first seeds were planted in 2008. It's taken a long time to grow to this stage of both culmination and new beginnings. Now more than ever, we need clarity about our shared purpose and discernment about what are really meant to create here together. The TrueVoice process, offered by Kai Madrone, kicks off on May 4 with a core team who will be shepherding this community-wide quest and helping to guide us home. If this resonates for you, we hope you'll find your way to coming along.

Circle News Column

Planning & Development

Infrastructure construction is nearly finished! Hence, we were able to turn our attention to preparing for lot closings, which involved creating many legal documents and getting our residential lot plat recorded by the County. We are working hard to finalize out Declaration and CCRs (Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions). We also turned our attention to the many details needed to coordinate with the County and others to get the final plat from a status of “approved” to “ready to record.” Until the plat is recorded, “lots of record” do not exist and so closing on the leaseholds is not possible.

Our first-wave residents (“Grounders”) are collaborating on all that will be involved in building homes. P&D, notably Theresa, has put enormous energy into finding ways to make financing for home building work for all of our Grounders. Our Treasurer, Becky, continued the heavy lifting of attending to our financial health, paying many bills, tracking in QuickBooks, LLC matters, taxes & K-1 management, and much more. Many moving parts remain to get to lot closings by mid-May, but as usual, we persist! **As of press time, our target date for lot closings is May 15th: Grounders, mark your calendars!** And then... we’ll need to celebrate!! Anyone keen on helping with party planning, please contact any P&D member.



Anthony championed and coordinated getting two wellhouses framed and ready for the pump installation. (Photo: Hope)

On the infrastructure front, our contractor, MEC, put huge effort into moving soil and mulch hither and yon and otherwise finishing up their six months of massive earth moving, pipe laying, and more. They have therefore officially closed up shop for the foreseeable future. They are lined up to come back later this spring or summer to

Meetings & Events Column

Events Snapshot

Details are in the section below Circle Meetings

- ◆ **Mondays, 7-8pm**-Racial Awareness Book Grp, Zoom
- ◆ **Tuesdays, 1pm**-Community Farm lunch
- ◆ **May 1 & 15, 6:30pm**-Friday Farm-to-Fork dinner
- ◆ **May 2, 5:30pm**-Wheel of the Year: Beltane
- ◆ **May 3, 1-3:30pm**-Persimmon Grafting Workshop
- ◆ **May 8, 7:30-9pm**-Guided Song Circle
- ◆ **May 9, 11am-12:30pm**-New Member Coffee Meet Up
- ◆ **May 15 start** -Pick Your Own Flowers daily at the Farm
- ◆ **May 17, 2:30-5:30pm**-Plant Sweet Potatoes
- ◆ **May 30, 2-5pm**-Community on the Ground
- ◆ **May 30, 5:30-7pm**-Community Potluck

- ◆ **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:** To subscribe to the CGEV Calendar, add or change an event, email Ren at calendar@commonground.eco
- ◆ **Members Only Discourse Forum Link:** <https://discourse.commonground.eco/>



Circle Meetings

Planning & Development

Wednesdays, 4-5:30pm, hybrid

[RSVP to Anthony](#) with subject “P&D”

Membership ***Change***

Thursdays, **5:00-6:30pm**, 1st and 3rd weeks, via Zoom or in person at the home of Amy H. when folks are interested! Task meetings, as needed, are on alternate weeks, same time

[RSVP to Lisa](#) with subject “Membership Circle”

General Circle

Sundays, May 3 & 17, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom

[RSVP to Hope](#) with subject “GC” 2 days in advance

for). The Core Team has been assembled and will have their kickoff meeting on May 4.

But first, Kai gifted us with a Capacity Building workshop to help us to shift over time from overwhelm, exhaustion, and stress towards increasingly embodied compassion, clarity, and creativity. We met outdoors at the Nest on a gorgeous April day to learn and take in some simple body-based practices that will help to ground us on a daily basis. **Robby Robbins kindly recorded the event and [made it available here](#).** If you are an active CGEV member and missed it, be sure to watch the recording in the next 3-6 weeks because you will be contacted for an interview.



Kai's Capacity Building Workshop is well received (Photo: Hope)

Land Stewardship

The Piedmont Farm Tour is fresh in our minds and hearts. It was a very impactful event for our Community, bringing about 250 visitors to the land to learn about the farm and budding village. Doug and Lucas led tours of the Farm and directed visitors to the barn to learn more about our budding residential community. [This video](#) from Lucas gives a good idea of all we were excited to share.

Projects on the Land, connected with the sacrificing of many trees during Village infrastructure installation, continued through the month of April, but some are still unfinished and are beckoning for more help. For example, the **Shiitake Mushroom log inoculation** has been a long, ongoing project, with at least 10 additional volunteers stepping up in April to inoculate over 100 more logs. **HOWEVER, we still have lots more logs to inoculate with spawn. Please consider coming out to the Land in May to help inoculate!** Contact Doug at (919) 444-9680 to arrange a volunteer visit – he's very flexible!

You Makes You Blacker: A Memoir in Essays, by Damon Young.

Tuesday Community Farm Lunch

Land Stewardship Circle

Every Tuesday at 1:00 pm, by donation

[RSVP to Lucas](#), or text 301-767-6720

Cooking and sharing meals is an essential part of our Community. Come enjoy a simple, nourishing meal prepared straight from the garden + thoughtful conversation with good humans who care about the earth. By donation--either cash, Venmo, or pantry staples are warmly appreciated (olive oil, rice, beans, lentils, GF flour...)

Friday Farm-To-Fork Dinners

Land Stewardship Circle

Fridays, May 1 & 15, 6:30pm, by donation

[RSVP to Lucas](#), or text 301-767-6720

At Full Table, we believe that eating should be a cause for celebration. This year, every third Thursday of the month you're invited to join us for a simple meal cooked with farm-grown & local ingredients. All are welcome.

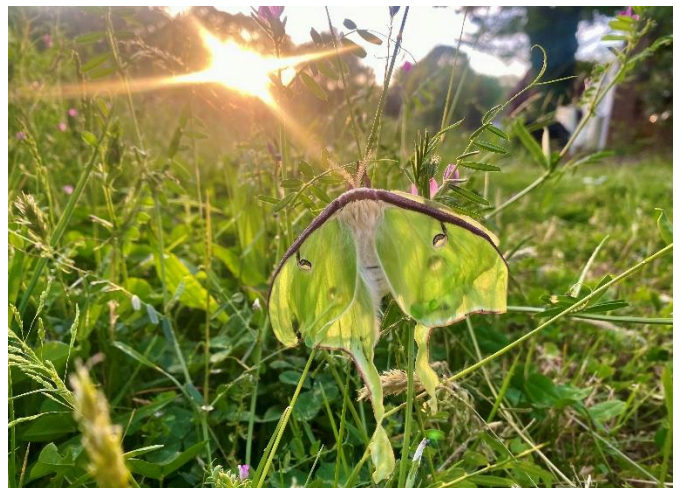
Wheel of the Year: Beltane

Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday, May 2, 5:30 potluck, 6:30 fire circle

No RSVP is needed; [contact Kai](#) for details

The season is turning from Spring's rising momentum into something warmer and more outward. Not pushing ahead, but opening. Not effort, but presence. This is the threshold we're stepping into, marking the midpoint between Spring and Summer. Let's gather in community around fire, food, and song to welcome the warmth and energy of the season and celebrate what is growing—on the land and in our lives.



The rising sun lights up a luna moth (Photo: Abigail)

On the plus side, our infrastructure contractors moved tons of leftover topsoil, gravel, small trees, and wood chips to various locations. We are using those materials for soil and road building, mulching, etc. In particular, our Far Field is low in fertility and will benefit from all the additional organic matter!



Downed trees are delivered to the Far Field next to the solar kiln, built largely by Paul, Goni, and Kamal (Photo: Hope)

Farm Highlights

The Full Table CSA Warm Season 2026 has begun! This year we grew production and membership by 20%, which means this CSA is now feeding over 100 households!



One of the most important metrics in CSA farming is retention (the number of people who stay from season to season). Did you know the average retention rate for CSAs is 40-50%? That means most CSA's must replace 30–60% of their members every season, due to high turnover. A retention rate of 70% or higher is considered exceptional. **Which is why we're deeply pleased that 93% of our Cold Season members renewed for Warm Season.** This tells us we're doing a good job of living what we're committed to: growing vibrant, flavorful food AND growing real, resilient community that is connected to the Land. Thank you to all those here at Common Ground who are part of it--journeying with us through the seasons. We appreciate you and the fact that we get to do this, together.

Gifted Garden Hands Volunteers

Pitch in with whatever we're up to in the field on a regular rhythm — weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. A

Persimmon Grafting Workshop

Many Turtles Learning Collective

Sunday, May 3, 1-3:30pm, on the land*

Sliding scale donation

[Click here](#) to read more and to register

Learn the basics of fruit tree grafting and practice grafting on native persimmon. Participants will learn the botanical practice of grafting different species of woody perennials together. A short lecture will be followed by hands-on practice of different tried-and-true grafting techniques to showcase different methods.

Space is limited. [Contact Jacob](#) with questions.

***Location:** 5797 Daisy Evans Gunn Trail, Mebane, NC.

You MUST use Google maps and/or a GPS that takes you to Daisy Evans Gunn Trail from Frazier Rd. Apple Maps does not work

Guided Song Circle with Deja Belle & Tessie Castillo

Many Turtles Learning Collective

Friday, May 8, 7:30-9pm, on the land*

Sliding scale donation [Click here to register](#),

Come together to make joyful and stirring music at the Fire Circle in the Far Field. Walk past the barn, beyond the pines. Bring a blanket or camp chair for comfy seating.

***Location:** 5797 Daisy Evans Gunn Trail, Mebane, NC. **You MUST use Google maps and/or a GPS** that takes you to Daisy Evans Gunn Trail from Frazier Rd. Apple Maps does not work

New Member Coffee Meet Up

Membership Circle

Saturday, May 9, 11am-12:30pm at Caribou Coffee, 1408 E. Franklin St, Chapel Hill

[RSVP to Lisa](#) to sign up, or text 919 619 2979

We will meet in the community room. This an opportunity for those who are curious about CGEV, want to make connections with other members and get a feel for what Common Ground is about



Ruby red radish abundance (Photo: Kai)

Pick Your Own Flowers

Land Stewardship Circle








Every Day, Starting May 15

[Contact Goni](#) if you have questions

farmer will get you started and weave in food-growing education along the way. All experience levels and physical abilities welcome. Just let us know your needs and we'll find the perfect fit.

The Wheel of the Year Farm Festivals

As the light returns, there are more gatherings on the farm that help us to connect, learn, and resource ourselves with the beauty of the earth. This year, we are marking the seasons with opportunities to grow food together. Come out to be nourished by shared work, family play, food, fire, and music. Learn earth-tending skills, deepen your reciprocity with the more-than-human world, and celebrate the seasons. **Mark your calendar and stay tuned for invites as each date approaches:**

-  **Beltane, May 2**— Notice all that's growing
-  **Summer Solstice, June 20**— Potato harvest
-  **Lammas, August 1**— Tomato canning & food preservation
-  **Fall Equinox, September 10**— Corn & Sorghum harvest
-  **Samhain, October 31**— Sweet Potato harvest
-  **Winter Solstice, December 19**— Celebration!
-  **Imbolc, January 30, 2027** — To be revealed

Governance & Communications

G&CC is continuing to move ahead on our [Proposal - Communications Standardization](#), which proposes we include certain types of standard information - Accessibility, Health and Vaccine notice, Diverse spirituality disclaimer - in all of our event announcements and calendar entries. We're actively seeking feedback before we consent to the policy and bring it to the General Circle. [Contact Quai](#) with your input.

Additionally, we're starting to work on draft proposals for our Sociocracy structure as we begin transitioning to living on the land. There will be more entities and more varied interests to hear from and balance input from. We look forward to sharing that with the community.

Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful Governance & Communications

Focus: The Meaning (and suffering) We Make
Impacts from someone's actions or words come with observable facts. "He changed the subject when I brought up a concern." Our suffering begins when we attach a

Come out any day 10am–8pm to pick your own bouquet by donation. Some flowers will also be available as CSA share add-ons. A wonderful way for kids to experience the garden!

Plant Sweet Potatoes!

Land Stewardship Circle
Sunday, May 17, 3-6pm at the Farm
RSVP to Caleb: 323-561-1960

Sweet potatoes are a keystone crop for a local diet here in the steamy clays of the Piedmont. Join us to learn a thing or two about tending this majestic plant. Come for what you can, leave with soil under your nails and a full heart.

Community on the Ground (COG)

Governance & Communication Circle
Saturday, May 30, 2-5pm, hybrid at the Nest
[RSVP to Theresa](#), subject "COG."

Community on the Ground is a monthly forum for ALL MEMBERS to help you:

- *Get more connected with each other*
- *Hear updates and information from Circles*
- *Explore hot topics, inspire ideas, and hear feedback from members*
- *Discover how to become more involved in winning ways*

*We'll have in-person conversations and a zoom link
Watch your email for details about May's event!*



Janey sells muffins made with corn & sweet potatoes grown on the farm & lovingly baked by her & Marilu. (Photo: Abigail)

story. “He just ignored me! Obviously, he wasn’t interested!” Suddenly, we are no longer reacting to the actual stimulus but to our own meaning-making, informed by our filters, traumas, and fears. We might feel angry, shut down, or avoidant.

Practice: Start with self-empathy, acknowledging feelings and unmet needs without creating a story. Then generate curiosity by guessing what the other person’s feelings and needs might have been. Maybe he felt anxious (needed ease), distracted (needed focus), pressured to keep the meeting moving (competency), or felt uncertain or unsafe (need for safety) with the topic you brought up. Notice the shift from accusation to curiosity and how it feels in your body. Now you’re ready to ask, “When I brought up X, I noticed you didn’t address it and kept going. I felt sad because my need to matter and be heard went unmet. Are you willing to share what was going on for you in that moment? I would really like to understand.”



Hazel and Lisa share storytime at the barn (Photo: Jacq)

Membership

Of the 200 plus visitors who came to Common Ground for the 2026 Piedmont Farm Tour, many expressed curiosity about the Ecovillage. Some signed up for the Friends listserv to receive this Almanac, some to volunteer on the Farm, others to get on the waiting list of the CSA. The secret sauce was the one-on-one conversations. These were made possible by many of you.

Our community is not easy to summarize in a few sentences! We discovered that greeting people in front of the information table was a lot more effective than staying seated on the opposite side. Our core message started with this vision: *We envision a world where we live in justice and harmony with each other and the land.*

Community Potluck

Membership Circle

Saturday, May 30, 5:30-7:30pm, after Community on the Ground, location TBD

RSVP is helpful for set-up and location.

[RSVP to Lisa](#), or text 919-619-2979

Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, and sometimes chew over the Community on the Ground meeting content. Please bring something to share. Vegetable dishes typically predominate, but all sorts of food and drink are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients or jot them down when you come.

Member Offerings

Goni & Hope invite you to [two SONAM Concerts](#), May 3 and 31—presenting beautiful and moving music to raise funds for selected non-profit organizations.

From fine artist, Margret Mueller:

If you find yourself heading down the highway towards Burlington/Elon, stop by the [Red Oak Brewery gallery](#) (yes, they have an art gallery!) and check out my entry in the NC Watercolor Society show. **There is an opening reception May 15** and it will be up for 4 weeks.



Watercolor painting of Binnegen Castle in Switzerland, where Margret’s parents met in the 1940’s

Rachoog is helping us to look closely at the beauty of Earth, Sky, and All in-between. [Click here](#) to read the latest about prescribed fire and the flourishing in the forest at Common Ground, stimulated by a burn last November.

Then we went on to talk about development, putting land into conservancy, how we govern ourselves, and the importance of the farm. How the children used legos to make a model for the Common Building, wrote their ideas for what to name it and made requests for future Many Turtles workshops. Connecting with our visitors and sharing excitement for what we are creating made for a very satisfying experience.

The Membership Circle has a wide-ranging domain. One of its most important jobs is to be on the lookout for concerns that members have and then find ways to support communication and mutual understanding. The Community on the Ground monthly meetings are one such forum, and we're planning topics for up-coming sessions.



Lucas tells visitors about the Farm at the Piedmont Farm Tour (Photo: Hope)

Outside Community Events not offered by Common Ground

Join Melanie of [Root 2 Rise Wellness](#) for a hands-on Herbal Medicine Makers Course this season in Hillsborough! Over 4 Sundays, we'll explore plant identification, wild foraged foods, and make your own herbal preparations to take home—while building confidence with botany and practical home herbalism. You'll also receive recipes, *materia medica* resources, over 30 videos of digestive plant tutorials, and access to a private plant forum for continued support. Perfect for beginners, nature lovers, and anyone wanting a deeper relationship with the healing plants around them. **Early bird pricing is \$450 through May 1st (\$485 after).** Message me if you'd like details!



Melanie talks about herbs growing in the garden at the Piedmont Farm Tour (Photo: Hope)

