

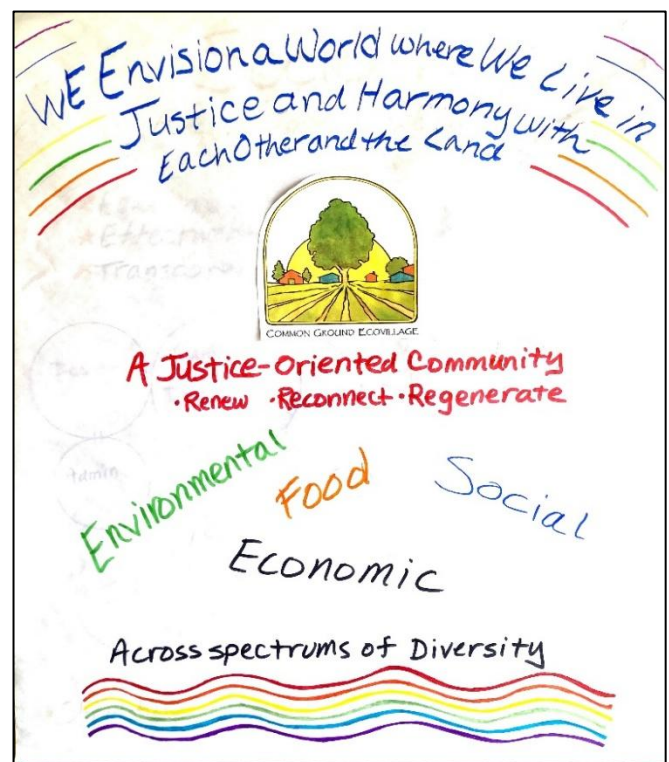


Finding Common Ground

August 2026

Up Front

If you are lucky, now and then you may be able to glimpse your own beauty; see your whole self and all you have become; behold the gift you are to the world. We had such an opportunity when members of the Rural Sociological Society (RSS) took a field trip to Common Ground from their annual international conference in Raleigh where the theme was Rural Justice. Turns out, we have a lot to say about that! Members from all aspects of our agrarian ecovillage spoke eloquently and passionately about how we are outworking a big vision that weaves social, economic, environmental, and food justice throughout our multi-dimensional work. How every voice matters in our governance; how our core of committed members exists within a wide-reaching web of relationships; how we conserve and steward our land while making it possible for homes to be built; how we are finding pathways for affordable housing; how we grow healthy food—and community—through our thriving CSA that centers fertility, justice, and health for land and humans alike.



Top: A rainbow parade celebrates Jascha's first birthday

Above: This poster set the tone for the RSS field trip

Left: Lucas, shares his passion for all that is being cultivated here with the RSS Attendees. (Photos: Abigail, Hope)



Many guests expressed joy and wonder that such a place is possible. Marilu said that her heart was bursting with happiness! Lucas saw how we are putting more into the "soil" than we are taking out for future generations. Many thanks to all who made this happen—to Paul, a career rural sociologist, who organized the event; to Rachel, Marilu, & Kathleen for a sumptuous lunch; and to Paul, Hope, Lucas, Kathleen, Randy, Therese, Caleb, Kai, & Doug who told the story of this remarkable community-in-progress!

Circle News Column

Planning & Development

We continue to wrap up infrastructure work. Electrical installation will probably be done by the time this newsletter comes out, though it's been slowed by the rains and a severed water line or two (there's a lot of stuff in the ground now!). Once power is live, we'll be able to install the pumps in the two wells along with the pressure tanks. This will get our water system up and running. We've also been cleared by the County to remove much of the erosion fencing, and hopefully you will hear soon about work crew opportunities to at least make some gaps in the erosion fencing for turtles and other animals as well as human walkers, especially along the berm south of the village.

Now that we have a decent road, we've got to get vehicles to slow down! Speeds over 10-15mph are bad for gravel roads and the humans and creatures nearby, kicking up dust and spraying gravel around. Our



neighbor Kim Vincent, is especially disturbed when people whiz by her house. How to slow people down? There is an extensive body of research and practice on this – officially called “traffic calming”. Can YOU help find a way forward? Please contact [Anthony](#).

On the legal side, we've achieved a milestone by recording many necessary documents for the County, including, our Declaration, Articles of Incorporation for the Owners' Association (OA), a revised plat map technically dividing the property between the OA and Hart's Mill, LLC (basically the farm), working out revised impervious surface allowances, and on and on.



Therese talks about Conservation-Based Affordable Housing at CGEV with RSS guests (Photo: Hope)

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
- ◆ **August 7 & 21, 6:30pm**-Friday Farm-to-Fork dinner
- ◆ **August 8, 7:30-9pm**-Guided Unisong Circle
- ◆ **August 29, 2-5pm**-Community on the Ground
- ◆ **August 29, 5:30-7pm**-Community Potluck

- ◆ **All gatherings are in Eastern Time** & open to all members, guests, and registrants 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/>



Cherry tomato gems (Photo: Kai)

Circle Meetings

Planning & Development

Tuesdays, 2:30-4pm, hybrid

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

Membership

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

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

General Circle

Sundays, August 9 & 23, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom

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

Relatedly, we may be working toward a Community Land Trust umbrella for the village proper in order to smooth the way toward the 10-year loan we need to cover remaining development costs (currently applied for with LEAF). There's been very hard work on this, as well as a potential grant through the Orange County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to support low-income housing accessibility.

Design-wise, the main work now is shifting to architecture and design/build planning. We were intrigued by a very well-attended visit by Ryan Ratigan. He is the owner and principal of Hemp Abode, a design/build firm out of California that offers pre-made, hemp-insulated panels for very fast and possibly quite affordable house assembly. At least one ADU is likely to go up this Fall with Hemp Abode. Others are looking at local design/build firms or architects. It's an exciting moment as the actual village begins to take shape!



Ryan Ratigan of [The Hemp Abode](#) (center) shown with Randy and Janey, who invited him to come here (Photo: Hope)

Governance & Communications

Governance & Communications is finalizing a proposal for Common Ground's new Sociocratic Circle structure as we continue making progress towards living on the land together. As our needs change, we want to utilize the nimble nature of Sociocracy to provide us the strategies to get those needs met in a way that incorporates the wisdom of our collective voices.

As we move forward, we heartily encourage you to join a Circle or Subcircle so we can include your voice, too!

Land Stewardship

Tuesday, August 11, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed).

[Contact Doug](#) or [Lucas](#) w/ subject "LSC" for details

Governance & Communication

Tuesday, August 18, 7-8:30pm, Zoom

[RSVP to Quai](#) with subject "G&CC"

All About Events



Photo: Kai

Tours of the Land

Membership Circle

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? [Email Lisa](#) or text at 919-619-2979 and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line. We usually have a tour each month upon request 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"

*The book group is for CGEV members and the larger community. We read our books aloud and break between paragraphs to share personal reflections, questions, and ideas. People attend as often as they can. **We just started a new book:** "Three or More is a Riot: Notes on How We Got Here 2012-2025" by Jelani Cobb. This is a perfect time to join.*



Volunteer Kallyn and Jascha harvest beets (Photo: Abigail)

Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful Governance & Communications Circle

Focus: Naturalizing NVC or Learning to speak “Street Giraffe”: As with any new language, when we first learn NVC, we learn the fundamentals of OFNR (Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests), and we memorize a new vocabulary in relation to it. (Feelings and Needs lists). This formal phrasing is fine with other NVC practitioners, but most people we interact with are not. They are more likely to hear it as strange jargon, and possibly even see you as inauthentic or hedging around saying what you really want to say. This can be very frustrating when you intend to be vulnerable and make an authentic connection.

Practice: After learning the basics, we learn to translate “classic OFNR” into “Street Giraffe”. First, we anchor into the goal, which is connection, not perfect syntax. One “pro tip” is to take the words “feelings” and “needs” out completely and separate the parts. “Are you feeling frustrated because your needs for cooperation are unmet?” becomes: “You sound pretty frustrated; is that true? (wait for a response) Would more cooperation help?” (listen for their needs). Once you have mutual understanding/connection, you can brainstorm strategies together.



Giving thanks before a meal shared with Rural Sociological Society guests who came here on a field trip (Photo: Peyton Baker)

Land Stewardship

As we received the first deluge of rain in months, it felt like the land was singing a love song. Could've been Etta James in the studio for the first time singing 'At Last'.

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, August 7 & 21, 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.



Delicious meals served weekly at the Farm (Photo: Peyton Baker)

Guided Unisong Circle with Deja Belle & Tessie Castillo

Many Turtles Learning Collective

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

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

Contact Lucas for more information

Join Unisong for an evening of shared songs at Common Ground Ecovillage inspired by the rhythms of nature. Gathering in a circle around a fire, we'll sing simple, heart-opening melodies that celebrate the land, the seasons, and our connection to one another. No musical experience is needed—just voice, presence, and willingness to listen and join in. Bring a blanket or camp chair for comfy seating.

**Location: 5797 Daisy Evans Gunn Trail, Mebane, NC (Use Google Maps, not Apple Maps.). Walk past the*

And now, heading into August, we've reached 6 inches of life-giving waters from above over the past two weeks.

July was a month of contrast. The drought, the heat, streams shriveling to nothing, the earth crusted and baked. Then, at last, water filled life again. Rachoog met a family of 5 coyotes in the wetlands, pups playing in the shallows. Randy met a lone coyote by the pond. Rabbits and turtles are all around. A black snake fell from the rafters in the barn after getting a rodent snack. There is joy, celebration, and relief.

The garden witnessed a rainbow parade for young Jascha's first year birthday. The forests received greetings from 40 members of the Rural Sociological Society from all over the globe. Duke energy put in transformers and electrical lines for the residential lots. What a full-on month!

We are grateful for the rains., but by many accounts, we are still about 4 months behind what we'd normally receive over the past year. May August bring even more life and mutual thriving into our community!



The pond is beginning to fill with water, turtles, and frog song (Photo: Hope)

Farm Highlights

July has been a season of abundance at Full Table. The tomatoes came on so strong that Goni, Caleb, Lucas, Hope, and Kai recently spent a day preserving the harvest, canning 76 quarts for the months ahead. We've also been delighted with our new variety of green beans-- these "yard longs" are much easier to harvest and a delight to behold!

barn and beyond the pines to Gather at the Fire Circle in the Far Field. Note for accessibility: There are 2 stair steps with hand-railings to enter the compost toilet in the barn. All ground is unpaved and uneven.



Varun's plays with his children in the kiddie pool (Photo: Hope)

Community on the Ground (COG)

Governance & Communication Circle

Saturday, August 29, 2-5pm, hybrid at the Nest

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

Community on the Ground is a monthly forum for ALL MEMBERS, with in-person conversations and a zoom link. Watch your email for details about July's event!

Community Potluck

Membership Circle

Saturday, August 29, 5:30-7:30pm, after Community on the Ground, likely on the land

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

From Rachoog: "I wanted let you know about the small business I work for, [Goodness Cooks](#)! This company shares so many of the aligned values and principles we aim for at Common Ground. I am SOOOO lucky to both

Between harvests, we also made some time to celebrate one another—with birthdays for Doug (76!) and Kai (50!), and a fun evening of tacos and bowling as a Farm Team mini-retreat. To top it all off, we're doing a big happy dance for the recent soak of good rain. Summer on the farm is full in every sense of the word, and we're grateful to be sharing its abundance with the community.

Membership

We want to bring your attention to the fact that **there are still opportunities for members who wish to build homes in the village!** In July several new families and individuals took tours of Common Ground. Thirteen people have become Visiting Members in the past 2 months. It's not too late to join in if you think that this Community might be for you and your family.

New Purple CGEV T-shirts are here! Cost is \$24 for adult sizes and \$20 for child sizes. People who ordered shirts will be contacted with pick up and payment options. There are some additional shirts for those who have not pre-ordered. Contact Lisa if you would like one: Lberley@yahoo.com

We're excited about creating a **visual representation of the different categories of members** that make up our community and the different ways they contribute to its health and welfare. Stay tuned!



Jascha turns one within a rainbow circle of loving friends



Plump and plentiful potato procession (Photo: Kai)

live in community and work in community. My life is saturated with people who are in pursuit of the New Bountiful World. I hope you'll dip into their website and be inspired, too!"



Rachoo delights Doug with a chocolate birthday cake (Photo: Kai)



The beauty of Summer Squash and yard-long beans (Photos: Kai)



Margret takes a snap of a baby snapping turtle

