



Finding Common Ground

July 2026

Up Front

July is all about celebration at Common Ground. We are grateful for the land that gives us life. For land stewards who work tirelessly to build healthy soil, grow nourishing and delicious food, build abundant community through meals and events, and care for our waterways and woodlands. For the skills and dedication of those who navigate regulatory, financial, and fundraising systems and steer us towards a safe harbor for dwellings and endeavors that support our needs and values. For our membership folks who continually weave a social fabric imbued with justice and harmony, clarity and connection for all. For those who care for our organizational structures and communications needs, without which we would flounder. For Members, visitors, and volunteers far and wide who offer their gifts across spectrums too vast to measure.



Milkweed and Butterflies—a perfect match (Photo: Kai)



Top: Exuberant Passion Flower blossom (Photo: Abigail)

Above: Kai and Sage gleefully whip up fabulous farm lunch.

Yes, though we are living through severe drought and punishing heat in a time of great uncertainty worldwide, at Common Ground we carry a commitment to create an oasis where generosity and love abound; in our imperfect way, learning all the time, and leaning into what's possible; attempting to grow into what we most long to be and become; supporting and inspiring all who come along the way. There is room for you at our table should you care to join in.

Circle News Column

Membership

We are a circle of four people (Lisa, Amy H., Kathleen, and Jacq). There are many opportunities to strengthen and grow our community, and with Jacq in Italy for six months, and Amy needing a break, it would be a mitzvah (that means a good deed!) for more folks (you?!?) to join the circle. Our work together involves a wonderful mixture of noticing what is needed and then creative problem solving and hands-on relationship building and event planning. We meet weekly on Thursdays from 5-6:30 and circle members come for the amount they can. **Whatever your skills and time frame, we are pretty sure the community can benefit from your engagement with the Membership Circle activities!**

In the month of June we focused on:

♦ **Appreciating each other at the time of lease signing!** Members were celebrated for many of the ways in which each have contributed to the life and culture of our community and by pursuing our vision and dream of living together on the land with huge effort, wisdom, flexible thinking, and continuing to learn what we have needed to know.

♦ **Deepening our knowledge of each other** regarding personal experience with spirituality in the Community on the Ground (COG) meeting. This opened up a space to hear the tension some of us were having and hopefully turning to enjoyment in listening, sharing, and exploring! [Click here to see notes](#) from this rich experience.

♦ **Opening up the “Owner’s Association” conversation** at the COG, which has now taken off with a life of its own!



Tarase & Caleb install a sprinkler for parched crops (Photo: Kai)

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
- ♦ **July 3 & 17, 6:30pm**-Friday Farm-to-Fork dinner
- ♦ **July 25, 2-5pm**-Community on the Ground
- ♦ **July 25, 5:30-7pm**-Community Potluck
- ♦ **August 1, 6pm onwards**-Wheel of the Year: Lammass

♦ **All gatherings are in Eastern Time** & open to all members, guests, and/or 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/>



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. when folks are interested! Task meetings, as needed, are on alternate weeks, same time

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

General Circle

Sundays, July 12 & 26, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom

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

♦ Working through and detailing the **Conflict Container Policy** for CGEV: a framework for interpersonal and collective conflict. The policy is ready for GC review and approval. We have almost gotten to GENSET on the myriad details of addressing conflicts of varying sorts; this will help serve members and facilitators to remember the many questions and steps that can guide our conflicts effectively

♦ **Exploring the meaning of membership** and who we are as a community. We are increasingly aware of the many types of members and interests in the community and so we are thinking about “categories” for inclusion and voice and also community cohesion across our many ways of engaging with and for Common Ground Ecovillage. Stay tuned on this one...

In the month of July we plan to focus on:

♦ **Finalizing the details in the Conflict Container.** Some folks will be contacted to review this guide and all are very welcome to contribute! Please let any of us know your feedback and we'll be glad to hear it.

♦ **Advancing members** to Engaged Member status.

♦ **Based on a growing and changing understanding of our community**, we will (a) have more conversation about our myriad ways of community engagement, and (b) rework the JOIN form to help us better direct folks to the ways they would like to engage with us.

♦ **Continuing the conversations** of getting to know each other so we all feel better understood and “seen” and can better do same with others.

If these issues seem enlivening to you, please join us! Call or email [Lisa Berley](#) or [Amy Halberstadt](#).

Planning & Development

On-the-ground infrastructure is close to finished. As of this writing, we're awaiting Duke Energy finally installing the power lines, but all the planning and prep for them has been done. Close behind the power will come the pumps and tanks for the two wells (in the pumphouse sheds), and we'll have running water. We're discussing with MEC their schedule for finalizing the water retention area and fully opening drainage along the berm into the pond as well as erosion control fencing removal. The last piles of excavated pond-bottom silt and other materials currently upslope of the pond also need to be distributed and stabilized. **Overall, despite the drought and a lot of dry grasses, we think the land looks beautiful!**

Meantime on the financial and legal side **we have been blessed, out of the blue, with an anonymous \$150,000**



Marilu & Lara model bouquets of flowers grown by Goni and designed by Lara (Photo: Kai)

Land Stewardship

Tuesday, July 14, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed).

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

Governance & Communication

Tuesday, July 21, 7-8:30pm, Zoom

[RSVP to Quai](#) with subject “G&CC”

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](#) 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”

bridge loan to allow us to finish paying off remaining development costs while awaiting a long-term loan (applied for, with excellent chances, from the LEAF foundation). We continue to work toward completing the legal details with the County for finally and fully closing the circle on the leasehold agreements.

As usual it's far more complicated than it would be if we were doing a simple subdivision with fee-simple ownership, But it's at least, well, interesting (even to the County). For example, **a boundary-drawing task force** is just finishing a proposal to distribute the land between a not-for-profit Owners Association (OA) (including members beyond the village since we are all owners) and Hart's Mill LLC, a for-profit entity. The OA will hold the village, the installed septic areas, and Primary Open Space land included in the various Conservation Easements where relatively low impact is a given. HM, LLC, will include the Farm and some forest sections where there is more interaction with the land and where we will concentrate farm-related buildings. There will be less County oversight or restriction on, for example, the amount of impervious surface in these areas. (Tax factors and other legal considerations also drive these decisions.)

Now that we have closed on lot leases, **the next step is to build houses!** A number of individuals or pods are working together to identify designs and/or design-build firms, potentially beginning to coordinate contractors, especially those interested in natural materials and major DIY components to the construction. This is great—exciting times! Common House fund-raising and design, and strategizing its inclusion in the village, are once again moving to the front burner as well. Never a dull moment...



Becky, Anthony, Randy (left) and Therese (right)

The dedicated Development Team pictured above has devoted many years of constant thoughtful creativity and thousands of hours (and dollars) to achieving this Ecovillage dream. Many others have been involved over time, but this group has been doing the heavy lifting



McGowan Creek still holds water during these dry times thanks to our resident Beaver engineers (Photo: Rachoog)

*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 are currently reading **What Doesn't Kill You Makes you Blacker: A Memoir in Essays**, by D. 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, July 3 & 17, 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.

overseeing the development process this past year. We all owe them huge appreciation and gigantic gratitude!

Many Turtles Learning Collective

Here are the goals we have been focusing on:

◆ **Supporting our community and community educators by providing workshops** that facilitate individual growth and well-being or connection to the land. We had four workshops in the first half of the year, with more planned in upcoming months. You are welcome to suggest well-formed or even half baked (!) ideas. We look forward to working with you!

◆ **Developing a strong fund-raising arm** to further the educational mission and to help build space to further future educational endeavors. We have hosted three fundraising workshops, all lead by Chari Smith who is guiding us to all become adept at raising money for the many and varied projects and events we hold in our hearts. Fostering relationships and connecting what we offer to those who value various aspects of our mission are key. **Please [contact Amy](#) for relevant resources and suggestions**—offering even an hour or two a month will help us advance forward!

◆ **Preparing our website to facilitate visibility** and ways in which folks can donate more readily. Member Christian Stalberg is helping us with this and your guidance and skills are also welcome!

We encourage you to chat with [Amy Halberstadt](#), [Lisa Berley](#), [Lucas Babinec](#), and [Krystal Smith](#) to learn more.



*Nothing says Summer like these sunny black-eyed Susans
(Photo: Kai)*



A joyful Papa Caleb tops a pyramid of children (Photo: Kai)

Community on the Ground (COG)

Governance & Communication Circle

Saturday, July 25, 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, July 25, 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.

Wheel of the Year: Lammas

Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday, August 1, on the land

6pm Feast, 6:45 storytelling, singing, dancing, and drumming under the stars

[Contact Kai](#) for full details

Governance & Communications

Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful

Focus: Staying Curious: At a recent workshop, Miki Kashtan stated “If I am convinced I know something, I have left NVC consciousness.” Are we locked into certainty about what is true while expecting others to listen to us with receptivity, curiosity, and openness? If so, it is essentially a lack of humility and unlikely to result in connection or movement. True curiosity is not the impulse to find out what someone thinks, just so we can stamp it as right or wrong within our own system of understanding. Curiosity does not require accepting or agreeing; it only requires an openness to the possibility that we might not know the absolute truth and that more information or understanding can come into our awareness that might shift our perspective.

Practice: When expressing a belief or listening to another’s perspective, pause before engagement to ask yourself: Am I holding myself to the same standard of openness as I am holding the other person? Am I approaching the conversation from a space of humility? What is my motivation for seeking this conversation? Consider stating your belief or perspective with the opening stems “I currently have the belief...” or “My lived experience is...”

Land Stewardship

Rachoog reports that last week, she, Hope, and Becky, helped Indigo Roper and Nick Ferguson from the Eno River Association to **fully mark the Conservation Easement boundaries on the land!** They all removed hundreds of yards of day-glo orange survey tape from trees, replacing it with blue paint to identify the Stream Buffer sections and white paint for the Working Lands Easements. Another HUGEEEE thank you to Hope and Randy for making this dream come true, among many others who were deeply involved in the process. What a JOY AND BLESSING it is to have this land under protection in perpetuity. We all are so grateful! [Read Rachoog’s blog](#) about the event and all she discovered along the way.

Land Learner, Tarase, organized a unique event on the land to showcase original acoustic folk-punk music and videos offered by friends. Over 40 people converged at the barn to support and enjoy these creative expressions until well after the sun went down!

Lammas is a celebration of harvest, of fire, and of thunder. It’s the time where the arc begins to bend inward—from the radiant fullness of summer toward the letting go of fall. In the midst of a very busy time (harvest) our ancestors honored the pause of this potent moment between solstice and equinox. Come and feel into this threshold together.



Nick & Indigo spent over 9 hours posting signs and painting trees to mark the extensive Easement borders (Photo: Hope)



Tarase strummed & sang newly composed songs (Photo: Hope)

Farm Highlights

Amidst the intense heat and prolonged drought, the farmers continue to put their hearts and hands into growing healthy and delicious veggies to deliver to eager CSA members. The **Potato harvest** yielded a robust quantity of these nutritious, delicious, whole foods. **TOMATOES** are coming in strong—truly one of Summer's most delectable and coveted joys.



Rachel digs up plump potatoes by the bushel (Photo: Hope)

Our community farm meals are one offering that makes this CSA pretty unique. Almost every week new folks come out and meet other like-hearted/minded people while enjoying a significantly farm-to-table meal. This helps us all connect more with the land our food comes from and with the community that makes this all possible. **Every Tuesday at 1pm** and **every 1st & 3rd Friday of the month at 630pm.** Be sure to make it out sometime this summer!

July's spectacular farm dinner came after a couple of us went around in the neighborhood handing out fresh veggies. It's a sweet surprise showing up on people's doors with squash, cucumbers, and onions. We are grateful for such bounty to share at our full table!



Rainbow Chard is a feast for the eye (Photo: Kai)



Vine-ripened, ready-to-devour tomatoes flourish in the high tunnel (Photo: Kai)



Caleb takes a moment to cool off in the CoolBot and celebrate the abundant Spring Onion crop (Photo: Kai)

