



Finding Common Ground

October 2026

Up Front

"We do not see things as they are; we see them as we are." — Anaïs Nin

If it's all in how you look at it, we've been gifted with some beautiful views of Common Ground lately. Fogged as we sometimes are by our struggles and obstacles, now and then the sun breaks through and reveals a bigger truth, a new perspective, a chance to see the whole of our creation rather than just pick it apart. In July, Robby Robbins shot (and spent countless hours editing) a [drone video](#) of our community from east to west that rises above the more visible dishevelment at ground level. We see the land cradled by woods all around and imbued with meadows and waterways alongside our human



[Drone views](#) from west to east (above) and reverse (below)



*Top: An abundance of Hibiscus roselles from Abigail's herb garden
Above: Fall Equinox Fire Circle—in more ways than one (photo: Kai)*

designs. We see ourselves encircled in a green embrace while doing our best to do justice to our place within it. Robby's video was made on the same day that 40 people from the International Rural Sociological Society took a field trip to our land and gave us a chance to spotlight our agrarian community achievements across the board. [Lucas made a two-hour recording of the presentations](#)—well worth a listen to appreciate how we are outworking our values on so many dimensions with such persistence, creativity, and heart.

Coming way back down to Earth, in this very moment **there are 5,000 (!) pounds of Sweet Potatoes to dig up yet this fall.** So come along to a harvest party on October 17 & 18, noon-6pm. We'll have a good time together putting away enough of these nourishing bundles to feed scores of people this Winter!

Circle News Column

Land Stewardship

The activities of Land Stewardship Circle and friends have continued to be mainly focused on the **"aftermath" of the Infrastructure installation** for the Village area. This includes: urgent mowing of several areas; cleaning up leftover logs and slab wood from onsite lumber milling; cutting and stacking lots of firewood; and improving our protection of the several thousand board-feet of lumber that was milled last winter from trees that were sacrificed.



All are eager to practice chainsaw techniques (photo: Hope)

We hosted a Chainsaw Basics workshop, offered by the Triangle Prescribed Burn Association. In the morning of September 12, 25 participants learned about chainsaw safety, techniques, and maintenance, and then donned their PPE to practice trimming and bucking logs in the woods. It was a rich (and safe) experience for all.

On the horizon: dealing with the dominance of undesirable plants in the Far Field, such as sweetgum and sycamore seedlings and invasive Johnsongrass. **Contact Doug Jones (919) 444-9680 if you would like to help with current Land-based projects.**

Farm Highlights

We are thrilled to welcome Elena, our new Land Learner: *I am so excited to do all I can during my stay at Common Ground EcoVillage. I am looking forward to meeting more of the amazing people here. During my time here, I am hoping to strengthen my farming knowledge and learn how intentional communities operate. This is just the first stop in my gap year that hopefully will go international. Thank you for inviting me into your community and letting me join in on your amazing work!*

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
- ◆ **October 3, 6-7:30**-Unisong guided song circle
- ◆ **October 15, 6:30**-Crack Black Walnuts and Chat
- ◆ **October 16, 6:30pm**-Friday Farm dinner
- ◆ **October 17 & 18, 12-6pm**-Sweet Potato harvesting
- ◆ **October 24, 3-5pm**-Community on the Ground
- ◆ **October 24, 5:30-7pm**-Community Potluck
- ◆ **October 31, 5:30pm onward**-Wheel of the Year

- ◆ **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/>



Sweet and pungent Spice Bush seeds ripen on the land (Photo: Hope)

Circle Meetings

Planning & Development

Tuesdays, 2:30-4pm, hybrid
[RSVP to Anthony](#) with subject "P&D"

Membership

Tuesdays, 3-5:30pm, via Zoom or in person at the home of Amy H. when folks are interested. Task meetings, as needed, on alternate weeks, same time
[RSVP to Lisa](#) with subject "Membership Circle"



Elena prepares tangy Hibiscus roselles for the CSA (photo: Abigail)



Fall has arrived

After August Dearth Season and one of the hottest Septembers on record, the shift is finally here. Dearth Time has given way to fall abundance, with bok choy, salad turnips, sweet potatoes, daikon, and other cool-season crops beginning to fill our plates as we settle into a new season of eating.



Dig into one of the Piedmont's greatest food allies

Here in the Piedmont, sweet potatoes are one of the crops that can carry us through the cold months ahead—a nourishing, starchy staple grown in summer abundance and stored for winter eating. **Come help us bring in this year's harvest—all 5,000 pounds!—on October 17 & 18 from noon to 6pm.** Get your hands in the soil, and savor the medicine of belonging as we come together to gather abundance for the season ahead.



Finding balance at Fall Equinox

We gathered on the land at Equinox, that brief moment when day and night come into balance. Together—with food and fire, story and song—we paused at the midpoint of the long descent from Summer Solstice toward the deep inwardness of winter: noticing what has grown, what remains unfinished, and what we're carrying with us into the season ahead.



Eat through the seasons with us

Cold Season CSA enrollment is open! Join us December through April as we keep eating from this land through the cold months. Our journey includes favorites like leafy greens, hearty roots, crisp brassicas, three kinds of sweet potatoes, butternut squash, and the sweetest carrots you've ever met. [Claim your Cold Season Harvest Share!](#)

Fiscal & Legal Well Being

Thursday, October 8, 6:30-8:00 pm
& October 22, 2:00-3:30 pm

[RSVP to Therese](#) with subject "Fiscal"

General Circle

Sunday, October 4 & 25, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom

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

Land Stewardship

Tuesday, October 13, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed).

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

Governance & Communications

Tuesday, October 20, 7-8:30pm, Zoom

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

All About Events



Get ready to crack black walnuts from the land on the 15th!

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.



Abigail cozies up to our new volunteer barn kitty named Okra, also Okie, or Kiki (photo, Abigail)



Goni & Sage built a Sukka on the land to celebrate the Jewish Harvest Festival of Sukkot with a feast under a full moon. (photo: Hope)

Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful By Ren Enberg, G&CC

Focus: Meeting Needs in Creative Ways

There is a saying in NVC, “Hold your strategies loosely and your needs tightly.” Denying your needs diminishes your well-being. It is generally understood that only 25% of our needs are reasonably going to be met by our relationships. One value of identifying our feelings and the needs they point to is that it frees us to be creative about how else we might meet them.

Practice: On a piece of paper, write four columns:

Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, Physical. Go through your needs list and add each one to the column it applies to as met or unmet. (Some may apply to multiple columns.) What do you notice? Are you fulfilled in all 4 areas? Are you chronically living with unmet needs in an area? Brainstorm new strategies or requests that might meet more of those needs on your own or with different people to bring more balance into your life. Can you put something on your calendar now or change something in your routines? Asking a friend to brainstorm with you might give you even more ideas!

Governance & Communications

Our circle is refining the proposed plan for a Common Ground Sociocracy circle structure that can most efficiently serve our needs as we transition to a living-on-land community. We received a lot of varied and creative feedback to analyze and incorporate. We will likely propose a process to the General Circle for sorting through the options and making decisions. We want to encourage the Sociocracy guideline to only consider

Guided Song Circle by Unisong

Many Turtles Learning Collective

Saturday, October 3, 6-7:30pm, on the land

[Register Here](#)

Deja Belle and Tessie Castillo of Unisong will co-create a gentle space to slow down, breathe with the land, and weave harmonies together. Through song and quiet attention, we’ll reconnect with the turning season, with each other, and with the living world that holds us. Come gather in a circle around the fire and sing simple, heart-opening melodies that honor the land, the seasons, and our connection to one another. No musical experience is needed—just your voice, your presence, and a willingness to listen and join in. We will end with a wolf howl song to the moon! Bring a blanket or camp chair for comfy seating. **Accessibility:** Two stair steps with hand-railings are at the compost toilet in the barn. Ground is unpaved and uneven.

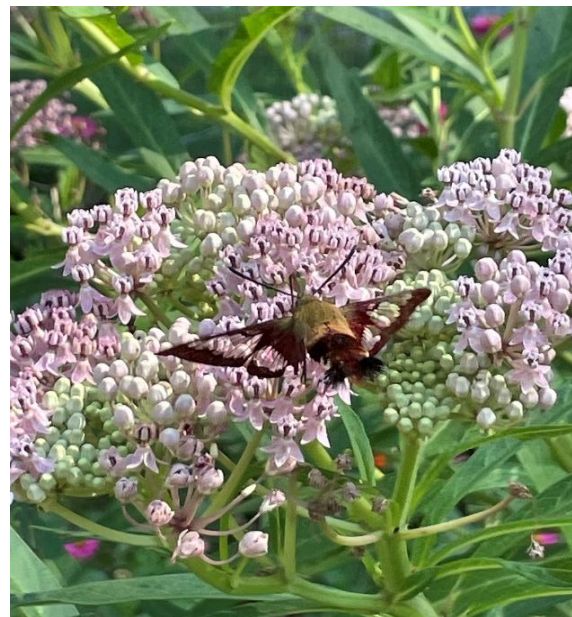
Racial Awareness Book Group

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. **Our current book is: Three or More is a Riot: Notes on How We Got Here 2012-2025, by Jelani Cobb.** This book is comprised of stand-alone essays which makes it easy to join at any point.*



Margret spots this hummingbird moth on milkweed

'range of tolerance' rather than personal preferences in deciding whether or not to raise objections.

Becky brought us a potential opportunity for Sociocracy for All (SoFA) to give our governance a Sociocracy check-up. If we agree and are selected for this process, we are likely to learn of ways to improve our governance. It may also assist us in building our new circle structure.

Quaye reports that we are nearing the point at which we can transition from our current website to our new one! This change will require user acceptance testing, a willingness to declare it is GENSET, and then 'flipping the switch' on www.commonground.eco so that it points to the new site.

Ren and Quai lead the first in an ongoing series of compassionate communication practice activities at our Community on the Ground (COG) on September 26. We are grateful for everyone who opened up with vulnerably and took a chance to try compassionate appreciations with other community members. We look forward to growing our community's capacity and skill for compassionate consciousness and communication.



Randy led a sharing activity where listeners picked out cards to identify needs expressed by the speaker. (photo: Hope)

Membership

The CGEV Retreat, held on Sept 19-20, was rich and wonderful. Members showed up, spent time together, listened and shared from their hearts. It was an outpouring of gratitude, a sharing of our vulnerabilities, and offered many opportunities to increase our feelings of belonging in the Community.

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 Dinner

Land Stewardship Circle

Friday, October 16, 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.

Crack and Chat

Land Stewardship Circle

Thursday, October 15, 6:30pm, at the Barn

[Contact Sage](#) for more info

Come and crack some Black Walnuts from our land! The hard shells contain a really tasty nut. We've got a specialized nut cracker and some picks to dig out the meat—but bring your own pick if you have one. And dress warmly!

Sweet Potato Harvest Party

Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday & Sunday, October 18 & 19, noon-6pm on the land. Weather dependent

[RSVP to Caleb](#)

There's an outstanding crop of delicious and nourishing Sweet Potatoes this year—about 5000 pounds! That's 2.5 TONS of potatoes which will feed a LOT of people. Come and get your hands in the soil, and savor the medicine of belonging as we come together to gather abundance for the season ahead.

Community on the Ground (COG)

Governance & Communication Circle

Saturday, October 24, 3-5pm, location TBA

[RSVP to Hope](#), 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 this event!

What a joy to see members wearing the new purple Common Ground T-shirts. They are all cotton, lighter weight than the light blue shirts and if you wear it tucked in, the logo and lettering are visible. Cost is \$24 for adult sizes and \$20 for youth sizes. The original light blue shirts are available as well in L, XL and XXL sizes. Contact Lisa if you would like to buy one.

Our community is a source of care for when we need help: a meal, a ride, a listening ear, assistance moving to a new home. It's sometimes so hard to ask, but so joyous to help! The more we lean in, the stronger the bonds between us grow. Reach out to [Lisa](#) or [Amy](#) with your needs and offerings.



Therese (wearing a CGEV Tee!) and USDA Area Director, Shirlene Alexander, at the Farm Lunch

AFFORDABLE - ARE YOU KIDDING?

News and information to help make it so

By Therese Jensen, P&D

On September 22nd the **Area Director of USDA, Shirlene Alexander**, came to visit Common Ground. Several of us gave her a tour of the lots, infrastructure, garden, and far field, and then she joined us for the farm lunch. **It's an understatement to say that she enthusiastically supports what we are doing.** I (Therese) spent many months educating her and persistently asking if she could check with higher-ups about the suitability of our structure (long-term leases, shared equity resale limitations, ADUs that are not being rented for income but are part of a 'single family home,' according to Orange County under our zoning, more than one

Community Potluck

Membership Circle

Saturday, October 24, 5:30-7:30pm, after COG

[RSVP to Lisa](#), or text 919-619-2979—helpful for set-up and location

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. Watch your email for updates.

Wheel of the Year: Samhain/All Souls/All Hallows Eve Celebration

Saturday, October 31, 5:30pm, on the land

[Contact Kai](#) for complete information

This moment of the Wheel of the Year is a celebration of relationship with our ancestors. The veil between the living and the dead thins. This threshold is a time of descent, the sacred composting of all that has past, preparing the ground for another cycle of life. Come celebrate the season together on the land!

Member Offerings

From Land Learner Sage: Do you like haunted houses and corn mazes? If so, come to Sage's scare-act at the Haunted Forest at Panic Point! Use discount code "sagmich" for 10% off. Tickets and additional info here: <https://raleighhauntedhouse.com/>



From Hope: Plant Spirit Medicine healer, Alison Gayek, is offering a training course at the Nest in Mebane in 2027/2028. Plant Spirit Medicine calls upon the healing power of plants to bring balance to the body, mind, and spirit. **Join Alison on Friday, October 16th, 12:00 pm EDT for a free class overview followed by a Q&A session.** [Contact Alison](#) for more information.

From Janey, Lucas, and Rachoog: We went down to Stone Mountain in Georgia for a harvest gratitude

household as co-buyers of a single lease/lot). Eventually she relayed that they "...could do it all!", and I burst into tears on the phone. Shirlene wants us to have a ribbon cutting ceremony as the first house goes up, and wants to be there. **Our approach is totally new for them, and they want to promote it so others can follow in our footsteps.** As Shirlene was leaving, she said, "I thought I was coming to look at lots but didn't know that I would find an amazing community doing so many amazing things!"

For more information about USDA and other loans, and Down Payment Assistance programs, go [HERE](#).

Planning & Development

Water, septic, and power are all in the ground, though some testing remains: we're on the brink of operational infrastructure. There's still wrap-up, though: finalizing size and location of retention ponds, removal of erosion control where permitted, winterizing the pump sheds, trying again with grass seeding (also key to erosion control) now that things are a little wetter. And more. But at the same time it is now possible to shift attention and energy more fully to design/build planning.

A number of folks have plans in some degree of progress, with different local design/build firms and architects. It's been exciting to share plans! At the same time, though, we also recognize that this is perhaps the most difficult stage of all for many members: just figuring out the steps involved in getting to the point of building, permitting, financing, and all the rest. Please know that the Design Review Committee will shortly be offering both written guides and regular consultation to help out with that process. For whatever questions you might have at any point, at whatever stage your plans might be, please also feel free to contact [Anthony](#).

And it may be that the build-out is slow. Our guess that within a year (nearing end of '27) there will 3-4 homes built or underway in the village, as well as the common house, with more coming gradually. We look forward to extending and deepening the community that already exists on the land, well knowing that it won't happen overnight or even over a year or two. Much to look forward to!

Planning for the common house proceeds apace. There are complexities around requirements for siting such a structure on a residential lot: another option would be to

ceremony this past weekend. We had the opportunity and blessing to once again engage relationship with each other, and honor the Mountain by participating in the sacred cycles of reciprocity. Please talk to them if you're curious about the work!"



This 12-foot Mexican Pozolero Morado corn is way higher than an Elephant's eye! AKA "Purple Hominny", the seeds came from Mexico through Janey and will be used to make tortillas (photo: Rachel W)

Outside Events of Interest

From Yes Solar Solutions: North Carolina's electric grid is changing, and so are the rules for homeowners considering solar. **This one-hour session on October 7 at 11:00am** breaks down what's actually happening: aging grid infrastructure, climbing electric rates, shifting net metering policies, and strategies for going solar in NC. We'll cover solar basics for those just starting to explore, how battery storage fits in, available incentives, and new leasing options. [Sign up here](#)

From Unisong: Holding to Flowing: Releasing Grief through Song, Tuesday, Oct 13, 6:30-8:30pm
Living Arts Center, 410 W Geer St, Durham, NC 27701
Through movement, compassionate witnessing, and the transformative power of music and song, Unisong will guide you on a journey from holding grief to a place of release and creative flow. [Click here](#) for information.

From Becky: 6th Annual Online Sociocracy in Intentional Communities Conference

[Fumbling Better Together](#), Saturday, November 21, 10:30am-4:30pm

Communities are groups of ordinary people reaching for something we may have never known and inventing



Kai shares a TrueVoice process update at the retreat (photo: Hope)

change the designation of a lot such as lot 9 or 10 to Owners Association open space, which would allow a less restricted building but may have other disadvantages. Many common house type functions might alternatively be located in a building on LLC land, but that would put it farther from the center of the village and the Grand Oaks. There is no easy and obvious answer, but we will figure it out! Concurrently we are developing a tremendous relationship with a local enthusiastic and energetic natural builder Stephen Hren and architect Alex Buck for Common House plan development—an unexpected treat.

Financially and legally, much work also remains. In the biggest picture, we have to mobilize ourselves for a major organizational transition as the LLC transfers ~70 acres of land to the new HM Owners Association (OA) while the LLC transitions to a Co-op and the village part of the OA transitions to a Community Land Trust. These entities support the smoothest long-term functioning and huge tax and other financial advantages. You'll be hearing more about this too into the later Fall. It would ease things a lot if much of the transition could be done by the end of the year.

Thus it's a good time to say again that new people stepping up to the work, including taking leadership positions, would be extraordinarily welcome and vital. There is more than enough to do, and those of us at the leading edge are not as *quite* bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as we once were. Join the work, up your game and ours!

new—or rediscovering ancient—ways of operating in this world. We will stumble along the way. Sociocracy won't spare us the bruises, but it gives us a structure that transforms challenges into data, wisdom, and growth. May we learn to fumble better together!

From Hope: Know anyone who is on the fence about voting? Share this [upbeat video](#) to inspire action!



Abigail weeds the thriving herb garden

