



# Finding Common Ground

SEPTEMBER 2024

## Up Front

Following our meeting at Arcadia earlier in August, members serious about living at CGEV **will be gathering on the Land for a Vision Retreat** over Equinox weekend, September 21 and 22. A specific program and schedule will be released as we get closer to the weekend. Expect a bunch of opportunities to connect deeply with the other folks who will be making the residential aspect of this community a reality, sharing the work/play of getting this village off the ground.

There will be a pizza dinner open to all Common Ground members on Saturday evening, the 21st. We encourage retreat participants to stay overnight on the land. More details to come!



**Visiting Member Susan Lewis** will help you to ground, de-stress, and more, as a fundraiser to support Common Ground.

Sometimes we just need a moment to deeply rest; to become centered and step into a place of inner peace. **That tranquility can be found with Reflexology.** Through this ancient wholistic modality, your entire body comes back into balance—through your feet.

15-minute sessions are available on Sunday, September 8 (1-6 p.m.), and Monday, September 9

[See UP FRONT, next page](#)

BANNER ABOVE: Caleb on the tractor, preparing beds for planting. Photo by Kai.

## EVENTS & MEETINGS SNAPSHOT

*See the All About Events and Circle Meetings sections for more details.*

- ◆ **Financial & Legal Subcircle:** Sunday, Sept. 1, 2-4 p.m. (Zoom); Thursday, Sept. 5, 5-7 p.m., Weaver Street Market, Hillsborough (along with dinner)
- ◆ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group,** Mondays, 7-8 p.m.
- ◆ **Weekly Farm Lunch,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.
- ◆ **Membership,** Tuesdays, Sept. 3 & 17, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Heart Share on the Land,** Saturday, Sept. 7, 3-5 p.m. Meet at the Barn.
- ◆ **Golden Well-being Hour,** Mondays 6:30-7:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 9

- ◆ **Land Stewardship,** Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Planning & Development,** Sept. 11, 2-4 p.m., and Sept. 24, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Governance & Communication,** Tuesday, Sept. 17, 7-9 p.m., Zoom
- ◆ **General Circle,** Sunday, Sept. 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Heart Share online,** Friday, Sept. 20, 7-9 p.m.
- ◆ **Vision Retreat,** Sept. 21-22
- ◆ **Tours of the land,** Saturday, Sept. 28, 1:30 p.m., or by request. RSVP required. Contact [Lisa](#).
- ◆ **Community on the Ground,** Saturday, Sept. 28, 3-5 p.m.
- ◆ **Community Potluck,** Sept. 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m.



## LAND STEWARDSHIP

In August, we focused on **efforts to tend to the forest and woodlands of Common Ground**, develop a comprehensive plan for food-growing efforts in the far field, and transition the current farm business from its current sole-proprietorship status into something more cooperatively shared (whether by the primary food growers or by the community at large).

We continue to pour devotion into the land we care for here. Sorghum stalks are approaching 10 feet in height, signaling a possible bumper harvest in a few short weeks. Butternut squash is finally taking off and bearing fruit. Juicy figs are recovering after the torrential tropical-storm rains. And we've got weeds, weeds, weeds galore! We've endured intense heat, had a tomato canning party, and enjoyed refreshing watermelon.

We all feel the tug of dozens of potential projects out here, sometimes venturing into overwhelm. Prioritization and focus encourage more easeful progress. The land needs us to offer what no other species can, and we need the land. Come walk the trails. Sit by the pond. Read a book (shout out for "The Soil Keepers" by Nance Klehm!). Picnic. And marvel at the wonder of life around us.

There is no rush to do. Just be. And by being here

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## UP FRONT, continued

(9 a.m.-6 p.m.). This is a fund-raiser for the Ecovillage. Suggested donation: \$20 for 15 minutes. You can also schedule a 30-minute session for deeper rest.

Susan Lewis became a Certified Reflexologist in 2001. She is donating 80 percent of donated monies to Common Ground!

Open to everyone—Members and Friends. If you'd like to schedule a session, contact Susan at [susan.plewis@gmail.com](mailto:susan.plewis@gmail.com) or text (505) 795-9061. Please book your session by Friday, September 6.

in that way as best as we can, to our surprise, all the essential projects have suddenly completed themselves :) Come on out!

## GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

CGEV is a member organization with Sociocracy for All, which provides discounts for classes and resources to provide support us.

We are preparing to teach another Sociocracy class. Please let Becky ([blaskody@gmail.com](mailto:blaskody@gmail.com)) know if you are ready for this step toward becoming an Engaged Member. Please read over these materials:

- **General introduction: [What is sociocracy, and do you need it?](#)** If you only read one article, read this!
- [Selection process](#)
- [Meeting format](#)
- [Rounds](#)

Is IT of more interest to you? If so, please email Quai at [IT@commonground.eco](mailto:IT@commonground.eco).



Photo by Kai

Farm volunteer Casey takes her child around in a wheelbarrow on the Farm.

## MEMBERSHIP

In the month of August, the Membership Circle focused on the following:

- We drafted and now seek feedback on a proposed list of **Community Cultural Agreements**. **Your feedback is very important.** You can read and give your reactions on the Forum, at the weekly Tuesday Farm Lunch, or by clicking this [link](#) to add your comments. We hope to bring a summary of feedback to the General Circle meeting in mid-September.

- **Follow-up steps:** At the July Community on the Ground (COG) meeting, we addressed becoming a welcoming community to families and diverse people with an attention to racism.

We are in the process of summarizing the comments/reactions/questions from the meeting and will post them on the Forum. We also hope to share them at the COG meeting in September.

- **Heart Share in person on the Land!**

Thanks to Robby and Lucas, a nice-sized group of new and longtime members met face-to-face in August for some wonderful sharing. They followed the tried and true structure guidelines of the Zoom version that Ren and Quai developed and have stewarded for several years. We hope this will be the first of many such gatherings.

- **“Speed Dating”:** The August COG meeting helped potential residents find compatible partnerships for co-owning and living in the village.



Photo by Roshana

Ren sings an original song while Quai and Nora accompany her during a Farm Lunch in the Barn.

Thanks to Kathleen for her energetic leadership. We're looking forward to more sessions like that!

**Important reminder:** If you are considering living in the village, remember **there is a requirement that you become an Engaged member**. There is no time like the present to apply for advancement. Here is a [step-by-step guide](#). Lisa, Amy and Kathleen are ready to support and assist you. Please contact one of us to get started or complete the process. If you are a Visiting member, [here is the guide](#) for the Exploratory membership level.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

P&D continues to manage the rezoning of the land back to R-1 conventional zoning to enable us



Photo by Hope

These Jack-O-Lantern mushrooms will grow as big as pumpkins.



Photo by Kai

Lucas, Caleb, and Doug share a laugh on Zoom in the Barn. Who knew those Land Stewardship meetings were so much fun?

## P&D, continued

to develop an alternative site plan using the county's new Flexible Development – Conservation Cluster framework. **The final hearing on the “down-zoning” part with the full Orange County Board of County Commissioners happens on September 5.** Our application for a Conservation Cluster-based site plan, based on the site, septic, and lot layouts we have been circulating and honing since the spring will be close behind. Check the newly updated **“Village Design” section of the website** for more, including design and building guidelines for members actively planning building.

We continue to garner **infrastructure cost estimates**. Some potential site contractors are interested, but timely numbers don't always follow.

In August, the **Financial and Legal Subcircle** was reinvigorated, given the village ground swell underway. F&L dove into the eventual land ownership structure and passed on an early draft proposal to P&D. Randy, Becky, and Paul are the current members, and they welcome others to consider joining in.

Also of note is that a new online project management tool is being actively used to identify

and track the many different tasks and activities involved with moving residential development forward. Tasks being tracked in the tool are lot reservation/purchase planning, along with other financial, legal, site planning/engineering, county review, and early phase of building design review. A central focus for the tool is to identify the task interdependencies while also looking at the project timeline and critical path to get to a point of being able to bid out the infrastructure construction work.

In the coming months, a very short monthly synopsis of the “state of the project,” per the project management analysis, will be shared in the Almanac. The tasks are mostly moving forward as hoped for. Developing the financial clarity and wherewithal may be the main potential project bottleneck. There is much planned for September on many activities and tasks, so stay tuned, and reach out to P&D members as needed and inspired.

## **GENERAL CIRCLE**

This Circle is sponsoring an initiative **to establish a green burial ground on the Land**. Come to the Community on the Ground meeting on September 28 to learn more. Contact Hope if you would like to collaborate on this: [hope.matrix@fastmail.com](mailto:hope.matrix@fastmail.com)

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## **CIRCLE MEETINGS DIGEST**

### **FINANCIAL & LEGAL SUB**

**Sunday, Sept. 1, 2-4 p.m.** (special meeting/Zoom).

**Thursday, Sept. 5, 5-7 p.m., Weaver Street Market, Hillsborough (along with dinner), prior to Board of County Commissioners meeting.**

RSVP to Randy ([rdodd.cgev@gmail.com](mailto:rdodd.cgev@gmail.com)). Other meeting dates and times TBD.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

**Tuesday policy meetings are set for Sept. 3 & 17, 3-5 p.m. via Zoom, with task meetings as needed on alternate Tuesdays.**

RSVP to Lisa with subject “Membership”: [LBerley@yahoo.com](mailto:LBerley@yahoo.com)

### **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**Tuesdays, Sept. 10 (time TBD) and 24, 2:30-4:30 p.m., via Zoom or hybrid.**

*Hybrid meetings (often having lunch at the Barn first). Observers are welcome. Email Anthony for updates and link with subject P&D: [weston@elon.edu](mailto:weston@elon.edu)*

### **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

**Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7-8:30 p.m.**

*Here is the recurring [Zoom link](#). RSVP to [Doug](#).*

### **GENERAL CIRCLE**

**Sunday, Sept. 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m., on Zoom.**

RSVP to Becky with subject “GC”;

*2 days in advance: [Blaskody@gmail.com](mailto:Blaskody@gmail.com).*

*Come observe to find out what's happening with all Circles at CGEV and how you can be involved.*

### **GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS**

**Tuesday, Sept. 17, 7-9 p.m., Zoom**  
RSVP to Quai with G&CC in the subject line: [quaifranklin@gmail.com](mailto:quaifranklin@gmail.com)

*If you're interested in observing or helping with G&CC work, please send your request to [gov-com@commonground.eco](mailto:gov-com@commonground.eco)*



## ALL ABOUT EVENTS

### GET INVOLVED

- ◆ All events are in **Eastern Time** and open to everyone unless otherwise indicated. **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 in our development, terrain is unpaved and uneven, and restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
- ◆ **Google Calendar Link:** [CGEV Calendar](#)
- ◆ To add or change an event, email Ren at [ren.enberg2@gmail.com](mailto:ren.enberg2@gmail.com)

### TOURS OF THE LAND

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? We regularly hold tours of the Land on the fourth Saturday of the month (Sept. 28) at 1:30 p.m. **RSVP is required.** You can also schedule a tour at an alternate time. Contact Lisa and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line: [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com).

### 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)  
Our current book is "**How to be an Antiracist**" by Ibram X. Kendi. A good time to join is when we begin a new book; this will likely be in October. An invitation will be sent out.



*Photo by Robby*

Farmer Doug wanted aerial photos of the Farm's crops to log what had been done and to plan future rotations and plantings. Robby came out and flew his drone to get several pictures, like this one.

### WEEKLY FARM LUNCH

Land Stewardship Circle  
**Every Tuesday, 1 p.m.**  
Please RSVP to Lucas (**301-767-6720** / [lucas.babinec@posteo.net](mailto:lucas.babinec@posteo.net)) or [fill out this form](#) by Monday evening if you plan to attend, and let us know about any dietary restrictions. All are welcome!

### GOLDEN WELL-BEING HOUR

**Mondays 6:30-7:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 9, at the Grandmother Oak, guided by Lucas.**  
Folks who gather will devote themselves to whatever self-care and/or recreative practice(s) they feel called to participate in: yoga, meditation, reading a book, lying down and looking up at the sky, bringing a meal to eat, arts and crafts, card games, etc. The hope is that this can be a space for us to gather in community in a low-stakes way, giving ourselves nourishment and care, while enjoying the splendor of a magic golden hour.

### HEART SHARE ON THE LAND

**Saturday, Sept. 7, 3-5 p.m.**  
We'll gather for our sharing circle at the Barn followed by a meal together.

### MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle  
**Friday, Sept. 20, 7-9 p.m., Zoom.**  
Organizers Ren Enberg & Quai Derr. RSVP [Heart\\_Share@commonground.eco](mailto:Heart_Share@commonground.eco).

### VISIONING RETREAT

**Equinox weekend, Sept. 21-22.**  
*Watch for details.*

### COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle  
**Saturday, Sept. 28, 3-5 p.m., Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane.**  
RSVP to Becky, subject "COG": [Blaskody@gmail.com](mailto:Blaskody@gmail.com)  
These all-member meetings are reliably informative and

## EVENTS, continued

connecting for all involved. This month, we'll talk about establishing a green burial ground on the Land. We'll also speak to what's most relevant when the time comes and follow the meeting with a potluck supper. You'll get to know each other and learn a lot! Make it a habit to come to these events.

## COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Membership Circle  
**Saturday, Sept. 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m., following Community on the Ground. Location TBA.**  
Watch for an announcement or contact Lisa: [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com). No RSVP required.  
Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes discuss the Community on the Ground meet-

ing content. Please bring something to share. Typically vegetable dishes predominate, but all sorts of foods are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients. Watch for an email announcement for location.

**Do you have news or pictures to share? Please send them to Roshana at [roshanamail@gmail.com](mailto:roshanamail@gmail.com).**



Photo by Kai

Gonzalo waves from behind the blackberry canes he's trimming.



Photo by Kai

Lucas learns how to wrangle a snake with a tool made by Robby.

## MEMBER HAPPENINGS

*CGEV Members may list their events not sponsored by CGEV Circles as an FYI. Supply title, date, time, location, links, and description.*

**Susan Lewis is offering Relaxing Reflexology sessions at Common Ground** on Sunday, September 8 (1-6 p.m.), and Monday, September 9 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.)  
To schedule, contact Susan: [susanplewis@gmail.com](mailto:susanplewis@gmail.com) or text (505) 795-9061. **Book your session by Friday, September 6.** Susan is donating 80% back to Common Ground!

**Common Ground member Melanie Yukov of Root 2 Rise Wellness** will have an Herbalicious Exploration on Saturday, Sept. 14. You can register [here](#). She'll also host a Plant Walk on Sept. 28 from 9-11 a.m. Register [here](#).

**A peek into Tamera Ecovillage.** Hope and Paul visited this fabled ecovillage during a trip to Portugal in May. They offered a presentation in August detailing what they learned about the history and current endeavors of this extraordinary place. [Here's](#) a video recording.



Photo by Becky

Jane enjoys a Farm Lunch made by Lucas at the Barn.