



Finding Common Ground

OCTOBER 2024

Up Front

The Autumnal Equinox marks the still point between cycles, old and new. It's thought to be the beginning of the new year in many traditions, mirroring what nature knows best: whatever the old cycle brought into our lives, it's time to plow it under and let it rest.

This is particularly apt this year at Common Ground. We are beginning a new cycle; writing a fresh story; downsizing our village footprint and upscaling our connections and commitments to each other. Most recently, at the **Equinox Retreat Weekend**, potential residents of all ages with a calling to live in community convened on the land.

[See UP FRONT, next page](#)



Photo by Robby

Participants of the Equinox Retreat (and wrap-up pizza party!) pose for a group photo.



Photo by Hope

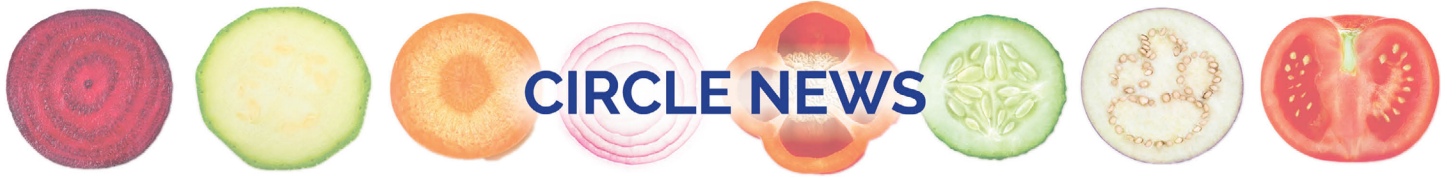
Anthony reviews village engineering plans with Grounders over the weekend.



Photo by Doug

Folks gather under Grandmother Oak for some deep sharing during the retreat.

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BANNER ABOVE: Caterpillars munching on catbriar / *Photo by Margret*



GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Governance and Communication is planning more training in Non-Violent Communication this fall and winter. We continue to welcome folks to join our Circle and observe our meetings.

If you're interested in contributing to the work of the IT task group, please email IT@commonground.eco. (You don't have to be tech-y.)

MEMBERSHIP

We are a community of 30-40 active members. Some of us are making plans to have homes on the land. New Visiting Members need to know that they can stay involved with Common Ground as Affiliate Members. Contact Lisa or Amy to talk about what's right for you.

The Membership Circle is happy share two versions of our Cultural Agreements. These Agreements describe the atmosphere of justice and harmony we envision with each other, with neighbors near and far, and with the earth. We know these are aspirations, that we will sometimes fall short, but it helps to state our goals and ideas for practice so we know where we are going. These "living" documents will need to be updated as we grow and learn. We'll next be bringing these to



Photo by Margret

We have a new covered tool shed, the result of work mainly from Anthony and Kathleen.

General Circle for consent. [Click here](#) for the complete document and [here](#) for the summarized version.

[Continued on next page](#)

UP FRONT, continued

Camping, sharing meals together, experiencing a new site plan, talking about money, speaking (and listening) from our hearts—all of this conspired to bring us closer to each other and to the real possibility of residing on the land. We're calling ourselves Grounders, and there is room for you if our agrarian community vision is compelling to you.

Enormous gratitude to those who planned and masterfully facilitated this Retreat experience—Becky, Caleb, Kai, and Lucas. We'll meet again on October 13 from approximately 10 to 4, including a potluck lunch. See "Grounders Meeting" in the **Events** section.

OTHER FEATURED NEWS

September's Community on the Ground featured Anne Weston, founder of the **Green Burial Project**. We plan to establish such a burial ground on our land. [Click here](#) to watch the recording.

Susan Lewis is returning on October 13-14 to offer **Reflexology sessions as a fundraiser for Common Ground**. Those who received her work in September felt deeply relaxed, balanced, and renewed. See "**Member Happenings**" for more information or contact [Susan](#) to schedule a session.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

September brought major progress on development planning. Early in the month, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners approved our downzoning back to R1. This was a key step toward developing an alternative site plan using the County's Flexible Development – Conservation Cluster framework. Randy and Anthony, along with our site designer Bobby Tucker, subsequently met with county planners in a Pre-Application Concept discussion to ease the way for our Conservation Cluster application.

At the Equinox Retreat Weekend for future residents, Anthony made a detailed presentation of the envisioned site plan. Later on, participants visited the proposed house sites, helpfully staked out on the land by Quayle and Doug. Future residents are now weighing in on their site preferences.

P&D consented to move ahead with the formal concept application on September 24. This will be an involved process requiring input from not just county planning but erosion control, the fire marshal, State Health Department and others, but we are gearing up for the push!

F&L: The Financial and Legal Subcircle has been very active recently. During the Equinox Retreat Weekend, members thoughtfully talked about money with candor and compassion. Many members pledged to increase the dues they pay each month in order for CGEV to pay



Photo by Hope

Participants visit proposed house sites during the retreat weekend.

its monthly expenses without dipping into its dwindling savings. **We are only part-way there, and increased contributions by many more members will be absolutely necessary to enable this community to cover our mortgage and other ongoing costs.** We will also be seeking additional, substantial contributions to prepare for residential development. On the legal side, Paul has been ardently looking into the legal structure that can best support CGEV over the long haul. Stay tuned.



Photo by Kai

CSA members Josh and Kelly have fun with their children getting shitakes at the Fall Family Harvest event.



Bradley works on installing plumbing and electricity for a sink and washing machine in the barn.

Photo by Kai



Caleb smiles as he christens the new kitchen sink in the Barn.

Photo by Kai

LAND STEWARDSHIP

The Land Stewardship Circle has begun an exciting design process for agriculture in our 9-acre “Far Field.” This is a large area of land, about 8 times the size of our current gardens, with some very good soil types but somewhat depleted plant nutrients. Everyone has been encouraged to lay their dreams on the table for all the foods that could be produced there to feed our community and provide some cash income for our farmers.

Next steps include extensive soil testing; making observations on slopes and contours of the land, as well as the wild plants currently growing; and doing a “prescribed burn” of those plants. Then we will pencil in a lot of design ideas, possibly planting a few nut trees this fall to get started on perennials.

Over the next few years, some important infrastructure will need to be financed and installed, such as a water well and a deer fence. The biggest input of all will be human labor. Roll up your sleeves, folks!

We plan to do a big, prescribed burn in the Loblolly pine forest between the Far Field and McGowan Creek, to enhance the biodiversity there.

The Farm Team is also focusing on marketing — there are a lot of new crops in the ground. We need many more members for our CSA, to get us



Photo by Jeffrey

The trail swing is repaired.



Pinesap, a sign of waning summer.

Photo by Margret

up to a “living wage.” Can you help us recruit? Contact [Doug](#) for information and ideas.

CIRCLE MEETINGS

GENERAL CIRCLE

Sunday, October 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m., on Zoom.

RSVP to Hope with subject “GC”, 2 days in advance: hopenatrix@fastmail.com. Come observe to find out what’s happening with all Circles at CGEV and how you can be involved.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays, October 8 & 22, 2:30-4:30 p.m., via Zoom or hybrid.

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

Observers are welcome.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Tuesday, October 8, 7-8:30 p.m. RSVP to [Doug](#). Here is the recurring [Zoom link](#).

FINANCIAL & LEGAL SUB

Thursdays, October 10 & 24, 2-3:30 p.m. RSVP to Randy (rdodd.cgev@gmail.com). Zoom most likely, but possibly in person. .

MEMBERSHIP

New time: Friday policy meetings, **October 11 and 25 from**

12-2 p.m. via Zoom. Task meetings, as needed, on alternate Fridays. RSVP to Lisa with subject “Membership”: LBerley@yahoo.com. We welcome visitors to our meetings.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Tuesday, October 15, 7-9 p.m., Zoom RSVP to Quai with G&CC in the subject line: quaifranklin@gmail.com If you’re interested in observing or helping with G&CC work, please send your request to 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

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 (October 26) 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.

GOLDEN WELL-BEING HOUR

Land Stewardship Circle
Mondays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., 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



Photo by Kai

Kylie and her grandmother harvest a bouquet during the Fall Family Harvest.

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.

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
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 sometime in October. An invitation will be sent out.

WEEKLY FARM LUNCH

Land Stewardship Circle
Every Tuesday, 1 p.m.
Please RSVP to Lucas (**301-767-6720 / 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!

MAKING CANDLE LANTERNS

Land Stewardship Circle
Saturdays, October 5, 10 a.m.-noon, and October 12, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Barn.

In preparation for a ceremony at the pond, we'll be making candle lanterns. No skill, materials or RSVP necessary; just an ability to see at least one lantern through start to finish; 30-45 minutes. Offered by Randy.

SORGHUM BOIL

Land Stewardship Circle
Saturday October 5, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Come drop in, bring a snack, bring an instrument, and hang out while we boil sorghum to make our yearly supply of molasses! RSVP to [Caleb](#).

HEART SHARE ON THE LAND

HeartWeavers Subcircle
TBD / Watch for an email.
We'll gather for our sharing circle at the Barn followed by a meal together. **Organizers:** Robby Robbins and Lucas Babinec.

EVENTS, continued

This month's theme: Appreciation. RSVP to **Robby** at robertarobbins@gmail.com.

SOIL RETURN

Land Stewardship Circle
Sunday, October 6, 3-5 p.m. around Grandmother Oak.

As we discuss burial options at Common Ground, why not practice giving back to the soil and earth here before your last breath? Join us for Soil Return, where we will imagine offering ourselves and our cells to the land. Lara will gently guide a decomposition death meditation, with shared songs led by EO ❤️. We will lie on the ground while dreaming and embodying our soil return, offering our bodies back to the land as good compost for the ground that nourished us during our lives.

Please bring a yoga mat, chair, or blanket to rest on. Show up as you are, bring a friend, a few bucks if you want, perhaps a flower or offering for Grandmother Oak, a snack, and your nutrient-rich body.

Email Lara or call (484) 542-3636 with any questions or curiosities.

SWEET POTATO HARVEST

Land Stewardship Circle
Saturday October 12, 1-4 p.m.
Come participate in our biggest harvest of the season! Sweet potato is a key plant in our practice of food sovereignty. Come share in the pleasure of collaborative work! RSVP to Caleb.

GROUNDERS MEETING

Planning & Development Circle
Sunday, October 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A follow-up to the Equinox Visioning Retreat in September, this gathering will include a potluck lunch. Want to help with planning? Ready to RSVP? **Contact Becky** with subject "CGEV October 13" as soon as possible: Blaskody@gmail.com

MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle
Friday, Oct. 18, 7-9 p.m., Zoom.
Organizers Ren Enberg & Quai Derr. RSVP Heart_Share@commonground.eco.

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle
Saturday, October 26, 3-5 p.m.,

Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane.

RSVP to Hope, subject "COG." These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved. This month, we'll take a deeper dive into Community Agreements 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, October 26, 5:30-7:30 p.m., following Community on the Ground. Location TBA.

Watch for an announcement or **contact Lisa:** Lberley@yahoo.com. No RSVP required.

Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes discuss the Community on the Ground meeting 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.



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

Reflexology — supporting your well-being and the Ecovillage dream. Nestle into the well of deep relaxation like an inner lullaby. Reflexology rebalances all the systems of your body and soothes the nervous system. Take a moment for self care. **Mini sessions available Oct. 13 (Sunday), 12:30-6 p.m., and Oct. 14, 9:30-**

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

1:30 at The Nest.
30-minutes (\$40 donation) or 15-minutes (\$20 donation). Susan Lewis (Visiting Member) became a Certified Reflexologist In 2001. **75 percent of donations will go to CGEV.** To book a session, contact Susan at susanplewis@gmail.com or text (505) 795-9061.



Melanie Yukov of Root 2 Rise Wellness offers fun and educational **Plant Walks** in Hillsborough on the Riverwalk. **Sunday, October 13, at 2 p.m., and**

Saturday, October 26, at 9 a.m.
Each Plant Walk has five spots available. Participants receive detailed plant notes following class and sip on medicinal tea or beverage and enjoy a wild treat afterward. To grab your spot, visit root2risewellness.org/plant-walk

Our last Herbalicious class had 20 participants! There's only one more this season, on **October 19**. Register at root2risewellness.org/herbaliciousexplore
Email info@root2risewellness.org or call (919) 969 -3321.

ONE MORE THING ...

We had so many great photos sent to the Almanac this month! We had to share at least a few more ...



Photos by Kai

A huge spider web hangs on tree branches on this peaceful, misty morning on the Farm.



Photo by Kai

Bradley and Harland swing on Grandmother Oak.



Photos from Melanie

Melanie's Herbalicious Class was a big hit this past month!

Box turtles love mushrooms too.

Photo by Margret



OUTSIDE EVENT

Please vote in October for a new consumer owner board member for [Weaver Street Market](#), our community-owned natural foods grocery store.

Do you have news or pictures to share?
Please send them to Roshana at roshanamail@gmail.com.