



Finding Common Ground

NOVEMBER 2024

Up Front

On an October Sunday evening, a group of 11 Common Grounders gathered around a fire as evening set. The kernel of inspiration for the gathering happened back in the summer when Randy was visiting a retreat center in New Hampshire. As part of that retreat, **there was a beautiful ceremony that involved gathering together, singing, and blessing each other.**

It included **a flotilla of candle lanterns** that had been made with paper mache and wood blocks. So, with that spark, along with appreciation for the long arc of spiritual presence and power in the American gospel tradition, we sang a brand-new rendition of “Down Here at Common Ground” to the tune of “Down by the Riverside.”

We then had a procession down to the pond with the guiding light of the western stars that had just emerged from the clouds that had hung around all day. We set the little lantern boats adrift into the vastness of the pond’s expanses as personal and collective blessings and aspirations for our light to shine ever more brightly as we continue to birth our ecovillage and navigate the Great Turning that the present time presents.

The Grounders met twice in October, on the 13th and the 27th, **focused on deepening connections and mutual trust**, along with exploring how to fund the village and build homes together. The lanterns, which had been created in the preceding weeks, were launched across the pond as beacons of light and hope for the birthing of the village and beyond.



Photo by Quai

Candle lanterns float on the pond as part of a ceremony during a gathering of Grounders on October 27.

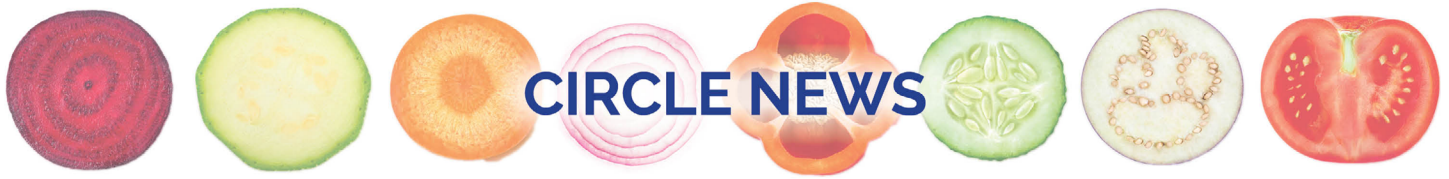
DON'T FORGET

Share your voice in Our Community Forum: discourse.commonground.eco/

Subscribe to our Common Ground [Calendar](#) or view it in your browser.

Send calendar requests with a subject line of “Calendar Request” or “Calendar Update” to calendar@commonground.eco.

BANNER ABOVE: Doug brought a very colorful salad to the Potluck on October 26. This is just a tiny slice of that rainbow. See the full picture inside. / *Photo by Marilu*



MEMBERSHIP

We're excited to report that **the Cultural Agreements for CG have been consented to by the General Circle** and are ready for prime time. At October's Community on the Ground meeting, members met in small groups to dive into specific agreements and consider the ways that they can guide our behavior now and in the future. We realized **what a rich tool these agreements really are** for grounding us as we continue to show up for ourselves, each other, the natural world that we are a part of, our neighbors and the communities beyond.

In addition to our work with new members and membership advancements, the Membership Circle is providing leadership in the areas of Cultural Agreements and Attention to Racism as well as furthering the efforts of forming a nonprofit (501C3) at Common Ground.

We benefit greatly from the ideas and efforts of members outside of our circle. Always feel free to come to a meeting, and call or email us with your suggestions and offers to help.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

P&D continues to pursue our Concept Plan application with Orange County while at the same time giving increasingly specific shape to a range of different next-step development scenarios.

Our Flexible Subdivision/Conservation Cluster Concept Plan — the site plan as shared with the community at the Equinox Grounders retreat — is now proceeding through the County planning process, with input coming from County department heads in early November. We are trusting there will not be any major snags and are organizing a neighborhood information meeting for the week before Thanksgiving. We continue also to garner infrastructure cost estimates — **numbers from potential site contractors**



Photo by Lara

An offering rests under the Grandmother Oak during the Soil Return meditation on October 6. Participants lay on the ground, offering their bodies back to the land as good compost in gratitude for the ground that nourished us during our lives.



Photo by Kai

[Continued on next page](#) Janey, Lucas and others harvest sweet potatoes.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, continued

are coming in — as well as pursue loan possibilities. Members are weighing in on lot preferences, and much more.

At the same time, **we have been re-imagining both the developmental process of the community and our aspirations for the built village.** A forming vision is to frontload the Common House in order to ground future community building and to jump-start the actual construction process. No further approvals or huge amounts of infrastructure money would be necessary to build a single home on an unimproved road. But it would, of course, need to be carefully integrated with the larger development plan.

Please go to the Forum threads (there are two) on [Building the Common House](#) for more information and a challenge to step forward to take active leadership roles!

Financial & Legal Subcircle

F&L met twice in October and also brought topics to P&D for further deliberation. Randy, Becky, and Paul are handling a good deal of operational and “behind the scenes” work with processing transactions, book keeping, budget planning, seeking legal advice, and reporting, etc. F&L also prepared a presentation for the Grounders on the financial picture of what will be involved in creat-



Photo by Kai

Casey, Harland, and Abigail process tulsi (holy basil) in the Barn.

ing the financial capacity for residential building. **They have initiated a financial plan for the village along with a “pledge” agreement template** that will be an instrument for moving forward with creating capacity for building. The coming weeks present an important time for financial discernment for all interested in both living at Common Ground and helping support the village.

[Continued on next page](#)



ABOVE: Kara, Abigail, and Casey craft lanterns.
RIGHT: Randy shows one of the many floating lanterns created for a ceremony at the pond.



Photo by Kai

Grounders hold their lanterns as they participate in a ceremony, launching them on the pond as beacons of light for the adventure we continue together.



Lucas, Kai (and Doug, not shown) enjoyed selling veggies at their first appearance at Ramble Rill's monthly farmers market.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

October's sorghum boil and sweet potato harvest day was a treat all around. Bradley the blacksmith brought a cast iron cauldron to stew a fantastic soup for the celebration dinner that followed. The Farm Team is currently aiming for November 10 (Sunday) or 16 or 17 (Saturday/Sunday) to do our Final Sweet Potato Harvest. Stay tuned for an announcement. We still have hundreds of pounds in the ground! **However ... you don't have to wait** to come help us dig



Photo by Kai

Caleb boils sorghum on a perfect Saturday on the Farm.

them up! We are flexible in hosting volunteers almost anytime that is convenient for you!

Our farmers have been invited to participate in the monthly Saturday Slowdown market at RambleRill Farm through December.

[Continued on Page 6](#)

CIRCLE MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP

Friday policy meetings, **November 1 & 15, 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.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Monday, November 4, 3-5 p.m., and Tuesday, November 19, 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.

FINANCIAL & LEGAL SUB

Thursdays, November 7, 2-3:30

p.m., (and tentatively November 21) in person at Arcadia Community in Carrboro. RSVP to Randy (rdodd.cgev@gmail.com).

GROUNDERS

Sunday, November 10, 1-1:30 p.m., at the Barn Come earlier to share lunches/ stay later to walk the land/ share dinner.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Tuesday, November 12, 7-8:30 p.m. RSVP to [Doug](#). Here is the recurring [Zoom link](#).

GENERAL CIRCLE

Sunday, November 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m., on Zoom.

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

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Tuesday, November 19, 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 (November 23) 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.

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 November. Lisa will send an invitation out.



ABOVE: A frog balances on a temporary fence on the Farm.
RIGHT: Farmer Doug smiles over his every-color-of-the-rainbow salad at the Community Potluck on October 26.

Photos by Kai

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!

FINAL SWEET POTATO HARVEST

Land Stewardship Circle
November 10 (Saturday) OR 16 OR 17 (Saturday/Sunday), at the Farm
Come help harvest these highly delicious and nutritious veggies. Contact Doug for information or to volunteer any time: dr.tobago-pepper@gmail.com.

MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle
Friday, November 15, 7-9 p.m., Zoom. Organizers Ren Enberg & Quai Derr. RSVP Heart_Share@commonground.eco.

A GATHERING OF GRATITUDE AND GOODIES

Saturday, November 30, 5-7 p.m.
At the Nest in Mebane. RSVP



required to Hope: hopematrix@fastmail.com

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle
Saturday, December 7, 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.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Membership Circle
Saturday, December 7, 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.

NOTE: Due to the holidays, we're planning just one COG meeting for both November and December. These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved. We'll 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.

LAND STEWARDSHIP, from Page 4

Come on over on November 2 and December 7 from 10-2 to enjoy an autumn array from vendors of all stripes and, oh yes, goats!

The Triangle Prescribed Burn Association carried out a **practice burn in the far field**. A couple dozen volunteers pitched in to learn all about—and actually complete—a 2-acre prescribed burn. Click here to read about it. This was Hope's certifying burn to become a Burn Boss! Lucas is next up to burn the remaining acres as his certifying burn sometime in November as conditions allow. All are welcome to show up, pitch in, or just observe this effective land management process, brought to us from Nature and the indigenous peoples who cultivated this practice for centuries.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

We are planning trainings in **Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and Sociocracy** in the New Year.

Please share interest with Becky: blaskody@gmail.com as we set dates and times.

If you're interested in contributing to the work of the IT task group, please email IT@commonground.eco. We need many different kinds of skill sets such as customer relationship management, writing, editing, record and form design, etc. along with information technology-based skills.



Photo by Kai

Hope (left) oversees the prescribed burn training on the Land on October 26.



The smoke from the burn produced some dramatic scenes.

Photo by Brian Gullett

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

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

LOCAL COFFEE SHOP

From Margret:

Friends, if you plan to live at Common Ground, Efland will be your home town. If you are a member of any level, Efland is your community too. In keeping with **Common Ground's stated goals of integrating with the wider community**, and in the spirit of sup-

porting small local enterprises, I urge you to check out Efland's new family-owned business, **Beautifully Blended coffee shop**, on Hwy 70, adjacent to the Efland Supermarket on Highway 70. Among other attractive features, their coffee beans come from a local-ish (Aberdeen NC) roaster. They have hired two local folks to bake their pastries, which I have not tried but they look yummy! The owners' special-needs adult daughter is employed there, and they have a history of special-needs work and advoca-

cy. Next time you plan to meet someone or pick up a cuppa, this is a great new option (and it's not Starbucks!).



LEARNING ABOUT HERBS

From Hope: On Saturday, November 16, from 2-3:30 p.m., the Orange County Public Library in Hillsborough is hosting an **Herbs of the Southeast** event (registration is required). You'll learn about selecting and growing herbs that suit this area. Sadly, I can't be there. If you go, let me know what you learn!

MORE PHOTOS!

Every month, I receive way more photos than I could possibly fit into the Almanac ... unless I just add another page or two. So that's what we're doing here. Enjoy! — *Roshana*



All photos by Kai

ABOVE: A full cauldron of delicious soup made by Caleb and friends. RIGHT: Folks ready to help with sweet potato harvesting and sorghum boiling pose for a photo.



Everyone enjoying the post-harvest feast.



A feast for Tuesday Lunch on the Farm.



Lucas gets carrots ready for the CSA.



Lucas wrangles a copperhead snake out of the field.



Elyse, Caleb's mom, visits from Canada, and gives the garden extra love as she helps weed carrots and leeks.



Caleb's and Abigail's moms, Elyse and Julie, play a feisty game of ping-pong in the Barn.



Burn Boss Hope prepares participants for the prescribed burn.



ABOVE: Lucas prepares food for another tantalizing Tuesday Lunch on the Farm.



LEFT: Caleb harvests the last of the tithonia (aka Mexican sunflower) and saves seed for next year. A bunch of tithonia hangs in the Barn.