

# Bluestem

COMMUNITY · CONSERVATION · CEMETERY



Friend,

A full moon rose above the fields last week—a sight to behold in a conservation cemetery. We walked under its bright light, silently along the paths, the birds mostly asleep save for an occasional barred owl. Fresh mounds covered in pine straw alerted us to new residents. Flowers or grasses strewn across the mounds remember lives, now at rest here.

We feel the warmer, longer days approaching, and during the day, watch the Bluestem grasses emerging thicker after a recent burn. The creek is swollen from spring rains. On the forest floor, trout lily, rue anemone, spiderwort and fiddlehead ferns slowly unfold themselves toward the sun, a sure reminder of renewal. Every corner of Bluestem, a refuge for plant life, wildlife, human life -- those gone before us, and those walking or working here. Welcome.

## ON THE LAND



Fern life overlooking the creek.

Your donations are gifts to this land. Bluestem volunteers and families, planted over 1200 shrubs, young trees, and native species in the ground this winter. A happy shout out to [Leaf and Limb](#) for their generous donation of tree saplings! Grassland gravesites were nourished with new wildflower species. A hundred ferns that were removed to carve out the new woodland trail, were replanted along the path and beside gravesites in the woods. Spot the bamboo stakes with yellow tips and know that new life is settling into place.

Bluestem is thrilled to welcome more citizen science and environmental education opportunities with the [Carolinas Butterfly Monitoring Program](#) and [NC Master Naturalist Program](#). Love to spot butterflies? Get in touch and we can [train you up](#) as a butterfly monitor at Bluestem.

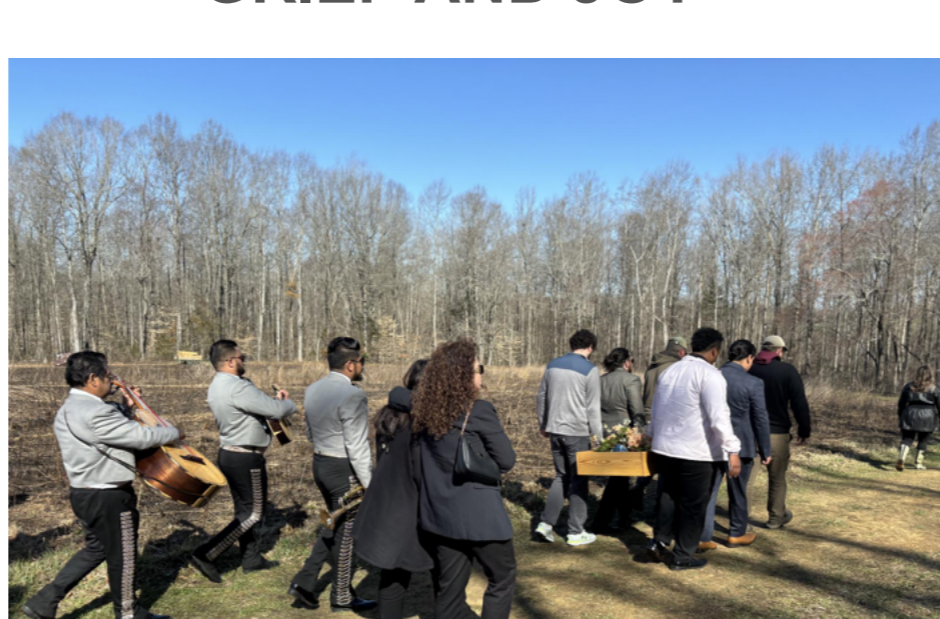
## PEOPLE STEWARDSHIP



Jackie, Lionel, Martin, Laura, Katie, Marie and Dorothy.

We celebrate Sanctuary Steward, [Katie Mangum](#), who has been volunteering with Bluestem for the past year while completing her Master of Divinity degree at Duke University. Katie brings a steady presence and spirit to volunteer events, community outreach, workdays, burial crews, and building Bluestem. She's been known to love a [good tractor ride too](#). We thank her for the meaningful blessings she's delivered at gravesites and in relationships. Join Katie at our next [Saturday Reflection](#), April 20 from 10-11. [Email her](#) to let her know you're coming.

## GRIEF AND JOY



Caminando con [Mariachi Viva Mexico NC](#).

Winter services have been filled with all manner of life—poems and prayers, sorrow and celebration, tears and joy. Organized by faith leaders, or family members and friends, some provided song with wooden whistles, guitars, violins, drums, and bagpipes. Others held the silence, allowing for only the wind and songbirds. One family processed to their loved one's gravesite following a mariachi band!

Each service as sacred as the person being honored. Loved ones can be remembered in the [natural sanctuary](#) spaces, underneath the tree canopy, or open sky. Bluestem supports families as they bring their own rituals, traditions and practices to this land. Volunteers stand by to assist with golf cart rides, an arm to lean on, and shoveling to close the graves. Learn what service means to them in our [Bluestem Meditations](#), or click the button below.

[From Birding to Bluestem](#)

## ACTIVE CONSERVATION



Prescribed fire in the grasslands.

An exciting day in early March, when we got the call from burn boss Brandon Price at [Wildland Forestry and Environmental Inc.](#) Over the winter we created our burn strategy for the grasslands, and beginning late February, started tracking weather patterns. Because spring weather can be so unpredictable, as soon as we get Brandon's call, we drop our to do lists. He confirms that wind, relative humidity and ground conditions are [right to light](#) and coordinates with local authorities, directing us in lighting the fields and overseeing our work, while following strict safety protocols.

Four hours later, 11 grassland acres were burned, including the field directly in front of the cabin. Make a plan to visit in the next few weeks and watch the black eyed susans pop!

Learn more about [why we're using fire to improve wildlife habitat](#).

## RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



A gravestone in the woodlands.

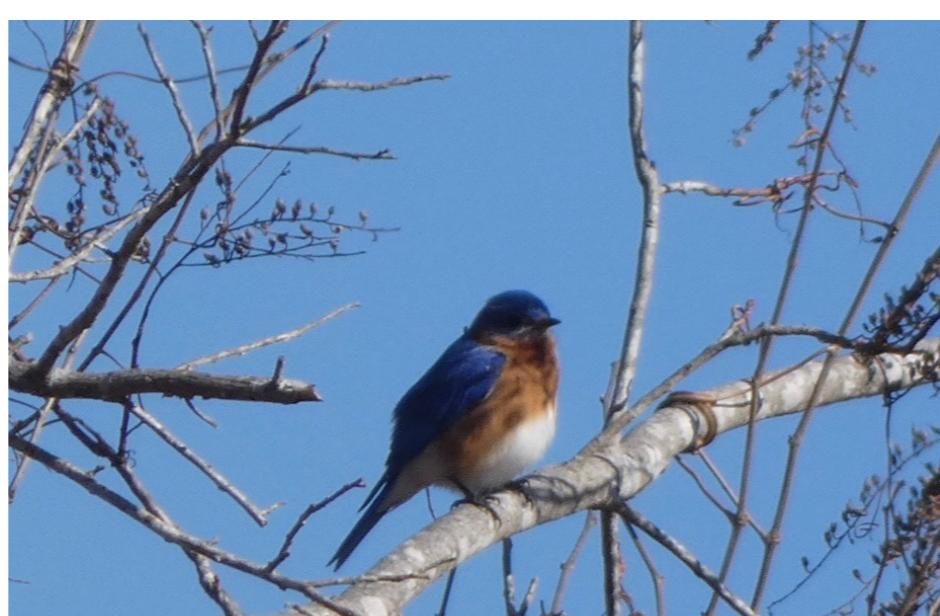
Planning for end-of-life arrangements can be emotional and overwhelming work. Start slow. Explore your options with a friend, online, in community, or by contacting any of the professionals on our [Service Providers](#) page. Other resources include the [Funeral Consumers Alliance NC](#), producing an informative newsletter and recent [Price Survey](#) for funeral homes throughout the state.

Local death care professionals at [Endswell](#) host a monthly [Death Café](#) and [offer services](#) that support a green burial at Bluestem. Green burial advocates lead [Death Cafés in Durham, Raleigh](#) and Chatham County.

[Durham Marbleworks](#) can engrave flagstones provided by Bluestem with your loved one's names and dates. [Get in touch](#) if we can help with making connections.

[What on earth is a death café?](#) An article from The Guardian.

## CONSERVATION BURIAL



A bluebird overlooking the First Field.

Making the decision for a burial at Bluestem is more than finding a chosen spot in a cemetery. Burial in a [conservation cemetery](#) is an investment in nature. Choosing Bluestem means supporting the many communities on this land: insects, pollinators, birdlife, mammals, amphibians, plant life, trees, shrubs and humans.

[Get to know it before making a decision](#). Take an early morning or sunset walk and find yourself surrounded by birdsong and butterflies. If you prefer the company of humans, sign up for a [Walking Tour](#) and join our knowledgeable volunteers for a one-hour meander around the nature preserve and cemetery. If you wish to organize a group tour or need assistance with a golf cart, [contact us directly](#). And if you have questions and prefer to gather information before visiting, sign up for a [zoom information session with staff](#).

For individuals seeking more immediate services, complete an [At Need Burial Form](#) and we will contact you directly.

[Why Bluestem?](#)

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Staff and volunteers sharing Bluestem Community.

Bluestem provides weekly volunteer service onsite, information sessions online, and gathering together out in the world. Learn more about these opportunities by clicking the buttons below. You can also follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

- [Friday Workdays](#)
- [Quiet in the Sanctuary](#)
- [Online Information Sessions](#)
- [Outreach Events](#)

If you, or family and friends, wish to keep up with our activity tending to the land, sign up for our seasonal newsletter and indicate your interest in [Land Stewardship](#). You will then receive our weekly Land Steward update.

[Newsletter Sign Up](#)

*Come experience Bluestem's spring ephemerals and grasses!*

Sample nature with all your senses. Sit on a bench, or under a tree. Walk, pray, contemplate, picnic with a friend, or look up into the sky. Remember the gifts of this earth, of the water and the air, remember people—those who call this home, and those who have chosen this permanent place of rest, helping to protect it into the future.

We hope to see you soon.  
Your Bluestem Stewards

[We Remember Them](#)

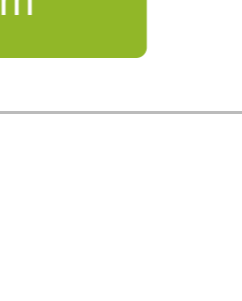
Bluestem is a community supported nonprofit dedicated to nourishing ecological stewardship, community service, and spiritual practice in shared fellowship. Donations are tax deductible EIN: 86-2188559. We are grateful for the creative minds and muscle of these important community members: *Carol, Laura, Tom, James, Jenny, Jackie, Dave, Al, Lynn, Andy R., Lionel, Betty, Mel, Noah, Ken, Kristin, Don, Angie, Ben, Michaela, Renee, Courtney, Anne A., 2 Dorothy Gs, Katie M., RJ, D, Lara, Caleb, Landon, Allen, Jennifer, Franz, Seletha, Kathleen, Carl, Beth, Shenea, Meredith, Heather, Rebecca, Annie, Claire, Grace, Walter, Lee P., Lee W., 2 Ann Rs, Erica, Emily, Brenna, Dorothy B., Hannah, Caitie, Andy H, Emily-Kate, JC, Hannah, Liz, Sarah, Leo, John, Carolyn, Sunshine, Hunter, Veronica, Sara, Hank, Ann W, Geri, Tom, Aimee, Kelly, Bill, Dana, Katherine, Kari, Robin, Xaris, Ina, David, Marcia, Michele, Catherine, Ed, Steven, Jon, KR, Kendall, Mary, Kallyn, Rachel W., Rachel C. and Stacey, Nora, Melissa, Laura, Maisie, Edith, Jordan, Jo, Marie, Lydia, Margot, Steve, and Kara, Betsy, Dan, Stan, and Elliott, John, Cameron, Melinda, Sean, Danielle, Laura, Rebekah, and Martin.*

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Bluestem

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