

Bluestem

COMMUNITY · CONSERVATION · CEMETERY



{{First Name}},

The heart of Bluestem is the land. Its soils and feathery grasses, its colorful wildflowers and constant weeds. Pollinators, birds, snakes and so many other beings derive nourishment and shelter from this land. Including us. We wild humans, creatures ourselves, seek refuge here from the turmoil of these times, from the weight of grief, from climate uncertainty, from everyday losses and disappointments. Every one of us carries a story that propels us toward somewhere we must be, something we must do, someone we must see. A universe of musts in front of us. *Until, arriving here, crossing the threshold into Bluestem, we find our racing selves slowing down and moving into quiet presence.* This land tends to all of us. Those who have gone before us, those who are arriving this week, and those who work beside us, welcoming another resident, planting seeds on their grave, and standing in witness to the cycles of life—the constancy of nature.

Welcome. Come be present here, at Bluestem.

A special welcome to new Bluestem Families who are receiving this newsletter for the first time. We are so grateful for [your loved one's](#) decision to be a part of this living, generative landscape. Their legacy attracts pollinators, nourishes soil health, provides habitat for wildlife, and supports a refugia that sustains us all. We hope you gain comfort from Bluestem and from the very broad community generosity that cares for it.



A grassland gravesite in the First Field.

LOCATING GRAVES AT BLUESTEM

Bluestem families and visitors can now access the GPS coordinates for a resident's burial plot, using our new online PLOT FINDER tool. Under the VISIT tab on our website, click the Visit a Gravesite page. Find the Plot Finder below the images. In the search bar, simply enter the last name of the Bluestem resident you are visiting and you will be returned the GPS coordinates for their plot. Copy and paste the coordinates into your maps application of choice, and, once at Bluestem, walk towards that point on the map.

When you reach the GPS destination, look amongst the wildflowers, grasses, and leaves, for the metal grave marker located in the center of every grave. **Please take care not to overly disturb any emerging growth. A friendly reminder that pulling weeds and [clearing grave mounds is not permitted](#).** For those who have reserved plots, stay tuned for our winter update to the directory, that will include your GPS coordinates too. We hope this tool makes sharing plot locations and guidelines with your family and friends much easier. *Let us know how it works!*

Plot Finder

For Bluestem Families

Join us and our volunteers on Friday, October 24th between 9:00 a.m. and noon for our Fall Family Planting Day. Together, we'll plant new native species in designated areas around the property, in honor of your loved ones. Bring a picnic and stick around to birdwatch, or hike the trails and listen to the falling leaves. Registration required below.

Join Fall Planting Day



Faith leaders gathered for a workshop in the Barn.

SHARING IN COMMUNITY

Both on and off-site, Bluestem volunteers and staff had a very busy summer of outreach—sharing Bluestem experiences, educating newcomers to natural burial, and extending invitations to visit this sacred place. The quiet and refuge here continues to draw people in: neighbors invited out for a walk, families sharing their grief during a burial service, [generous volunteers storytelling for newcomers](#).

Join us for more outreach and learning together — this month, a field trip with the [NC Native Plant Society](#), the [Master Gardener's Plant Fest at Blackwood Farm](#), and our [Fall Planting Day](#). In November, a special, bilingual celebration organized by Bluestem families for [Dia de Los Muertos](#), supporting The Plant's [Death Faire in Pittsboro](#), and a [Super Moon Stroll](#) in honor of the Beaver Moon!

Calendar of Events



New information kiosk in the Barn.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

On a weekly basis, Bluestem is graced with the dedication and craft that our volunteers bring to this place. Some volunteers choose trail building, some steward the invasives, some monitor the birds, butterflies and moths. Friend Andy Riddle has assisted in all of these ways, *and* contributed his exceptional woodworking skills to building and installing Bluestem's new display case in the barn. Find it filled with information and QR codes for [self guided tours](#), [natural burial education](#), and [reasons to support Bluestem's mission](#). *Thank you, Andy, for the care you bring to your volunteering, and to all of us at Bluestem!*

Join Andy at Bluestem



A Black Vulture on the roof of an outbuilding at Bluestem. Photo courtesy Karen Hogan.

EVERYDAY CONSERVATION

Conservation takes place at Bluestem every day. Whether removing invasives like [Tree-of-heaven](#), [sheltering a being out of harm's way](#), or [assessing our trails after a storm](#), land stewards and people stewards share in a commitment to protecting the creatures and natural resources that coexist with us here. We launched our [Everyday Conservation](#) series this summer with facts, stats and images about the amazing vultures we see soaring in the skies above. Did you know that the turkey vultures and black vultures that roost on rooftops are not only valued members of our ecosystem, but also hold spiritual significance for many? [Read more from Bluestem volunteer Margot Lester about these amazing psychopomps](#), and stay tuned for future *Everyday Conservation* topics in the barn and on our website.

LOS BUITRES



A new burial option available only for at-need burial in the grasslands.

RESTORATION BURIAL

I don't care where you plant me, just put me where you most need me!

This pronouncement from more than one visitor to Bluestem, inspired us to design a new burial option, **Restoration Burial**, for the individuals and families seeking a natural burial in a beautiful setting, with no need for a specific location. Restoration Burial offers graveside services including benches at the site, lowering by hand, and wildflower seeds for planting on the closed grave. Pre-measured plots are slightly smaller than Bluestem's standard plot, and individuals are laid to rest beside the most recent grave. At \$4000 per person, Restoration Burial can be a meaningful and economical natural burial choice at Bluestem. Families who have arranged for a relative's burial at the time of need from afar have expressed that Restoration Burial was a ready answer to their loved one's wish for a green burial.



Rebekah Foster, UNC graduate student studying with Bluestem.

WELCOME REBEKAH

On Wednesday and Thursday mornings, stop by and say hello to [Rebekah Foster](#), joining us from UNC's Social Work School, and spending time at Bluestem for her practicum experience. Prior to graduate school, Rebekah spent 10 years connecting young people to nature in school gardens and on backcountry trails in California and Florida. At Bluestem, Rebekah will be exploring how nature, community offerings and rituals can support individuals working their way through grief and bereavement. We're also collaborating on new tools for caregivers and hospice workers. Reach out to Rebekah if you have advice or stories to share!

Email Rebekah



View from the future Wing of the Barn.

WING OF THE BARN UPDATE

Very steady progress to report on our [Wing of the Barn project](#) with the review of design ideas, exploring construction options, and evaluating drainage impacts on the land, and on Bluestem's activities. We launched this barn expansion campaign last fall, raising money to extend the existing barn's roof and provide undercover gathering space for burial services and community events. Connecting the "wing" to the western side of the barn, will make Bluestem more accessible for friends and visitors with mobility limitations, and provide 180' views of the wildflowers and grassland habitats that surround the wing.

Thank you to the many generous friends who have donated to the project! [Click here](#) if you'd like to honor a friend with a donation and watch for new developments in 2026.

Help Build Bluestem

Bluestem awaits your visit. The nature preserve is open to hikers, birdwatchers, meditators, wanderers, and all visitors every day from dawn to dusk. No appointments are needed for visiting. Park at the front and walk in. Find [a self-guided walking tour route here](#). Reminder that good walking shoes, comfortable clothes, hats, sunscreen, plenty of water, a buddy, and bug spray make for a more enjoyable visit!

If you are exploring natural burial at Bluestem, please find [our online resources](#) available at your convenience. Review the [Bluestem Burial Guide](#). Attend an [Online Information Session](#) or [Informational Tour](#). If we can support you with making burial arrangements, please start by completing [a burial interest form](#), and our staff will be in touch with you soon.

Take care of yourselves this fall, and always at Bluestem.

Your Bluestem Stewards,
Heidi, Jeff, Katie and Lionel

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:
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