

# Bluestem

COMMUNITY · CONSERVATION · CEMETERY



Friend,

It seems every color imaginable has made an appearance over the land these past few months. With the darker evenings and cooler air settling in, we watch the sun drop down and make a symphony of color in the sky. The trees stand silently in awe. Their fallen leaves have turned the forest floor into a magnificent welcome mat—the decaying carpet greeting each step with a tender rustle. There is no hurry here. Even as this season signals the start of a sure, glorious transformation on the forest floors, in the grasslands, and deep in the soil, it also welcomes us into a necessary quiet. There is space here to slow down. To listen and be still. To mourn and to remember. To be.

Turn into the quiet with us. Allow nature to lead the way, one steady footfall at a time.

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## Bluestem Meditations



*Remembering a beautiful life in the Sanctuary.*

## SACRED SPACE

Bluestem's [Natural Sanctuary](#) continues to serve as a meaningful gathering space; in recent months hosting individuals for silent worship, community meetings and picnics, and memorial services both large and small. Faith leaders have given sermons, [grievers have read poems](#), families have played musical instruments, and children have played in the leaves. At every occasion the trees stand like trusty sentinels, anchoring the space for prayer, memories, song, laughter, tears, communion.

Visit on your own and take a seat for awhile. Find the sanctuary path just west of the barn. Or, if you happen to walk beyond the barn, follow the signs around the pond.

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Support the Bluestem Community Fund



*Un parque y cementerio para todos.*

## **BIENVENIDOS!**

We have been growing new friendships in the area and are thrilled to announce our brand [new webpage translated into Spanish!](#) This gift of time by a generous donor is truly a dream come true as we branch out into the community. And, one more example of the types of service people bring to Bluestem.

We imagine building a team of volunteers familiar with green burial and interested in sharing their knowledge with Spanish speaking families. **Want to get involved? [Drop us a line](#) and share your skills and availability.**

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*Trailhead inviting walkers into the woods.*

## **YAY WOODLAND TRAILS!**

Three cheers to our [hearty volunteer trail crew](#), individual donors, the [Strowd Roses Foundation](#), and to the [Conservation Corps of North Carolina](#)! Their collective contributions produced another mile of trail through this beautiful property, expanding our hiking network to approximately 3.5 miles. CCNC crew members trained up on their skills, blazing the new route, limbing trees, clearing rocks and attending to drainage, while our volunteers followed behind reinforcing the tread, building bridges and replanting native species. *On top of all that hard work, another super skilled volunteer* has [revised our map](#) so that trails are easy to find.

Come out and travel the Inner Circuit Trail following the yellow arrows. Find the trail heads off Bluestem Road – across from the first field grasslands, and near the turnaround by the Black Walnut trees. Let us know if you see the heron that's been spotted near the creeks' confluence!

Consider [making a donation](#) to further support [extending the trail](#) next year. Check in at the barn for a map before heading

**out, and please respect our neighbors** by not trespassing on their properties, and staying on the trail.

[New Map with Trails](#)

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*An access lane regenerating after a burial.*

## IN THE FIELDS

Have you wondered about the mowed pathways weaving through the grasslands? Some of these paths are permanent while others are temporary lanes. Bluestem's cemetery design includes these temporary lanes, cut only as needed to access burial sites in the interior of the fields. We also use the lanes to avoid crossing over a grave with equipment.

At the end of a burial ceremony, families mound pine straw over the grave and scatter wildflower seeds provided by staff, around the site. An [engraved grave marker](#) is placed in the center of every grave, with GPS coordinates given to families so they can find



graves hidden by nature. Over time, the gravesite, as well as the mowed lanes, regenerate according to the season -- colorful wildflowers in the warmer months, and grazing birds in the winter.

***Did you love the wildflowers this year?*** Be part of our plans for 2024! Donate to more native species in the grasslands and woodlands, habitat improvements, invasives removal, a new weather & habitat station, improved signage and green burial education. **You can impact [Growing Bluestem](#) with your year end gift** to our many goals -- *the birds and trees and fields and all of us, thank you!*

[Donate Here](#)



*Preparing for an ash burial in the meadow.*

## ARRANGING FOR BURIAL

We are working on new green burial materials for individuals' interested in learning how to plan at Bluestem. Until then, review the tabs under the [Green Burial section](#) on our website. Share your

questions [with us via email](#), or [schedule an appointment](#). Twice a month [Walking Tours](#) are led by our knowledgeable volunteers. [Email us directly](#) if you need mobility support with a golf cart. When you are ready to make an appointment complete a [Pre-Need Burial Form](#) online. For those seeking At-Need Burial for a loved one, [contact us directly](#).

### Green Burial at Bluestem



*A recent burial in the grasslands.*

## FAREWELL 2023

As the year draws to an end, ***all of us as Bluestem Community pause to remember our residents, their families, and all that this land has given us.*** Bluestem welcomes. It is a place for our grief as well as our joy. A place of solace and restoration. A place of fellowship and renewal. A place of memory and hope.

We take these final days in the year to remember those buried here, known and unknown. Walking the woodland trails or on the

grassland pathways, we sense that every single soul quietly tends to this place. From the uniquely sacred gatherings these past two years, through every workday shared with hardworking friends, with every wound or loss or celebration, we trust that Bluestem can hold all the cycles and complexities of life and death. It is our privilege to serve you.

### We Remember Them

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*We wish you, and the larger world, much peace in 2024 with nature always by your side.*

Your Bluestem Stewards,  
Heidi, Jeff, Sidney, Lionel and Katie

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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 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, Landon, Allen, Jennifer, Franzi, Seletha, Kathleen, Carl, Beth, Shenae, 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, Hunter, Sarah, 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, Lydia, Margot, Steve, and Kara, Betsy, Dan, Stan, and Elliott.*

### Make a Year End Gift





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**Our Contact Information**

Bluestem Community NC  
1900 Hurdle Mills Road  
Cedar Grove, NC 27231  
(919) 451-9236

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