

# Bluestem

COMMUNITY · CONSERVATION · CEMETERY



Friend,

September is golden at Bluestem. The grasslands bursting in Tickseed Sunflowers, the woodland edges covered in Goldenrod, and around every corner a party of Goldfinches lifting into the sky. We watch the wildflowers fade and the grasses become more pronounced. They nourish the soils, feed migrating birds, and catch the light in the afternoons. The ancient snapping turtle that lives on the land slowly crosses Bluestem Road, a reminder to slow down, look around, be here. Our recent burial mounds are settling into the fields and woodlands, new life regenerating all around. Faded flower bouquets lie in memory of bright lives lived. Life and death. Both, celebrated and remembered.

Welcome to Bluestem.

What is Bluestem?

A video by Rachel Jackson and Katie Mangum, Bluestem Interns With Duke's [Community Based Environmental Management Program](#)



Ash gravesite in the Woodlands

## SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Over the summer, more families were welcomed here as we buried their loved ones. They [selected the gravesite](#) and created their memorial service. Some were guided by ministers, others simply by a family member or friend. Each was a unique and sacred farewell. Staff and volunteers prepare the areas, welcome and direct guests, and assist with closing the grave. Families take time walking to the service area, sharing stories or music, lowering loved one's caskets or ashes into the grave, and closing the grave by hand. Together, we cover the mound in pine straw. [A grave marker](#) is placed in the center of the grave. Another life honored, now at rest. A songbird sings. Slowly guests disperse to the trails, sit by the pond, or return to their cars and depart. Bluestem resets.

Make a gift in memory of someone



Hardworking volunteers trenching for water at Bluestem

## HAPPENING AT BLUESTEM

So many volunteers continue to muscle Bluestem forward. This summer we dug a well and laid pipes for bringing drinking water onsite. Other volunteer efforts enhance our thinking projects; developing relationships and partnerships that support [green burial education](#), [navigating grief and loss](#), and accompanying individuals in preparing for end of life. Our [Bluestem Conversations](#) have returned online. Check out the schedule and [register for them here](#). If you have a presentation you'd like to share, email us with your proposal. Find us [out in the community this fall](#), bringing more education to Churches, community spaces, and local festivals. Even better, join us for our [Friday workdays](#) where you get the real down and dirty.

Help turn on our drinking water



Future hiking trail beside the creek

## EXPANDING OUR TRAILS

Every year, the [Conservation Corps of North Carolina](#) trains young adults on conservation service projects throughout the region. This fall, two crews will apprentice at Bluestem helping to expand our trail network. We are grateful to [Strowd Roses Foundation](#) for kickstarting this project with a \$5000 grant. We now seek another \$35K to pay for the trail crew's time and supplies. Sharing Bluestem's conservation strategies gives these future environmental leaders practical job skills and [grows the conservation burial movement](#). In turn, Bluestem families and visitors are rewarded with many more miles of trails. [Donate online](#) or join us Friday, September 22 at our [Friend and Funds Raiser](#) in Hillsborough.

Help build more trails



Pathways in the grasslands

## WELCOME STEWARDS

Four new stewards have joined Bluestem and we are thrilled to introduce them to you -- longtime volunteers, Seletha Pherribo and Kathleen Davidson, were welcomed on Bluestem's [Council of Stewards](#). Both are knowledgeable Bluestem guides, helping to expand outreach into the community and managing our [Walking Tours](#). Remember that you can treat yourself to a self-guided tour any day dawn to dusk. Find trail maps in the barn or [online](#). OR, [sign up for a walking tour](#) with our volunteers.

Joining Co-directors Jeff and Heidi in operating Bluestem are colleagues Sidney Cruze and Lionel Reid-Shaw. Sidney supports visitors and individuals with burial sales, and Lionel brings GPS and surveying expertise to our land stewardship program. Look for everyone's bios and faces up on the website soon!

Explore Bluestem



Entrance to the cemetery

## A CONSERVATION CEMETERY

Visitors have asked how Bluestem can assure the public its permanence into the future. *Our answer* -- Bluestem is a community supported nonprofit 501(c)3 governed by a [Council of Stewards](#). Its conservation cemetery is designed following Green Burial Council [standards for a conservation burial ground](#). These standards limit our burial density onsite, ensure green burial principles, and prioritize conservation. Furthermore, Bluestem is partnering with two local land trusts, [Eno River Association](#) and [Triangle Land Conservancy](#), to place a conservation easement over the property that will be co-held by both parties. (Read TLC's description of a [conservation easement here](#).) Our partnership with these long standing land trusts serves as triple measure in ensuring Bluestem forever remains a nature preserve with a conservation cemetery. Bluestem is additionally applying to the Green Burial Council for certification as a conservation burial ground.

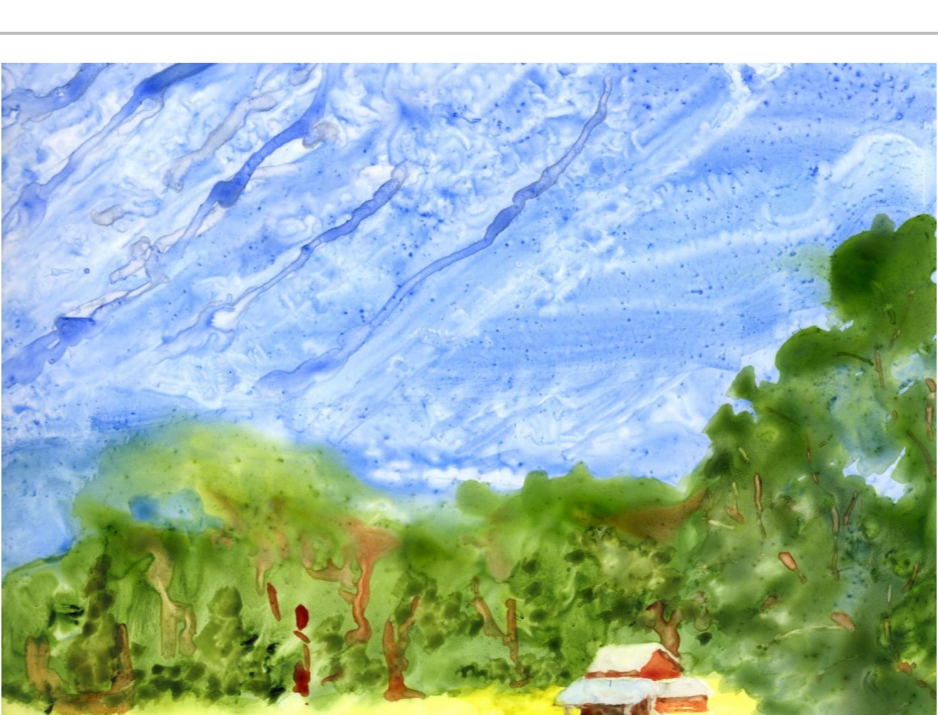
Our conservation strategies

## ARRANGING FOR BURIAL

Bluestem is open for sales and burials by appointment only. If you wish to preplan, we recommend reviewing the [Green Burial section](#) on our website. When you are ready for an appointment complete a Burial Planning Form online or click the button below. For those seeking At-Need burial, [contact us directly](#). Thank you.

Burial Planning Form

*I have painted there, sketched there, walked there and rested there. I have had deer stomp and snort at me from the woods. I have listened to the bees. I have watched as flocks of birds lift in unison from the wildflowers. It's a gift of a place that welcomes and restores you. - JR*



Watercolor by Joyce Frederick

dear Bluestem friends, family, community -- we hope you take time for yourselves outside in this beautiful fall. Grab a dog, a blanket, a friend, a picnic, or just yourself, and come out and experience where nature is enough.

Heidi & Jeff  
Co-directors

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., R.J, D, Lara, Landon, Allen, Jennifer, Franzi, Seletha, Kathleen, Carl, Beth, Sheneae, Meredith, 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, David, Marcia, Michele, Catherine, Ed, Steven, Jon, KR, Mary, Kallyn, Rachel W., Rachel C. and Stacey, Nora, Melissa, Laura, Maisie, Edith and Jordan.



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