

Emerald Earth Community
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www.emeraldearth.org



Together we have raised over \$40,000 towards our Common House!



Spring
2009

The Newsletter of Emerald Earth Community

Community Update by Brent

Michael Franti's recent album was titled "Yell Fire". This felt appropriate June 20th. While many of us were dancing to Michael Franti at the Sierra Nevada Music Festival, lightning struck all over northern California. Fires were everywhere. Smoke filled our valley. Several of us decided to flee for better air quality. It is a strange feeling to pack up your car and have the thought that your home may not be there when you return. The blessing for me was realizing that, beyond my loved ones, I have very few objects that I would be devastated to lose, but our home and this land are precious to me beyond measure. Thank you Spirit for sparing this land and for reminding me what matters most.

Taking care of this land and community involves new adventures every year. Currently our big focuses are creating our new common house and developing our gardens (see Prana's and Abeja's articles) as well continuing our focus as a sustainable living education center.

In preparing for the new common house, we welcomed to our land the big metal beasts that move earth. In May, a very skilled backhoe driver came and prepared the common house site. The hillside shifted, parking for cars took up more space than imagined, and we altered the access road. Later in the season, the miller brought his portable sawmill to make lumber for the building, while an excavator and bulldozer cleaned our pond out (come and swim!). Honestly, so much earth moving was intense and often painful to witness, but we hold faith that, with our help, the land will heal and even be better off for it in many ways.

We held many successful courses this year. In addition to the natural building courses which are our staple, we were blessed with other teachers coming in and bringing new aspects of sustainability teachings. Tamara Wilder led a course on making your own cordage and nets. Donna D'Terra led an acorn for food workshop that included a taster's sampling of seven different species of acorn. Brock Dolman of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center co-taught a Permaculture weekend with Liz. Their differing styles created an excellent balance for participants. Michael and Darryl also led a workshop devoted to the round pole construction style that is used for many of our homes. We look forward to continuing to bring diversity of instruction this year.

2009 brings more membership changes. Joey has chosen to leave the community and move in with her darling, Kristopher.

She will still be in the Anderson Valley, and we intend to keep this terrific woman in our lives. Arriving this spring is Michael's sweetie. Cathy brings a warm smile, plenty of farming experience, a masterful kimchi recipe and a passion for local local local food. She won't be coming alone. Cathy will be accompanied by a young German Shepherd named Haley, about twenty chickens, and a herd of seven goats! We plan to make her landing a comfortable one, and we hope to be swimming in homemade goat cheese by June. Come out and try it.

We now have 4 kids here! Esther Joy 2 ½, Garnet 3, Moses 3 ½, and Demetri 6. Nastasha and her boys have been living here since August. More kids mean MORE of lots of things. More fun, more mess, more noise in the common house. Overall, we are loving it.



Cathy

As for members living offsite... Sara, Darryl, and Aria live just outside of Sebastopol. They are very close to a whole group of their friends who also live in "Boonville South" (Sebastopol). Sara has a rocking job as head gardener of another incredible garden. Darryl is sharing his building skills and enjoying being closer to music venues. Aria has a more active social life living in town, playing volleyball, and taking ballroom dance in a classroom of 400 teenagers! Deleh had a lovely baby daughter, Ananda, on February 18. She is cozied up with her baby and sweetie Eric in Santa Rosa. Birute organized a dowsers conference, Jess is composing music, Jim made a new life resolution to have more fun, Connie is continuing her adventures into bliss and the present moment through sacred dance and loving practice, and Mitch is still enjoying being a homemaker with Uma in Eureka.

Work trade this year was dominated by Jesse, Jesse, Jesse. He joined us early in the Spring and left us at the end of the Fall. Jesse won the hearts of all, including our kids. We usually have a policy that prohibits work traders like Jesse from leaving, but his own path is leading him to Thailand and beyond. Work trade included Jen and Jeff (who went to seven weddings this summer, so if you are looking for advice...) as well as poet Phil who came in at the end of the season just in time to help Tom keep our foundation work on track. This coming year will bring whole new adventures as we incorporate up to ten worktrade at a time.

This summer we will celebrate twenty years since this land was purchased. We wish to thank Julie Jess Middleton for the wondrous gift of this land and her foresight and generosity of turning it over to the non-profit Emerald Earth Sanctuary. We hope this year is filled with blessings and abundance for you all, and invite you to stop in this summer and be part of our story.

What's Up With Work Trade?

Emerald Earth has refashioned our work trade program for the 2009 season. We are offering a *Garden to Kitchen* program focusing on permaculture and food production, and a *Building in Community* program, focusing on natural building. These two separate programs will increase focus within their respective areas and supplant the two-month apprenticeship and our more generalized work trade of past seasons.

The participants in our Garden to Kitchen work trade will get their hands deep into food sustainability practices. They will work and learn in our annual and perennial gardens and nursery; help to care for our laying hens and milking goats; and they will join with others in the community to prepare and process food and milk that we have grown, gleaned and purchased.

As for our Building in Community work trade, we have gathered a great team of builders to join us for the season. The group will be building on the foundation of our new Community House which was laid last season, completing a large part of the structure, including framing, natural wall systems, and roofing. We will manage and direct the process together, expanding learning opportunities and benefiting from the talents of everyone involved.

Members and work trade participants will come together regularly to undertake community projects, participate in the greater aspects of community living, and, most importantly, to have fun. We are excited to have everyone who comes here contribute to and share in our learning and our progress as a community dedicated to sustainable living. Did we mention how much fun we're going to have?

Getting 'The Dirt' Out

The Dirt is the annual newsletter of Emerald Earth. If you want to receive a paper copy, send us your mailing address. The Dirt is also available on our web site, www.emeraldearth.org/newsletter. Check the web site for photos, events, and other updates. If you want to take yourself off the paper mailing list, send an email or a post card to community@emeraldearth.org or P.O. Box 764 Boonville CA 95415. If we have your email address, we'll let you know when The Dirt is available online.

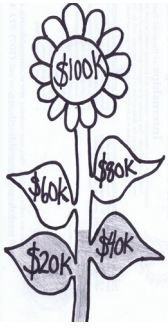
Hearing from you feeds the fires that keep our project going. Please drop us an email or post card to let us know that you enjoy The Dirt and our community. You can also phone us at (707) 972-3096. Thank you for being part of our community and for staying in touch!

Emerald Earth 2009 Events

April 18-19	Work Party
May 16-17	Work Party
June 1-6	Intro to Carpentry Workshop
July 11-12	Work Party
July 26-Aug 2	Natural Building Intensive
Sept 13-20	Natural Building Intensive
Oct 17-18	Work Party
Nov 7	Acorns for Food Class

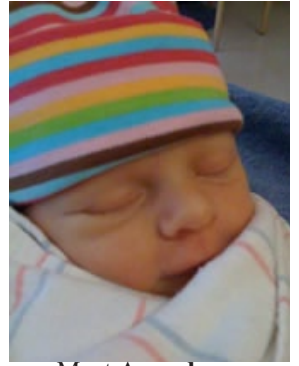
For course details: www.emeraldearth.org

Community Fundraising nears halfway mark!!!



Thanks to your support, we have already raised \$42,000 of our \$100,000 goal. We are amazed by the generosity you continue to share during these challenging economic times. You blessed us with donations of \$5 to \$10,000. You donated hand crafted art and books you wrote. You even supplied us with an entirely new battery set for our electrical system. Our gratitude is deep.

We still intend to raise that \$100,000. As you feel inspired and abundant, please consider contributing to our efforts to make this community an education center for sustainable living skills. Together we will build it. "Yes we can!"



Meet **Ananda**, daughter of Deleh and Eric, the newest member of the Emerald Earth family

Evolution of Our New Common House

by Prana

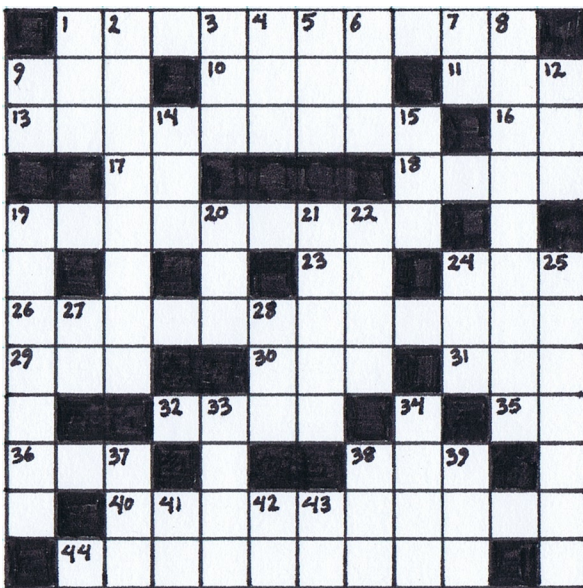
Our dreams of sitting together in the sunshine at our new common house have started to take physical form. The groundwork has been laid and materials have started to be gathered as we gear up to raise some walls this season. We are working to complete the construction on a three/four year timeline and, with the first year complete, we are right on schedule.

There are many fine details of site preparation involved in making the leap to the sunny side. Led by Abeja and Darryl, our solar panels got moved to the new powerhouse (adjacent to the common house site) where they are gathering more sun power, thus reducing the need to run a generator during high-use times. Fencing on the sunny side has been expanded, with direction from Joey, and now encompasses the building site and additional potential garden space. Trees have been planted that have a fast growth rate to begin the creation of a windbreak for the common area, thanks to leadership from Liz. Michael guided the construction of a lumber/tool shed close to the site, increasing our organization and efficiency.

In late May, heavy machinery graded the gentle hillside for the building, parking area, and greenhouse site. Simultaneously, we worked with local miller Nathan Anderson to transform sustainably harvested trees into lumber, and another milling session took place later in the year. Last, but far from least, August and September were spent creating forms for the foundation. Tom focused a majority of his energy towards this step of the process and was steadfast and resolute through the completion of the concrete pour in October.

With all of this accomplished, we literally have a solid foundation from which to commence building. There is much excitement in the air as we gather energy for the 2009 season. Our plan is to take on this project in phases. This season, we hope to finish a portion of the building to the extent that we will be able to have meals in our new common house by winter. Prepare to be inspired as our vision continues to take form.

Puzzle Pause



Across

1. Time to eat at Emerald earth
9. Financial statement
10. Complain
11. Letters before wood or mouth
13. What we are together
16. MW State
17. _____ infinitum
18. Catch sight of
19. Agreement among all concerned
23. Food-producing enterprise
24. Lawyer for short
26. Principles for sustainable design
29. Great source of organic fertilizer
30. Precedes time and place
31. Most invasive species
32. With P, an EE resident
35. Comes before 31 across
36. Building technique with clay and straw
38. EE resident
40. Make meetings easy
44. Site of many Emerald Earth rituals

Down

1. "It's _____ soon to say"
2. Product of Emerald Earth's toilets

3. Big bird
4. A long time
5. Completes Mum or Du
6. With Br, an EE resident
7. Old-fashioned entertainment
8. Building technique with straw and clay
9. Intentional community, for short
12. Expression of enthusiasm
14. Mika's initials
15. "_____ we can!"
19. Prune for basketry, fodder, or building material
20. See 41 Down
21. Where we sweat
22. _____ duckling
24. Sacred syllable
25. Prepared to join with a mortise
27. Theme of this puzzle, in brief
28. Preserve food
33. Follows ten or tru
34. Former senate majority leader
37. 4-yr. degree
38. Word that often precedes 28 Down
39. With Jong, a Chinese game
41. With 20 Down, an EE resident
42. Opposite of UV
43. First letters in two EE residents' first names

We hope you enjoyed "The Dirt". If you want more information about courses, work parties, or other ways to be involved, please visit our website or email us at community@emeraldearth.org. --- Blessings



Thinking Globally, Eating Locally—and WELL! by Abeja

Outside my cozy home, the garden sleeps under cold, grey February skies. The sun breaks through periodically, reminding us that it is, once again, not even threatening to rain. The driest January in recorded history has just passed. The pond we cleaned out in the fall sits only half full. Around Mendocino County, wells are going dry for the first time since they were dug.

Even as Emerald Earth moves in the direction of food sustainability, we are constantly reminded how intertwined we are with the rest of the world. This drought—a symptom of the global climate chaos—threatens every aspect of this upcoming season and the exciting things we have planned. At the same time, the crumbling world economy makes the work we're doing even more essential.

Our well seems solid, our new 10,000-gallon ferrocement watertank a boon, and we do still have many months of possible rain, so we continue to move forward with our ambitious summer plans. And so this year, even as we undertake the largest building project to date, we are also launching a work trade program specifically geared towards food production, preparation, and preservation. This will help us meet our own needs and desires for high quality local foods and help us keep a hungry building crew fed with that same level of nutrition and ecological healthfulness.

Emerald Earth is well known for our natural buildings, and rightly so. However, the vision and purpose of our community is much broader than that—we strive towards all aspects of ecological and social sustainability. For years, Emerald Earthlings have been active in the local foods movement, and our own gardens have been growing, too. With the help of our food-focused work traders, we hope to start developing more garden space and growing even more of our own food!

As we try to keep our food local, ecologically sustainable, and nutritionally dense, many Emerald Earthlings are also eating more animal products. Although controversial, even among the residents, many of us feel that eating wild game and milk, meat, and fats from our and our neighbors' pasture-fed cows and chickens (and goats, sheep and pigs when available) is healthier for our bodies and our planet than eating beans, grains, and oils grown much further away on factory farms (even organic ones!). The wild turkeys are particularly popular on the dinner table, not just because they are tasty, but because huge roving flocks of them decimated our garden last summer, even as we kept trapping them.

No matter where on the spectrum you fall—from hardcore vegan to a meat-focused omnivore—you will find both lively debate and tasty food here this summer! With the help of our work traders, we plan to have a constant fresh supply of goat and cow milk, goat cheese, breads baked in the cob oven, garden fruits and vegetables, eggs and meat, sauerkraut and kim chi, yogurt and kefir, and maybe even homebrew beer and wine!

As excited as we are about Michael's sweetie Cathy coming to live here because of who she is, we're also thrilled about the experience and the animals she brings with her! Cathy is dedicated to eating locally and sustainably, and almost all her food comes from within 10 miles of her farm in the Capay Valley. Some may remember the goats that were here at Emerald Earth three summers ago that belonged to our friend Jim. Well, he sold a few of them to Cathy, who has grown them into a healthy herd of 7 female goats. As soon as we finish building a goat shed (which shouldn't take long, if the rains don't come), Cathy—along with those goats—will move here in time for the goats to kid in summer and bring our milk, cheese, and meat source home!

Cathy will also bring about 20 hens, doubling our flock. Fortunately, we have finished a new chicken coop in the Sunny Side orchard. As soon as we get a little more fencing done, all the chickens will move to their bigger house in the sun, and we will hopefully not need to buy eggs from town anymore!

Wherever you are, we encourage you to start creating and supporting local food—for your health, for the environment, and because it just tastes better!

PS: It's March now, the pond is FULL, the chickens are moved, and the goat shed is almost finished! Yippee!

Wish List

- * Building materials (lumber, plywood, brick, tiles, windows, doors, hardware, stove pipe, electrical and plumbing supplies, etc...)
- * Reliable 4WD truck, preferably a diesel
- * Power tools: drill, skil saw, compound miter saw
- * Garden tools, especially forks
- * Cider press
- * Rototiller
- * Electric fencing and charger for goats
- * Goat milking machine
- * Grain mill for making flour
- * Wood fired or propane commercial cook stove
- * Large cooking pots (restaurant-size)
- * Portable stereo/CD player
- * 5-gallon buckets
- * wide mouth canning jars