

Facilities Committee Fall 2025 Membership Meeting

Hello from the Facilities Committee of Mariah Scott, Ethan Avery, and Steve Wester. We are excited to talk to you all about the Facilities Committee and Circle Pines Center's work to uphold our mission. While each committee's role is difficult to define, we in the Facilities Committee plan and work to keep the grounds of Circle Pines safe and functioning in a way aligned with our mission statements of environmental stewardship and cooperation. If you would like to join or know more, please reach out to the chair, Mariah Scott. Circle Pines is also a community of caring, hardworking individuals. So, facilities work at Circle Pines happens as a result of both collaborative and self-guided efforts of the Facilities Committee, staff of Circle Pines, members, volunteers, guests, and the larger community!

Normally we would love to give a shout out to all who have helped since the last membership meeting, but that list has been so long as of late. Thank you to all who have worked to clean and improve the Circle Pines grounds!

The committee has been focused on how to do a lot with a little. We have been utilizing limited funds, lumber milled from the property, our local connections, our expertise, and wonderful members of our community to get a lot done. This is in part to compensate for the facilities work going over budget this previous fiscal year and to prevent our efforts from risking Circle Pines' larger goals. The volunteers have been a huge part of how we have gotten so much done! We will try to list the facilities work and upgrades since the Spring 2025 Membership Meeting, but there will definitely be improvements we forgot to include.

Since the Spring Membership Meeting, so much has been accomplished for the grounds of Circle Pines Center. It is so impressive how much the Buttermilk Jamboree and Summer Camp communities get done for Circle Pines.

This is not a complete list at all, but the work that got done includes...

- Fixed several doors and porches on cabins
- Fixed deck in youth
- Fixed acorn dining room porch. Replacing most of the wood for this porch is a goal for the coming year
- Many arborists and volunteers worked on pruning trees and removing concerning limbs. Several more limbs and trees, especially around the farmhouse, were identified by professional arborists as needing to be removed for safety
- Fixing the Royal Flush urinal
- Electrical upgrades
- Mulching paths around the Farmhouse deck to reduce tripping hazards
- Removing brush to both beautify the grounds and open up potential habitat for wildlife
- So much cleaning!
- The Buttermilk Jamboree group is working on a new solar power system for the Juniors cabins to take them off the grid, as well as getting the Farmhouse and rec hall properly grounded and updated from the new electrician helping

- Replacing the roof of the Yellow Cabin has been on our list of goals for a while and the execution is now being planned. Initial estimates of cost were prohibitively high, but Danielle found someone to work on the project inexpensively, in exchange for Buttermilk Jamboree tickets. Circle Pines only needs to buy some materials (under \$700) and they will be professionally installing the yellow cabin roof for no cost. Stay tuned for more information!

Circle Pines has a lot of projects still to do. We have worked to get more organized as to those tasks and want to figure out ways to incorporate preventative maintenance into our process.

The Summer Camp staff who assist on maintenance made a shared Google document, where we have detailed lists of needed maintenance projects that provide information including the task, who knows more details, priority level, person who volunteered, expected completion date, and what status the project is at currently. It has helped us keep organized and prioritizing tasks based on urgency and importance. We are going to be utilizing this format to keep us and future volunteers organized. Thank you to Eddie and Ethan for leading the garden and construction Summer Camp work projects. It has been lovely to see what you have grown and built with the youth of Circle Pines!

Some of the projects accomplished so far include...

- Keeping up on cleaning, repairs, and plumbing issues
- Prepping for Summer Camp and the ACA inspection
- Trails cleaning
- The garden is looking great!
- Framed and walled off a new furnace room in the office upstairs
- Pruning apple trees
- Cleaning up after storms
- Repaired picnic tables and built new Rec Hall log crates
- The lawn mower got repaired. Steve organized getting the costly repair done for free in exchange for the repairman getting our old, broken lawnmower. This means we both saved money and reduced clutter.
- Steve and I are hoping to create written procedures for preventative maintenance. I am already developing one for the winterizing water shut off and turn on process. Steve and I want to have ones for our mowers and tractors. We are also hoping to get advice from Dino for water heater and furnace maintenance plans. The end goal is to have short, preventative maintenance lists attached to relevant machines, as well as a computer programmed to-do list that alerts relevant staff of the upcoming maintenance to-dos. Preventative maintenance, with recorded institutional memory, will help us reduce our costs, onboard new staff/ volunteers, and reduce our environmental footprint.
- Cleaning of spaces! Circle Pines is working on keeping our workspaces clean. This will help us reduce frustration among community members, care for and keep track of tools, and be able to make better use of our time. A lot of work has been done since the winter. I want to also point out that the summer camp work project staff have done a great job of organizing their respective areas and helped maintain them. Areas that

have gotten a lot of attention include the farmhouse (all three floors), swallows basement, garden shed, green barn, recycle shed, butler, royal flush laundry room, and mansion laundry room. Many of these spaces may need a re-sprucing from the rush of the busy season, but keeping these spaces safe and clean is a consistent goal.

In the next few months, the focus will be on winterizing, getting wood chopped, and creating written procedures for tasks. An important note is that several limbs and trees, especially around the farmhouse, were identified by professional arborists as needing to be removed for safety. Figuring out how to get those safety concerns removed safely and inexpensively is a major goal for the facilities committee.