

Land Use Committee Fall 2025 Membership Update

Hello from the Land Use Committee of Christyl Burnett, Meryl Domina, Bryan Heystek, Lisa Phillips, Mariah Scott, and Steve Wester;

We are excited to talk to you all about the Land Use Committee and Circle Pines Center's work to uphold our mission. While each committee's role is difficult to define, we in the Land Use Committee consider, suggest, and enact policy of how Circle Pines can environmentally steward the landscape it encompasses, through 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, land use work at Circle Pines happens as a result of both collaborative and self-guided efforts of the Land Use Committee, staff of Circle Pines, members, volunteers, guests, and the larger community! If you are interested in getting involved, we are also working on ways to help make everyone who visits Circle Pines feel like valued Stewards of the land. If you have any ideas to help us in this effort to promote environmental stewardship, please share them with us.

We would love to give a special mention to Tera John, Gerardo Reyes, Noah Silver-Mathews, Danielle Hoskins, Ethan Avery, and Eddie DeGraw for all the work they have done for the Circle Pines environment!

CPC Events

Circle Pines events all work to be environmentally conscious, from the food we source to the connections fostered with the land we inhabit. Thank you also to Gerardo for sourcing so much of the event food, especially Buttermilk Jamboree and Summer Camp meals, from local producers and growers.

First and foremost, one of the biggest helps for the land use committee each year is the trails crew during summer camp. Thank you to Lisa Phillips for leading the trails crew this summer. With an ecological background, she was the perfect person to get youth into the forest to fight invasive species. Ethan Avery, the Construction leader for Summer Camp, helped improve the grounds, using lumber milled at Circle Pines whenever possible.

In addition, many events are specifically focused on connecting people with their surrounding environment. Thank you to Danielle for organizing Buttermilk Jamboree and Fall Mushroom Camp, along with the communities of volunteers and attendees making those events so successful. It is so lovely seeing so many people connect with nature at Circle Pines.

Also, this past spring Circle Pines Center was gifted with over 100 native, fruiting trees. This gracious donation was from the Ypsilanti Free Fruit Tree Distro, a tireless group of Mother Earth loving, community involved abolitionists, with members of Mutual Aid Network of Ypsilanti. Circle Piners have been planting the Burr Oaks, Sycamores, American Plums, Aronia, and Elderberry trees around the property. This has been a fantastic addition of native species diversity at Circle Pines Center.

Land Stewardship Plan, Recertification, and Implementation

Circle Pines and the [Land Stewardship Plan](#) was awarded the Michigan Agriculture and Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Recertification. This certification was initially started to inform our environmental stewardship goals, as well as our saw mill and invasive species removal practices. We are hoping to use this plan to specifically inform our stewardship of the Prairie Restoration Area. It is important to note that due to budget restrictions the DNR will have no ability to provide us with seeds, herbicide or equipment this year.

The Land Use Committee will be working with the Board and Executive Director to develop a cut-stump, aka cut and dab, herbicide treatment of invasive species policy. We are hoping to use those developed guidelines to treat invasive species in the Prairie Restoration Area this winter. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like updates before the Spring Member Meeting.