



# 10 Things You Can Say to Your Local Cemetery to Promote Green Burial

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1. "Please consider creating a green burial section in your cemetery where I may be buried without the use of a concrete grave liner."
2. "I/We would be happy to help you, including speaking to your board of directors or council, providing educational materials, and sharing information from other cemeteries who have done this."
3. "Burial without a concrete grave liner is legal, safe, easily learned, and more desirable to many."
4. "There is no one definition of green burial but this is what is important to me: to be in a biodegradable container or shroud, to not have a concrete grave liner, and to not be embalmed. It would also be wonderful if you modified your grounds maintenance practices to be more environmentally friendly."
5. "There are over 300 green burial sites in the US — nearly half are in existing conventional cemeteries and the rest are separate green cemeteries. Many are under development across the country and in Canada."
6. "More and more people, babyboomers especially, are asking for environmentally responsible burial options that reflect their personal values, and you are uniquely qualified to provide them."
7. "There are other revenue generating activities that can go along with offering green burial, such as:
  - Selling biodegradable products and family-centered services
  - Incorporating multi-use offerings like educational, recreational and community events
  - Capitalizing on other marketing strategies based on the fact that green burial families are eco-conscious, interested in reducing the carbon footprint of burial, and prefer locally-sourced and made containers and supporting the local economy."
8. "We know that you and your staff have the interests of families at heart, and this is one more way to help bereaved families. Green burial in a place that matters to them gives families a sense of place that aids in healing."
9. "The Green Burial Council offers certification for hybrid cemeteries as well as conservation cemeteries."
10. "I regularly speak to my friends and others about green burial and I personally know many people to whom the idea is very appealing. You could be the first in our area to offer green burial."



# 10 Things You Can Do to Start Green Burial in Your Community

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Present the latest *Green Cemeteries in the US and Canada* list<sup>1</sup> and explain how many cemeteries, including Catholic, are setting aside green space. The list gives them numbers to call for first-hand information and persuasion. Connect them to each other.

Ask for your cemetery's revenue sheets, particularly their most recent P&Ls. You might be able to do a general revenue stream projection based on what you learn from other green burial hybrid cemeteries. Find out what they charge for interment and then remember to compare by separating out the charges to get the true apples-to-apples comparison on costs. Suggest that they can charge a small amount when any divot occurs to bring in additional soil to fill the hole.

Provide *Green Burial Council Photo Essay*<sup>2</sup> that demonstrates the simplicity of the burial process to help quell the unfounded safety fears they have re: falling through rotting coffin tops and wild animal raids.

Share GBC fact sheets, such as *Real Answers to Question Real People Ask About Green Burial*, *The Science Behind Green Burial*, *Opening, Closing and Maintenance of Green Burial Cemeteries*, *Start-Up Tips for Green Burial Cemetery Operators*, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Ask your state Attorney General to write a letter confirming the legality of dispensing with concrete and plastic vaults.

Add a sense-of-the-meeting item to your next community-wide government meeting. Do your homework and educate key people in the community who will attend, along with officials who will be there, and seek consensus to form an exploratory committee to begin a grassroots effort.

For that matter, just form a group and start getting in the public eye. The key is to educate the public.

Educate your church Social Justice Committee and get them to connect with other groups in your area to take up the cause. They're experienced in challenging the norm.

Contact the environmental science, nursing, and counseling programs and death and dying classes at your local college or university and offer to guest lecture.

Contact your local library to schedule a presentation about green burial and alternative after-death practices either on your own or as part of a library-sponsored series.

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://nhfuneral.org>    <sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.greenburialcouncil.org>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*