Selected Survey Data
In January of 2015, the Education Committee of the Green Burial Council solicited responses from 70 green burial cemeteries in and out of the GBC network, receiving a 53% response rate. The raw results of that study are shown below.

The data collected was used to develop presentations to cemeterians and funeral industry professionals, and to inform future endeavors by the GBC in its mission to educate the public about green burial, develop ways to support certified providers, and continue research into green cemetery best practices.

It should be noted in evaluating the data that of the cemeteries represented 78.1% of the respondents were hybrid, at term that refers to conventional cemeteries that allow, at minimum, space for vaultless burial. Methods of transporting loaded caskets and opening and closing graves in many cases appear to follow standard cemetery protocols and methods.

Of the total number of known green cemeteries in the US at the time of the survey, 64 are hybrid, 45 are natural, and six are conservation. Of those certified by the GBC, 25 were hybrid, 18 were natural and six were conservation. 43% of those responding to the survey were GBC certified.

For a complete definition and description of the three standardized categories of certification and to learn more about the value of independent certification, go to greenburialcouncil.org.

Overview
1) Total acres of cemetery land
   a) 0-10 8.8%
   b) 11 to 20 11.8%
   c) 21 to 40 32.4%
   d) more than 40 47.1%

2) Total acres for green burial
   a) 0-10 63.6%
   b) 11 to 20 6.1%
   c) 21 to 40 9.1%
   d) more than 40 21.2%
3) What types of interment take place in your cemetery (check all that apply)
   a) Conventional burial 78.1%
   b) Urn burial 81.3%
   c) Scattering 50.0%
   d) Columbarium 53.1%
   e) Mausoleum 43.8%
   f) Green Burial Council certified-burial 68.8%
   g) Green burial not currently certified by the Green Burial Council 37.5%

4) Average number of conventional burials/year
   a) Average # of conventional burials/year 2424
   b) Average number of green burials/year 151
   c) Total number of green burials have occurred since you began offering it? 671
   d) Total number of green burials in 2014 171
   e) Total number of burials in 2104 both 2546

5) Pre-need Burial Arrangements
   a) Total # of all existing pre-need burial arrangements 13,569
   b) Total number for existing preneed green burial arrangements 554
   c) Total number of all preneed arrangements in 2014 995
   d) Total number of preneed green arrangements in 2014 148

6) Do you provide digital grave marking by GIS?
   a) Yes 13.3%
   b) No 86.7%

7) What methods of memorialization are used in your green cemetery? (rank by most 1 to least 6 popular)
   a) Conventional Headstone or Footstone 6
   b) Wood or unpolished stone marker 4
   c) Memorial wall 1
   d) Planting of native tree or shrub 3
   e) Bench 2
   f) Other 5
8) Grave opening methods *(rank by most 1 to least 3 used method)*
   a) Family digs by hand 3
   b) Cemetery digs by hand 2
   c) Backhoe 1

9) Do you have an onsite chapel or covered shelter for services?
   a) Yes 71.9%
   b) No 28.1%

10) What method do you employ for transporting the body to the gravesite?
    a) Funeral Coach 64.5%
    b) Other motorized carriage 22.6%
    c) Horse drawn carriage 12.9%
    d) People-powered carriage 38.7%
    e) Carry by pallbearers 58.1%
    f) Other (specify) 0%
11) Does your cemetery offer any of the following green burial-specific products? (check all that apply)
   a) Green Burial Council certified Shrouds 50.0%
   b) Green Burial Council certified Caskets 37.5%
   c) Green Burial Council certified Biodegradable urns 37.5%
   d) Caskets, shrouds, urns or other products by local craftspeople 62.5%
   e) Natural Monuments (made from unpolished stone or wood) 75.0%
   f) Flowers, greens or native plants 68.8%
   g) Other (specify) 0.0%

12) If you have public use space, please tell us what it is used for (rank from most popular 1 to least 7):
   a) Meditation 2
   b) Bird-watching 3
   c) Picnicking 6
   d) Family gatherings 4
   e) Walking/hiking on trails 1
   f) Cross-country skiing on trails 7
   g) Educational programs 5
13) Have you engaged in restoring the land to its native ecosystem, with natural watersheds, native flora and fauna?
   a) Yes \[75.9\%\]
   b) No \[24.1\%\]

14) What has been your experience with the demand for green burial since your cemetery began providing green burial?
   a) Demand for green burial has increased \[72.4\%\]
   b) Demand for green burial has been steady, but no significant change in demand \[6.9\%\]
   c) Demand for green burial has declined \[20.7\%\]

15) What type of green burial certification does your cemetery have?
   a) GBC Hybrid green cemetery \[27.6\%\]
   b) GBC Natural green cemetery \[27.6\%\]
   c) GBC Conservation green cemetery \[17.2\%\]
   d) Not certified \[27.6\%\]
   e) List other certifications: Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, 2 in process

16) In your experience, families who are choosing green burial previously would have primarily chosen:
   a) Cremation and scattering \[27.6\%\]
   b) Cremation and inurnment \[17.2\%\]
c) Conventional burial with embalming and viewing 20.7%
d) Direct burial in conventional cemetery lots 34.5%

Those Who Choose Green Burial Might Have Chosen:

- Cremation and scattering
- Cremation and inurnment
- Conventional burial with embalming and viewing
- Direct burial in conventional cemetery lots

Finances & Marketing

17) What is the ratio of green burial lot sales at-need and pre-need?
   a) Less than 1/4 at-need (3/4 or more pre-need) 43.5%
   b) More than ¼ at-need (less than 3/4 pre-need) 8.7%
   c) About half and half at-need and pre-need 21.7%
   d) Less than 3/4 at-need (more than 1/4 pre-need) 0.0%
   e) 3/4 or more at-need (¼ or less pre-need) 26.1%

Ratio of Lot Sales At-need to Pre-need in Green Cemeteries

- Less than 1/4 at-need (3/4 or more pre-need)
- More than 1/4 at-need (less than 3/4 pre-need)
- About half and half at-need and pre-need
- Less than 3/4 at-need (more than 1/4 pre-need)
- 3/4 or more at-need (1/4 or less pre-need)

18) What is the average price of a green burial lot in your cemetery?
   a) Less than $1,000 20.7%
   b) $1,000 to $2,500 55.2%
   c) $2501 to $5,000 17.2%
   d) More than $5,000 6.9%
19) What is the cost for opening and closing a green burial lot in your cemetery?
   a) Included in plot price 7.1%
   b) No charge if family digs it themselves 0.0%
   c) Less than $500 14.3%
   d) $501 to $1,000 35.7%
   e) $1,001 to $1,500 28.6%
   f) More than $1,500 14.3%

20) Is your cemetery for-profit or nonprofit?
   a) For-profit 20.0%
   b) Nonprofit 63.3%
   c) Municipal 16.7%

21) Has green burial been profitable for your cemetery?
   a) Yes 76.9%
   b) No 23.1%
22) How does green burial compare to other types of interment re: profitability (check all that apply)?
   a) More profitable than conventional burial 37.5%
   b) About the same profitability as conventional burial 29.2%
   c) Less profitable than conventional burial 16.7%
   d) More profitable than inurnment 29.2%
   e) About the same profitability as inurnment 8.3%
   f) Less profitable than inurnment 16.7%

23) Knowing what you know now about green burial, would you open a new green cemetery today if you had the opportunity?
   a) Yes 81.5%
   b) No 18.5%

24) If you answered “No” to the previous question, why would you choose not to open a new green cemetery? (check all that apply)
   a) Too much work and maintenance 0.0%
b) Not sufficiently profitable 50.0%

c) I don’t believe that there will be enough future demand for green burial to justify the investment of time and money 25.0%
d) We have other priorities 25.0%
e) Other (specify) still new at it n/a; not start a new one

25) What in your experience are the best ways to market your green cemetery? (rank all that apply from most 1 effective to least 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery website</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing on the Green Burial Council website</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid online advertising</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid print advertising</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking/presentations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of funeral directors, hospice and end-of-life care providers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booths/tables at fairs, conferences, conventions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
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How People Hear About Green Burial

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Listing on the Green Burial Council website</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of FDs, hospice, care</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid print advertising</td>
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Maintenance

Check all that apply

26) Trail work, eco-system restoration and maintenance is

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handled by cemetery staff</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handled by subcontractors</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer work done by families and green burial enthusiasts</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer work done by partnering with environmental groups, Boy Scouts or other nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27) Weed control methods used
   a) None 11.1%
   b) Controlled burn 18.5%
   c) Mowing 51.9%
   d) Conventional Herbicides 37.0%
   e) Organic Herbicides 29.6%
   f) Pulling/digging by hand 70.4%
   g) Other goat rental 1; spot treatment for poison ivy only

28) Pest control methods used
   a) None 65.4%
   b) Organic pesticides 11.5%
   c) Other organic methods, such as restoration of native ecosystem or reintroduction of natural predators 30.8%
   d) Conventional pesticides 3.8%
   e) Other (specify) 0.0%
29) Post-burial lot maintenance
   a) None 6.9%
   b) Add soil 65.5%
   c) Add organic material such as dead leaves 31.0%
   d) Plant native vegetation or tree 34.5%
   e) Restore sod or grass 51.7%
   f) Other 17.2%

30) Demographics of Population Served
   What is your perception of the income relative to your area of the families that choose green burial? (rank in order from largest 1 population to smallest 4)
   a) High-Upper 1/3 2
   b) Medium-Middle 1/3 1
   c) Low-Lower 1/3 3
31) What is your perception of the education level of the families that choose green burial? (rank in order from largest 1 population to smallest 4)
   a) Graduate or Professional degree 2
   b) Undergraduate degree 1
   c) High School diploma 3
   d) Less than a high school diploma 4

32) What is your perception of religious beliefs of families that choose green burial? (rank in order from largest 1 population to smallest 5)
   a) Religiously devout/Very conservative 4
   b) Religiously devout/Moderate 3
   c) Religiously devout/Liberal 2
   d) Spiritual but not religious 1
   e) None of the above 5
33) People from which religions are buried in your green cemetery? (only include the religions that are currently represented in your green cemetery)
   a) Catholic 45.5%
   b) Protestant 77.3%
   c) Eastern Orthodox 27.3%
   d) Jewish 50.0%
   e) Muslim 27.3%
   f) Buddhist 22.7%
   g) Hindu 9.1%
   h) New Age (e.g. Wiccan) 22.7%
   i) Non-religious/unaffiliated 72.7%
   j) Other (specify) Mormon 1

34) What generations in your experience are most interested in green burial? (rank in order from largest 1 population to smallest 5)
   a) Mature/Silents (born 1927-1945) 2
   b) Babyboomers (born 1946-1964) 1
   c) Generation X (1965-1980) 3
   d) Generation Y/Millenials/The 9/11 Generation (1981-2000) 4
   e) Generation Z/Boomlets (2001-2014) 5
35) What is your perception of the reason why people choose green burial? (rank in order from most 1 to least 5 important)
   a) Green burial has been the practice of humankind since time immemorial
   b) Minimizing impact on the environment
   c) Spiritual or religious reasons
   d) Do-It-yourself ethic
   e) Cost

36) How would you describe the degree of emotional connection felt by families with green burial as opposed to a conventional burial?
   a) More involved emotionally with green burial
   b) About the same level of emotional involvement
   c) Less emotional involvement with green burial
37) How would you describe the degree of family participation by those choosing green burial as opposed to a conventional burial?
   a) More participation with green burial  66.7%
   b) About the same level of participation  29.6%
   c) Less participation with green burial  3.7%

38) How do you perceive the degree of satisfaction for families that choose green burial versus conventional burial?
   a) Families that choose green burial are more satisfied with their experience  72.0%
   b) No difference in satisfaction between green burial and conventional burial  28.0%
   c) Families that choose conventional burial are more satisfied with their experience  0.0%
**Bonus question**

39) What is the single most important thing you would tell a startup green cemetery operator or funeral director about green burial?

- Building alliances with other providers
- Do it right
- Focus on what today's families want – simpler, environmentally friendly
- Keep it simple and low cost
- Honor the old ways
- More education needed
- Do not be afraid
- Be patient
- Do it because you believe in it
- This will be an uphill battle
- Don’t just offer burial without a vault or embalming to save on cost.
- Add environmental benefits and you will build value in the entire concept and attract higher income clients
- Do research and planning before releasing info to the public
- Focus on providing families more opportunity for participation
- Make sure you are sold on the idea before selling it to someone else
- Learn from other green burial providers
- Educate people to the choices they do not know they have
- The public has a way of voting with their wallet and their feet, so if you aren’t willing to change with the times, expect to be left behind
- Change your paradigm to match what your families actually want
- The GBC is not only key because we need certifiable standards, but because it has the potential to build binding networks