



**Green Burial Council
Cemetery Certification Standards
Adopted March 6, 2015**

| New Standard # | Criteria | Hybrid | Natural Burial Grounds | Conservation Burial Grounds |
|------------------------------------|--|--------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CUSTOMER RELATIONS CRITERIA | | | | |
| 1. | Accurately represent earned level of GBC certification in marketing materials, websites, and conversations with the public, clients, and the media. | √ | √ | √ |
| 2.. | Obtain GBC certification for any funeral homes that operate on the premises. | √ | √ | √ |
| BURIAL PRACTICES CRITERIA | | | | |
| 3. | Provide clients and families with the opportunity to participate in the burial and ritual process in keeping with state law and with these standards. | √ | √ | √ |
| 4. | Accept for burial only decedents that have not been embalmed or those embalmed only with GBC-approved, nontoxic chemicals. | √ | √ | √ |
| 5. | Prohibit the use of a vault (partial, inverted, or otherwise), a vault lid, concrete box, slab or partitioned liner in the burial plot. | √ | √ | √ |
| 6. | Limit burial containers, shrouds, and all associated materials to those made from biodegradable, natural materials. | √ | √ | √ |
| SITE PLANNING | | | | |
| 7. | Operate only outside sensitive areas as identified in the ecological assessment. | | √ | √ |
| 8. | Conduct an ecological assessment that includes baseline information on existing geology, hydrology, soils, topography, cultural resources, and existing and potential native animals and plants. | | √ | √ |
| 9. | Preserve, enhance, or restore a historic native or natural community of the region. | | | √ |
| 10. | Conserve or restore minimum of 10 acres, or 5 acres if contiguous to other protected lands. | | | √ |

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CARE OF GROUNDS

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|-----|---|--|---|---|
| 11. | Compile a list of native plants based on the ecological assessment to use memorial features and to enhance plant diversity on the site. | | √ | √ |
| 12. | Develop a plan for protecting or salvaging rare plants identified in the ecological assessment. | | √ | √ |

OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

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| 13. | Develop a Maintenance and Operations Manual to be given to all staff members, contractors, and volunteers to communicate site goals and methods of meeting them. | √ | √ | √ |
| 14. | Implement an invasive plant and pest control plan to employ best management practices for the control of invasive species and to discourage the use of pesticides, except as a last resort. | √ | √ | √ |
| 15. | Develop a plan for dealing with unauthorized grave decoration and landscaping. | √ | √ | √ |
| 16. | Use excavation and burial techniques that minimize impacts on soil health and plant diversity. | | √ | √ |
| 17. | Develop a plan for limiting the types, sizes, and visibility of memorial markers/features to preserve or restore naturalistic vistas in the cemetery landscape. | | √ | √ |
| 18. | Develop a plan for limiting access to sensitive areas as well as policies for families who choose backcountry or off-trail burial | | √ | √ |

PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

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|-----|--|---|---|---|
| 19. | Establish an endowment fund to ensure the long-term maintenance of the site by setting aside at least 10% of all burial plot sales. | √ | √ | √ |
| 20. | Guarantee preservation of burial ground by deed restriction, conservation easement, or other legally binding and irrevocable agreement that runs with the land and is enforceable in perpetuity. | | √ | √ |
| 21. | Operate in conjunction with a government agency or a nonprofit conservation organization that has legally binding responsibility for perpetual enforcement of the easement and must approve any substantive changes to operational or conservation policies that might impact the ecological objectives of the site. | | | √ |

- **Hybrid Burial Grounds** are conventional cemeteries offering the option for burial without the need for a vault (partial, inverted or otherwise), a vault lid, concrete box, slab or partitioned liner. Hybrid Burial Grounds shall not require the embalming of decedents and must allow for any kind of eco-friendly burial containers including shrouds.
- **Natural Burial Grounds** require the adoption of practices/protocols that are energy-conserving, minimize waste, and do not require the use of toxic chemicals. A Natural Burial Ground achieves GBC certification by prohibiting the use of vaults (partial, inverted or otherwise), vault lids, concrete boxes, slabs or partitioned liners, and by prohibiting the burial of decedents embalmed with toxic chemicals, as well as by banning burial containers not made from natural/plant derived materials. It must have in place a program of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and be designed, operated and maintained to produce a naturalistic appearance, based on use of plants and materials native to the region, and patterns of landscape derived from and compatible with regional ecosystems.
- **Conservation Burial Grounds**, in addition to meeting all the requirements for a Natural Burial Ground, must further legitimate land conservation. It must protect in perpetuity an area of land specifically and exclusively designated for conservation. A Conservation Burial Ground must involve an established conservation organization that holds a conservation easement or has in place a deed restriction guaranteeing long-term stewardship.