

**Green Burial Council**  
**Cemetery Best Practices**

*Adopted January 1, 2020*

Best Practices	
1.	Consider pricing to include a range of affordable options and that meets the needs of any funding plan that supports land conservation and community activities.
2.	Maintain healthy ongoing relationships with key community figures, including land trust representatives, local officials, professionals, community groups.
3.	Ensure that any decisions that change the original agreement, easement, or compact do not directly or indirectly benefit involved individuals or groups financially.
4.	Design infrastructure to maximize comfort, convenience, and safety for workers and visitors while minimizing potential damaging impact to the land (parking lots, bathrooms, visitor center, chapel, etc.)
5.	Develop a plan for siting trails, boardwalks, bridges, and graves that reduces negative impact on existing sensitive vegetation and takes into account water run-off, wildlife corridors, multiple access, or other considerations.
6.	Develop a plan for managing visitation traffic, both at the graveside ceremony and afterwards, including the identification of sensitive areas with signage, and separating off places of potential danger to the visiting public. Define visitor capacity and maintain records to establish patterns for future planning needs.
7.	Use excavation and burial techniques that minimize impacts of soil health, plant diversity, water quality, and ecological habitat.
8.	Provide clients and families with the opportunity to participate in the burial and ritual process, in keeping with state law and with GBC standards. Consider providing multiple sizes of shovels, including ones for children.
9.	Develop a <i>Restoration Plan</i> that documents short and long-term projects detailing expectations, resources, and goals. Develop a plan for protecting or salvaging rare plants identified in the ecological assessment for memorial features and to enhance plant diversity on the site. Extract from the <i>Ecological Impact Assessment</i> information that informs a plant propagation plan for managing plants and seeds collected on site. Keep an annual monitoring photo and written journal of cultural and archeological elements, sensitive areas, plants, and wildlife sightings to inform future burial and land use decisions.
10.	Minimize the use of chemical controls, such as pesticides and herbicides for property management.
11.	Create a standard waiver to be signed by visitors at the entrance that indemnifies your cemetery from liability for accidents, incidents, Acts of God, etc.
12.	Publish a <i>Cemetery Visitor's Manual</i> for families and visitors that outlines appropriate behavior and expectations in the cemetery, including safety protocols and policies, such as grave decoration, memorialization, pet policy, etc.
13.	Publish a <i>Family and Funeral Director's Guide</i> that outlines required paperwork, procedures, and protocols from arrival to exit of the cemetery grounds, including proper body preparation, procession, lowering, mourning gallery protocol, ceremonial expectations, etc.
14.	Publicly post a list of scheduled activities encouraged in the cemetery, such as educational presentations and lectures, guided nature walks, community events, and social events such as baptisms, weddings, etc.
15.	Obtain GBC certification for any funeral homes that operate on the premises.