



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

INFORMATION FOR CEMETERY OPERATORS

The Green Burial Society of Canada offers certification of natural burial areas in two categories:

1. **Green Burial Cemetery:** a green burial area of a larger conventional cemetery
2. **Green Burial Conservation Cemetery:** a stand-alone green burial cemetery established to protect and conserve the land and restore natural habitat.

The Green Burial Society of Canada acknowledges that all cemeteries in Canada are on Indigenous land.

Certification criteria: These criteria are listed on the following three pages.

GBSC Glossary of Terms: Terminology used in the Certification Criteria and the Application Forms is defined in the Glossary at the end of this section.

Provincial Governance: As cemeteries are provincially governed, the GBSC recognizes that cemetery regulations differ by jurisdiction. We evaluate applications for certification by completeness and invite applicants to note any points specific to their jurisdiction that may affect their certification.

Certification criteria: These criteria are reviewed periodically by the GBSC. They may change with evolving environmental and other practices, standards and growing public awareness.

Application Fee: The one-time application fee covers GBSC time and resources to vet, set-up and administer the initial application process. An application fee must be paid for each cemetery seeking certification. The application fee is due upon submittal of the application.

Renewal Fee: Renewal fees are due each calendar year. The GBSC will send a renewal invoice in advance and issue a receipt for renewal fees paid. Upon renewal, the GBSC will email a certificate for the current year. All fees collected by the GBSC are used to cover the cost of operating the Society, which is a registered nonprofit organization. The GBSC uses all funds received solely to operate the Society and advance the GBSC's Goals and Purposes, notably, to promote green burial across Canada.

Benefits of Certification: Upon successful certification, cemeteries will receive:

- The right to use the terms "GBSC Certified Cemetery".
- Use of Green Burial Society of Canada's logos and web link for marketing their cemetery.
- National exposure through the posting of their site on the GBSC's map and through information about their site featured on the GBSC's website.
- Promotion of certified green burial areas through the GBSC's social media.
- Information about certified green burial areas being provided, as appropriate, to people who contact the GBSC for direction and advice about green burial.
- Opportunities to participate as hosts or sponsors of GBSC's events, including at the AGM.
- The right to vote for the GBSC Executive at each AGM.
- Access to periodic newsletters on issues and topics relevant to green burial.
- Mentorship from Board members.



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BASIC GREEN BURIAL CRITERIA:

The following five (5) criteria are the baseline criteria that any site must meet before it can claim to offer “Green” or “Natural” Burial and be eligible to apply for GBSC Certification of a site of any size.

- 1. The BODY:** Remains for green burial must be in a natural state to permit natural, unimpeded decomposition. Arterial embalming, in any form, is not permitted. Medical implants may remain in place.
- 2. The CONTAINER:** Remains for body burial must be enclosed in a fully biodegradable shroud, casket or other container. Ideally, the container will be made from locally sourced, sustainably produced materials that are free of nonorganic glues and/or fittings.
- 3. The BURIAL:** Remains will be placed and buried directly into the earth. Use of any outer burial container, such as a rough-box, grave liner, or vault of any type is not permitted.
- 4. The MEMORIAL:** Memorials may be communal or individual and are minimally intrusive in the landscape. Ideally, they would be made of locally sourced materials, such as stone or wood.
- 5. The LAND:** The Cemetery chooses sound ecological practices on the land, and acts as a resource for green burial education in the community.



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CATEGORY 1: Green Burial Cemetery

In addition to meeting all the **BASIC GREEN BURIAL CRITERIA** above, a cemetery eligible to be certified as a **Green Burial Cemetery** with burial areas for green burial only, or green burial plus cremated remains, and fulfills at least ELEVEN (11) of the following 15 criteria:

- Individual graves are opened at a depth of up to 1.2 metres. Note: Double depth graves may be permitted where demand is high, and density is desirable to achieve more sustainable land use.
- Memorials are made of locally sourced materials, such as stone or wood.
- Cremated remains are buried directly in the earth, without an outer container.
- Family/public participation in green burial ceremonies are encouraged, such as the infilling of graves if allowed.
- Family/public participation in land and grave maintenance, such as selecting native plants for graves, planting native plants on graves, etc. when or where possible.
- Seed or plant starts (not sod), and plants native to the area are to be used for grave restoration.
- Supplemental watering is done only as needed to establish or to maintain plants during dry spells. Watering is done by hand rather than by an in-ground irrigation system.
- Pesticides are not used anywhere within the green burial area.
- Only organic fertilizers and soil amendments are used in the green burial area.
- Replanting is based on an ecological restoration plan to return the land to the original natural habitat.
- Electric or alternative fuel vehicles and/or tools are used in the cemetery.
- The cemetery commits to ongoing, site-wide ecologically sound initiatives, such as recycling and composting.
- The cemetery commits to supporting habitat restoration by planting and/or protecting native plants that contribute to habitat creation on-site and/or off-site, by supporting local habitat restoration projects.
- The cemetery accurately reflects green burial principles and GBSC certification standards.
- Where permitted by local regulations and/or supported by historic practice, grave re-use or time-limited grave leases are encouraged to achieve sustainable land use.

APPLICATION FEE: \$450

ANNUAL RENEWAL (due at AGM): \$200 for 10 or fewer burials; \$300 for more than 10 burials annually.



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CATEGORY 2: Green Burial Conservation Cemetery

In addition to meeting all the **BASIC GREEN BURIAL CRITERIA** above, a cemetery eligible to be certified as a **Green Burial Conservation Cemetery** is a cemetery used for green burial only, or green burial plus cremated remains, and fulfills at least SEVENTEEN (17) of the following 20 criteria:

- Individual burials are opened at a depth of 1.2m (or less).
- Group memorial markers only.
- Memorials are made of locally sourced materials, such as stone or wood.
- Cremated remains are buried directly in the earth, without an outer container.
- Scattered cremated remains are amended with compost or soil.
- Family/public participation in green burial ceremonies are encouraged, such as the infilling of graves if allowed.
- Family/public participation in land and grave maintenance, such as selecting native plants for graves, planting native plants on graves, etc when or where possible.
- Seed or plant starts (not sod) native to the area are to be used for grave restoration.
- Supplemental watering is done only as needed to establish or to maintain plants during dry spells. Watering is done by hand rather than by an in-ground irrigation system.
- No pesticides are used anywhere on the land.
- Only organic fertilizers and soil amendments are used in the green burial area.
- The cemetery has completed a baseline environmental assessment.
- Replanting is based on an ecological restoration plan to return the land to the original natural habitat.
- Environmentally sensitive areas are identified, and burials are limited there.
- Burial density does not interfere with the natural habitat, which may limit a cemetery to 300 or fewer burials per acre; density can be greater with buffer acreage surrounding.
- Electric or alternative fuel vehicles and/or tools are used in the cemetery.
- The cemetery commits to ongoing, site-wide ecologically sound initiatives, such as recycling and composting.
- The cemetery commits to supporting habitat restoration by planting and/or protecting native plants that contribute to habitat creation on-site and/or off-site, by supporting local habitat restoration projects.
- A conservation covenant is placed on the land title.
- The cemetery accurately reflects green burial principles and GBSC certification standards.

APPLICATION FEE: \$450

ANNUAL RENEWAL (due at AGM): \$150