Haliburton Highlands
GREEN BURIAL SOCIETY

Making Green Burial Options Happen in the Highlands!

Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 2020

What's In A Name?

Welcome to the first issue of the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHBGS) Newsletter! It doesn't yet have an official name (although someone suggested that "Dead Right" or "Dead On" might make an evocative handle). We're asking you to help the Board find a remedy for this problem, so please email us your suggestions by **May 30th** at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com . We'll collate the names put forward and ask HHGBS members to vote for their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.

Taking Stock of the Last Year

It's coming up to a year since Environment Haliburton (EH!) sponsored the first public meeting in the Highlands on Green Burial. That well-attended Enviro-Café, took place on May 14, 2019 and featured Mark Richardson, the Cemetery Manager in Niagara Falls, and Ellen Newman, of the "Good Green Death Project".

Green Burial in The Highlands:

Making It Happen

1st Meeting of the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHGBS)

* Green Burial: The Basics and More
* Visualizing Green Burial and Green Cemeteries
* Status of Green Burial Discussions in Haliburton
* Why a Green Burial Society? Why Should I Join?

Wednesday November 27, 2019, 7:30pm
Haliburton United Church,
10 George Street, Haliburton

Please consider carpooling

For more information contact: Terry Moore, tmoore7031@gmail.com, 705-306-8254

An EH! Green Burial Working Group was formed in May of 2019 and quickly hit the ground running with Green Burial presentations to all four Township Councils between May 16th and June 25th. Councils were asked to review their cemetery by-laws to identify and remove barriers to green burial and to examine the possibilities of creating green burial sections within the cemeteries under their authority.

Algonquin Highlands Council was also asked, and agreed, to put all sales of new plots in St. Stephen's Cemetery on Buckslide Road on-hold while it examined the possibility of creating a green burial section in its undeveloped northern section.

All four Township Councils expressed support, in principle, for green burial and agreed to examine the possibilities for creating exclusive green burial sections. So far, the most promising possibilities are at St. Stephen's Cemetery in Algonquin Highlands and the Deer Lake Cemetery in Highlands East.

Raising the Profile of Green Burial

Each of our Council presentations was covered by local newspapers which helped get people talking about more environmentally sensitive alternatives to conventional burial and cremation. Invitations to make green burial presentations at the Haliburton Chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women's AGM on October 17, 2019 and Minden Rotary Club AGM on October 28, 2019 also helped to generate more interest and discussion as well as gaining additional media attention.

Finally, we participated in three "Planet Haliburton" interviews about green burial on CanoeFM, throughout 2019 and one on CBC's "Ontario Morning" program on January 17, 2020.

Winter Burial Workshop

Winter Burial in The Highlands?
A Workshop for Township Councillors and Staff

Presentations By:
- Terry Moore, President, Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society
- Mark Richardson, Cemetery Manager for the City of Niagara Falls

Special Guest:
- Kevin Baker, CemeCare Cemetery Management, Zephyr, Ontario

Tuesday February 4, 2020,1pm – 4pm,
Dysart et al Township Council Chambers,
135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton

Sponsored by the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHGBS)

For more information contact: Terry Moore, tmoore7031@gmail.com, 705-308-9254

All four Townships in Haliburton County do not allow in-ground burial to occur from sometime in November of each year, when the ground freezes, until about the beginning of May, when the ground thaws. Families wishing to bury loved ones who happen to die in the winter, have to either have their bodies stored in one of three winter storage lockers in the County or have them buried outside the County in cemeteries that offer winter burial.

In addition to placing an additional emotional burden on bereaved families, storing bodies for spring burial also requires embalming, which poses significant occupational and environment health issues. The absence of winter burial options is one of the reasons an estimated 70% of those dying in Haliburton are choosing to be cremated.

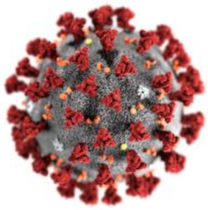
To encourage Townships to seriously consider offering a winter burial option, the HHGBS sponsored a "Winter Burial Best Practices Workshop" for some 30 township councillors and staff on February 4, 2020. This workshop, at which all four Townships were well-represented, shared winter burial experience of cemetery operators outside of the County as well as hearing from representatives of a company prepared to provide winter burial plot openings and closings in Haliburton for a reasonable additional fee.

We produced a Workshop Kit for all participants filled with background information and resources for moving forward. If you would like to obtain a copy of the resource material, please send us an request via email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the Winter Burial Workshop and are optimistic that we will see movement toward year-round burial in the near future.

Covid-19 Puts a Pause on Public Meetings

The Board of the HHGBS decided soon after it was formed in January 2020 to sponsor quarterly green burial and end-of-life public educational presentations each year. In addition, we are planning to run regular introductory "Green Burial Basics" sessions at libraries across the County. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to push the pause button on both of these initiatives pending the relaxation of physical distancing rules.



We are investigating the possibility of replacing at least one face-to-face public meeting, that was planned for April of this year, with a virtual meeting and will let you know if and when we will be able to make this happen. If you have suggestions for topics you would like to see addressed at future HHGBS public sessions, please let us know by sending us an email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

Website Coming Soon

A basic HHGBS website is under development and the Board is also working hard on a grant application to pay for additional functions so that we can provide comprehensive "one-stop-shopping" information on all death and end-of-life planning issues.

We want to build a model website providing for two-way communication with members and links to up-to-date news on green and natural burial developments. From links to cemeteries with green burial sections to articles on the legal parameters governing death and dying, we aim to make our website the go-to source for all the information you need.

If you have suggestions regarding the type and range of information you'd like to see on the website, please drop us an email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

Why Become a HHGBS Member?

By becoming a HHGBS member you are giving your financial support to creating a better environment in Haliburton County. You are saying this is what I believe in and standing behind the efforts of the Board and volunteers of the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society to make real change.

Who Should Join? Individuals interested in the cultural and environmental legacy of their community, those wanting access to educational and resource material related to end of life planning and those who support the objectives of the Society.

The cost of membership is $20 per year and you can join by sending an email request to the HHGBS Secretary, Shirley Moore at smoore7031@gmail.com.

Donations Are Really Helpful!

The HHGBS operates largely on the basis of people volunteering their time and energy. However, there are some things, like a great website, that require outside professional services. We can ask for a not-for-profit discount but businesses cannot afford to work for free. If you have the means and the inclination, donations can really help us get to where we are going faster and can be made to the **EH! Kyle Moore Memorial Green Burial Initiative** at this link: https://www.environmenthaliburton.org/green-burial.html. Of course, you can also forward donations via cheque directly to Beth Johns, HHGBS Treasurer, Box 54, West Guilford, On K0M 2S0.

Green Burial Actions We Can All Take Right Now

While we are pressing the Townships to look for opportunities to establish green burial sections within their cemeteries, it is important to remember that, outside of the winter months when no burial of any kind is allowed, cemeteries can already accommodate a number of green burial related requests. Embalming is not mandatory nor is the use of concrete vaults or non-biodegradable caskets. So, if you or a loved one doesn't want any or all of those things, then make that fact very clear to your family as well as funeral home and cemetery administrators. Putting your wishes in writing will eliminate any confusion down the road.

To help communicate the fact that there's a growing demand for green burial sections to Township Councillors and Administrative staff, consider asking Township cemetery clerks to put you on a **waiting list for plots within green burial sections** that you're looking to the Township to establish. Since 70% of deaths in the County currently result in cremation, policy makers have become more interested in building columbarium to house cremated remains than green burial sections.

By demonstrating to policy makers that there's a demand for green burial sections, we can encourage more attention to be paid to green burial initiatives. Please keep us in the loop with regard to any conversations you have with Councillors or staff about green burial and waiting lists.

First HHGBS Board Established

Following the first public meeting held under the name of the HHGBS on November 27, 2020, the EH! Green Burial Working Group began the formal process of setting up an organization separate and distinct from Environment Haliburton. EH! has a long and proud history of incubating spin-off organizations and we are grateful for all the support we've received to date.

On January 17, 2020, the first Board of the HHGBS was appointed from among the members of the EH! Green Burial Working Group and tasked with filing for incorporation as a not-for-profit organization. Once our incorporation is

finalized, an initial by-law (AKA a constitution) will be drafted and the Board will schedule our first Annual General Meeting.

A bank account in the name of the HHGBS has been established at the TD in Minden with three signing officers, two of whom are required to sign any cheques. The funds raised via donations to the EH! Kyle Moore Memorial Green Burial Initiative, as well as the money from the sale of memberships at the November 27, 2019 meeting, have been transferred to the HHGBS account. EH! has agreed to maintain the current donation system in place on its website until the HHGBS has its own website with a donation function up and running.

The members of the inaugural HHGBS Board, and their email addresses, are as follows:

Terry Moore, President, tmoore7031@gmail.com
Beth Johns, Treasurer, bethjohns9@gmail.com
Carolyn Langdon, carolynlangdon3@gmail.com
Jean Neville, e_jneville@hotmail.com
Jenny Rieger, Vice-President, jarieger@sympatico.ca
Shirley Moore, Secretary, smoore7031@gmail.com
Margaret Milne, gramma131094@bell.net
Jean Tyler, jeanandgodfreytyler@gmail.com

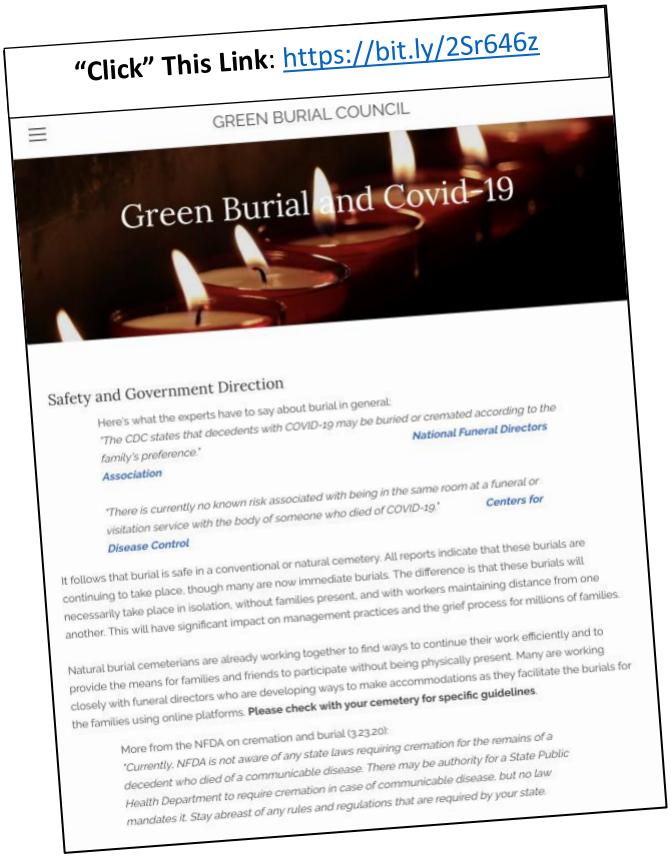
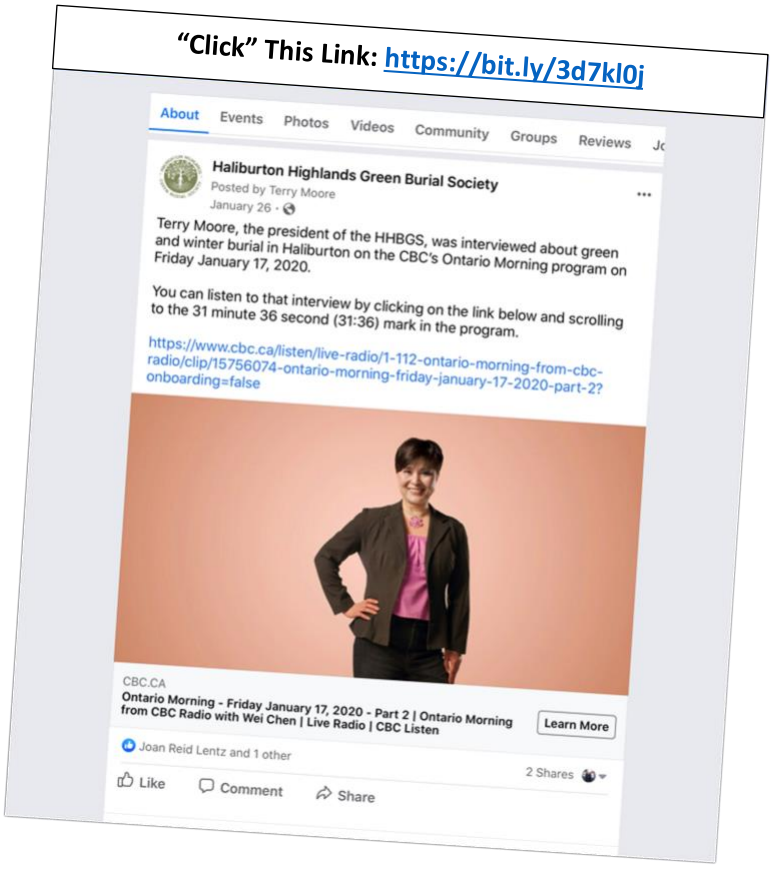
"Like" Us On Facebook

While we don't yet have a website the HHGBS does have a Facebook Page on which we try to make regular postings about green burial related developments and events. If you are on Facebook please go to our site: www.facebook.com/HaliburtonGreenBurialSociety and "like" us as well as having a look at the postings we've put up for your information.

For a little taste of the kind of information that we've shared on Facebook ...

Checkout these recent posts (just "Click" on the link on the image)

"Click" This Link: https://bit.ly/2Sr646z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