Haliburton Highlands
GREEN BURIAL SOCIETY

Making Green Burial Options Happen in the Highlands!

Volume 1, Number 2, Fall 2020

What's In A Name?

Welcome to the second issue of the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHBGS) Newsletter! It still doesn't have an official name, but a number of you have submitted proposals to remedy that following our appeal for suggestions in the Spring Newsletter. Here's a list of proposed handles we've received to date:

1. Pushing Up Daisies
2. Coming Up Roses
3. Dead On
4. ForEver Green
5. The Green Hereafter
6. An Environmental Undertaking
7. The Green Undertaker
8. JUST Buried
9. The Dead Green Show
10. ComPost Mortem
11. DeCompose Yourself
12. Compost Yourself
13. Going Green
14. Gone Green
15. Natural Selection
16. A Natural Conclusion
17. The Green Comeback
18. Coming Back Green
19. Back to the Land
20. Going Underground
21. The Green Underground
22. The Unvarnished Truth
23. The Green Reaper
24. Recycle Me, Please

We're asking you to help the Board select the newsletter's name by emailing us your top three choices by **December 15th** to hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com . We'll collate the results and announce the winner on the HHGBS Website and Facebook Page early in the new year.

Encouraging News From Algonquin Highlands

After the EH! Green Burial Working Group was formed in May of 2019, it quickly hit the ground running with Green/Winter Burial presentations to all four Township Councils between May 16th and June 25th. Due to the very encouraging reception received during the first presentation to Algonquin Highlands Council in May of 2019, a follow-up presentation was made in January of 2020.

The time and effort put into those presentations appears to have moved things forward to the point that Algonquin Highlands will receive a staff report, in the spring of 2021, that will include a draft revised Cemetery Bylaw and providing for a green and winter burial section at its St. Stephen's Cemetery on Buckslide Road. We are cautiously optimistic that this will result in the breakthrough we have been working toward and that both green and winter burial options will soon become a reality in Haliburton County!

However, we cannot assume that everything will go as smoothly and as quickly as we would like and members interested in purchasing a green burial plot in Algonquin Highlands are encouraged to get in touch with Township Councillors to express support for a green/winter burial section at St. Stephen's. Contact information for all five AH Councillors can be found at this here.

All four Township Councils have expressed support, in principle, for green and winter burial options and agreed to examine the possibilities for creating exclusive green/winter burial sections in their existing cemeteries. If Algonquin Highlands makes the first move next spring, we are hopeful that the other Townships will be encouraged to follow suit.

Winter Burial Workshop

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.

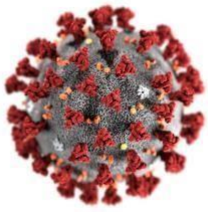
In addition to placing an additional emotional burden on bereaved families, storing bodies for spring burial also requires embalming, which poses significant occupational and environment health risks. The absence of winter burial options is one of the reasons an estimated 70% of those dying in Haliburton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

To encourage the 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, featured a presentation on how winter burials are provided outside of the County. In addition, attendees heard from representatives of a company prepared to provide winter burial plot openings and closings across Haliburton County, 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 a request via email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those attending the Winter Burial Workshop and are optimistic that we'll 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.

As it now seems likely that face-to-face meetings will not be possible until well into next year, at the earliest, we're planning to replace public meetings with virtual Zoom events and will let you know soon when these meetings will be happening. In the

meantime, if you have suggestions for topics you'd like to see addressed at future HHGBS virtual public sessions, please let us know by sending us an email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

Website Update

A basic HHGBS website (www.haliburtongreenburial.ca) has been up and running since the early summer. However, to develop our website into a comprehensive state of the art "one-stop-shopping" website, containing a full range of information on green/natural burial and end-of-life planning issues, we were successful in obtaining a $5000 grant from the Haliburton county Development Corporation (HCDC).

We want to build a model website providing for two-way communication with members and up-to-date news on green and natural burial developments nationally, provincially and locally. 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 and your loved ones would ever need.

We are working hard to have the new comprehensive website ready to go live by the end of the year. and if you have suggestions regarding the type and range of information you'd like to see made available, please drop us an email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

Why Become a HHGBS Member?

By becoming a Burial Society member you're helping to green after-death practices in Haliburton County while passing on your commitment to environmental stewardship to future generations, at the same time. Membership in the HHGBS helps extend your support for more ecologically sustainable after-death practices while you are alive into a legacy that will keep on living after you have passed on.

By pooling our resources, the members, volunteers and Board members of the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society can encourage the adoption of greener options to conventional high carbon burial and cremation practices, thereby reducing our individual and collective ecological footprints.

Who Should Join? All those desiring increased green and winter burial options in Haliburton, anyone interested in the cultural and environmental future of their communities, as well as those wanting access to green end-of-life planning, educational and resource material.

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. The membership year runs from January 1st – December 31st and we're encouraging all current members to renew their memberships for 2021, as soon as possible. You can do that by sending a cheque for $20 made out to the **Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHGBS)** to Beth Johns, HHGBS Treasurer, Box 54, West Guilford, On K0M 2S0.

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**. Of course, you can also forward donations via cheque directly to Beth Johns, HHGBS Treasurer, Box 54, West Guilford, On K0M 2S0. Please note that the HHGBS is not a registered charity and cannot issue tax receipts.

Green Burial Actions We Can All Take Right Now

While we continuing to press the Townships to establish green burial sections within their existing cemeteries, it is important to remember that, outside of the winter months, when no burial of any kind is allowed in the County, 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 wish to be buried as green as possible, 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/winter burial options 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 at least 70% of pre-pandemic deaths in the County resulted in cremation, policy makers are more inclined to support the purchase of columbaria to house cremated remains than creating green/winter burial sections. The covid-19 emergency measures have, if anything, resulted in an increase in the proportion of cremations. So, if we're going to see movement toward more environmentally sustainable end-of-life dispositions, we're going to have to make that desire very clear to decision-makers.

By demonstrating to Councillors and senior township staff that there's a demand for green burial sections, we can encourage them to support green/winter burial initiatives. Please keep us in the loop with regard to any conversations you have with Councillors or staff about green/winter burial options and waiting lists.

Your HHGBS Board Members

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. The Board applied for and received articles of incorporation and an initial by-law (AKA a constitution) has been drafted for presentation to the membership at our first Annual General Meeting, tentatively scheduled to take place in April 2021.

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 money from the sale of memberships, has been transferred to the HHGBS account. EH! has agreed to maintain the current donation system in place on its website until the HHGBS website, complete with built-in donation function, is up and running.

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

Terry Moore, President, tmoore7031@gmail.com Jenny Rieger, Vice-President, jarieger@sympatico.ca
Beth Johns, Treasurer, bethjohns9@gmail.com Shirley Moore, Secretary, smoore7031@gmail.com
Carolyn Langdon, carolynlangdon3@gmail.com Margaret Milne, gramma131094@bell.net
Adele Espina, adele.espina@gmail.com