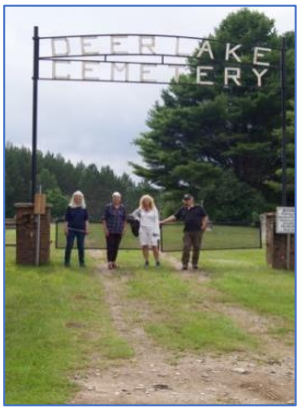
Haliburton Highlands
GREEN BURIAL SOCIETY

~ Forever Green ~

Volume 2, Number 2, Fall 2021

Update on Green/Winter Burial in Haliburton County

Great News From Highlands East



The Township of Highlands East passed a resolution at its June 8, 2021 Council meeting accepting its Environment Committee's recommendation to create a green burial section at its Deer Lake Cemetery.

The resolution also directed township staff to develop a draft revised Cemetery By-law having reference to the City of Niagara Falls' green burial by-law language as well as the HE Environment Committee's Green Burial Policy Recommendations. Those Policy Recommendations read as follows:

"Green Burials in Highlands East

Policy Recommendations from the Environment Advisory Committee

1. *Deer Lake Cemetery is the site recommended for Green Burials*
2. *Our Green Burials will be a hybrid version where equipment will be used to dig graves due to the rocky soil.*
3. *Mowing of the area will be done on a yearly or as needed basis to maintain the site.*
4. *Plots will be assigned (not selected) to prevent driving over occupied plots. Municipal Staff will determine the most effective way of marking and mapping plots.*
5. *Only biodegradable encasements will be allowed.*
6. *A communal stone marker with plaques that can be engraved will be placed at the entrance to the Green Burial section.*
7. *A gazebo and/or seating will be located in the centre with walking paths through the area.*
8. *Winter burials can be accommodated using a private contractor at the family's expense to prepare the site.*
9. *Plantings: We suggest consulting with the property supervisor before planting.*

Note: It was thought not to mention embalming in the recommendations and address the issue as it arises. Should a funeral home offer an eco-friendly form of embalming staff may permit it."

The first draft of the revised HE Cemetery By-law will be discussed at the October 20, 2021 HE Advisory Committee Meeting wbich begins at 9am. The draft revised by-law can be found here and anyone interested in observing the meeting can do so at this link: https://youtu.be/dBAB8EJRslE.

The HHGBS Board had a tour of the Deer Lake Cemetery and the proposed Green Burial Section with Suzanne Partridge, the chair of the HE Environment Committee on July 29th.

And … Some Encouraging News From Algonquin Highlands, Too

In May of 2019 Algonquin Highlands Council agreed, in principle, to the creation of a green burial section within the newer northern area of its St. Stephen's Cemetery on Buckslide Road. It put further sales of burial plots in that area on-hold pending a staff review of the issues associated with the introduction of both green and winter burial options.

The Covid-19 pandemic, as well as recent staff changes have slowed down the production of the staff report on how to proceed. A new Manager of Operations, Lyell Bergstrome, has recently been hired and he is currently planning to table his Staff Report on green and winter burial at St. Stephen's during the second AH Council Meeting in October.

We remain cautiously optimistic that Algonquin Highlands will join Highlands East in moving forward with the breakthrough for which we have been working so hard making year-round green burial options a reality in Haliburton County.

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 within their existing cemeteries. If Highlands East and Algonquin Highlands make the first moves, we are hopeful that the other Townships will be encouraged to follow suit.

In spite of the encouraging response from the four Townships, and recent moves by Algonquin Highlands and Highlands East, we cannot assume that everything will go as smoothly or as quickly as we would like. Members interested in securing a green burial plot in Algonquin Highlands or Highlands East, in particular, are encouraged to get in touch with Township Councillors to express support for both green and winter burial options.

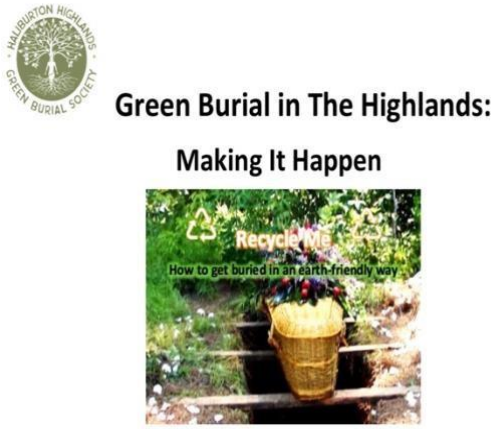
Contact information for AH Councillors can be found here and Highlands East Councillors here. Additional photos of the St. Stephen's Cemetery and the proposed green burial section can be found on the HHGBS website at this link:

Green Burial Actions We Can All Take Right Now

While we continue 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'd like to see established.

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 covid19 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 is 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.

Why Become a HHGBS Member?

By becoming a Burial Society member you are helping to green after-death practices in Haliburton County while, at the same time, passing on your commitment to environmental stewardship to future generations. 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 individual membership is $20 per year while a couple's membership is $35/yr. You can join or renew your membership by going to the Membership Tab on the website www.Haliburtongreenburial.ca. 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.

The new website provides an option for membership fees and donations to be paid via etransfer or you can send a cheque made out to the Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society

(HHGBS) to the HHGBS Secretary, Shirley Moore, 1193 Braeloch Rd., Algonquin Highlands, On K0M1J2.

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.

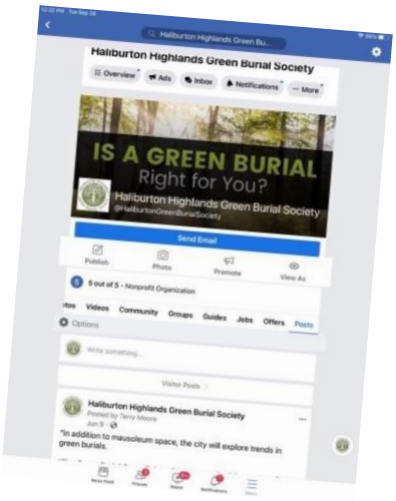
If you have the means and the inclination, donations can really help us get to where we are going faster and can be made to the **Kyle Moore Memorial "Green Burial Initiative".** Information on how to make a donation via e-transfer or cheque can be found on the "Donation" Tab on the website at www.haliburtongreenburial.ca.

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 has been drafted for presentation to the membership at the April 28, 2021 AGM. Please note that we have open positions on the Board available so, if you are interested in serving as a Director, please send us an email at hhgreenburialsociety@gmail.com.

Officers: Terry Moore, President, Jennifer Rieger, Vice-President, Shirley Moore, Membership Secretary/Treasurer, Adele Espina, Secretary

Board Members: Margaret Milne, Carolyn Langdon

For More Info go to the HHGBS Website or Facebook Page

(Click on Image)