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GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF

GREEN CEMETERIES IN MAINE

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Green cemeteries, a concept first considered in 1988 in North Carolina, is gaining in popularity all across the country, including Maine. The driving force behind this interest is captioned in the definition of Green Cemeteries: “A way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources, reduction of carbon emissions, protection of worker health, and the restoration and/or preservation of habitat”. There are however, few regulations and only general guidelines on site selection considerations and burial options for interested parties to follow. The purpose of this document is to provide site selection guidelines or considerations for those interested in developing a green cemetery to be located within the State of Maine.

There are a number of issues that should be taken into consideration when selecting a site for the development of a green cemetery. They include soils, groundwater table type, soil depth, slopes, surface stoniness, vegetation type and size, protected natural resources, accessibility, adjacent developments, burial goals/objectives, aesthetics and maintenance. Of these, soils are by far the most important consideration and should be the primary focus during site selection. Not only do soils directly affect burials but also access to and through a site. County soil survey maps are a good first step but should not be relied upon for any final decisions. They are designed for general planning purposes but are not

intended for site specific decisions. That can only be done through a site visit with a trained professional soil scientist. It would be unwise to select a site for a green cemetery without first conducting a site specific investigation of soil suitability.

1. **Soils** – Probably the most important factor an interested party should consider when looking for a suitable piece of land to develop a green cemetery is soil suitability for the type (depth) of burial desired. Maine has 6 general types of soil, all of which developed from material left behind around 10,000 – 12,000 years ago by our most recent glacial event. They are alluvial or flood plain soils, marine sediments, lacustrine sediments, organic soils, glacial till soils and outwash soils.

    a. **Alluvial soils** – alluvial soils are found within flood plains of rivers and streams and coastal beaches (sand dunes). Most are subject to periodic inundation due to flooding events. They are comprised of very fine sand and silt which drops out of suspension in flood waters as the speed of the flowing water slows when it enters a flood plain. Stones are rarely found within the soil profile. Some of these soils have a shallow groundwater table but none of them have a hardpan layer. Flood plain soils that are not wet are some of our states most valuable prime farmlands.

    b. **Marine Sediments** – marine sediments are our finest textured soils. They have the highest clay content of all our parent material soils. No stones or sand are found within the soil profile. Marine sediment soils were deposited on the bottom of the ocean, when the ocean was about 300 feet higher in elevation than it is today (due to the weight of the glacier depressing the land mass). It can take several months in a relatively calm environment for some of the smallest clay sized particles to drop out of suspension. Since the ocean is the last place runoff water from anywhere within a watershed can go, it is where clay sized particles can finally settle out. Clam or mud flats are examples of current day marine deposits. Marine sediment soils tend to be finer in texture (higher in clay content) with depth and are very dense (have a hard pan) at relatively shallow depths (12” -18” typically). Unless marine sediments are located on top of a hill or near the top of a hill on a side slope, they tend to have a shallow depth to seasonal groundwater table. In flat or low lying areas, they tend to be poorly drained and are often a component of a wetland.

    c. **Lacustrine Sediments** – Lacustrine sediment soils formed at the bottom of glacial lakes created by glacial meltwater becoming damned up as the glacial meltwater traveled to the sea. Water does flow through lakes but much slower than in streams and rivers. The reduced flow rate allowed fine sand and silt to drop out of suspension and some clay if the flow rate was slow enough. Typically, these soils have layers of very fine sand and silt reflecting the rate of flow which would vary by

season when the glacier was melting. Stones and coarse sand are rarely found in the soil profile. When the glaciers began melting, in the hot summer, melting was rapid so the flow rate was faster through the lake only allowing fine sand to drop out. In the spring and fall, when temperatures were cooler, the flow rate was slower allowing silt and maybe some clay to drop out of suspension. Lacustrine sediments are fine textured but not as fine as marine sediments. Like Marine sediments, position on the landscape is a primary determining factor in how wet these soils are. On top of a hill or on a side slope, near the top, these soils are not usually wet. At the toe of the slope, in low lying areas or on flat areas, these soils tend to be wet and are often part of a wetland. Lacustrine sediments tend to be finer with depth and typically have a hardpan at depths of 12" – 24".

d. **Organic Soils** – Organic soils develop over time due primarily to some factor which affected the rate of organic matter decomposition by soil microbes. In Maine, there are two primary reasons for this reduced soil microbial activity; lack of oxygen or cold temperatures. Lack of oxygen is generally caused by soils that are saturated or inundated during the growing season when microbes are typically active. Anaerobic decomposition is much slower than aerobic decomposition resulting in the buildup of organic matter over time. Organic soils that develop due to anaerobic conditions are usually found in bogs and swamps (wetlands). Organic soils can also develop due to cool summer temperatures. The temperature during the winter is not a factor as soil microbes are not active during that time. Cool temperature organic soils are generally found in Maine in higher elevations and along the Downeast Coast or coastal islands. Cool temperature organic soils are fluffy with many roots and excellent granular structure. Anaerobic organic soils are dense and have platy structure or no structure at all.

e. **Glacial Till Soils** – Glacial till soils are a random mixture of sand, silt and clay and rocks. They were created by glaciers picking up soil material from one place as they moved across the landscape and then depositing it in another location as the glacier melted. Soil textures range from loamy sand to silty clay loam. These soils can have a stony or very stony surface. There are two broad categories of glacial till soils found in Maine.

    i. **Lodgement Till** – In Maine, the most common category of glacial till soils is those that have a very dense hardpan called lodgement till soils. These hardpans were created by compaction due to the great weight of glaciers. Only about the upper 18" – 24" of soil has weathered enough since the glaciers melted 10,000 – 12,000 years ago, to loosen up the hardpan. The hardpan in these soils tends to be very dense and can be quite difficult to excavate. Glacial till hardpan soils on the top of knolls or near the top on side slopes do not generally have a seasonal groundwater table but those

on lower side slopes, low lying areas or flat areas do and may be poorly drained indicating the presence of a wetland.

ii. **Ablation Till** - The other category of glacial till soils, referred to as ablation till soils, do not have a hardpan. They were not formed beneath a glacier but were pushed up into mounds and ridges by the glacier or deposited by melting water from the glacier as it retreated northward. These soils have generally better drainage than hardpan glacial till soils except for those found in low lying areas or at the toe slopes.

f. **Outwash or Stratified Drift Soils** – Our coarsest textured soils are those called outwash or stratified drift. As the glaciers melted, the meltwater formed streams and rivers of fast flowing water. The water in these streams and rivers was filled with sediment from soil picked up by the glacier as it moved south and then north. Due to the speed of the flowing water, only stones and coarse sand could drop out of suspension. All of the fine sand, silt and clay in the water continued on down the watershed until reaching a glacial lake or the ocean or flood plain. It is common however, to find a topsoil layer in these soils which is loamy. This topsoil layer was formed by wind-blown fine sand and silt from the time between when the glacier retreated and the soil became stabilized by the growth of vegetation. Outwash soils tend to be excessively well drained but, in low positions in the landscape, can be poorly drained and part of a wetland. They have high groundwater storage capacity and commonly contain significant aquifers. Outwash soils do not generally have a hardpan but, in wetter areas, can have a cemented layer called an ortstein. Ortstein layers form by the accumulation of iron and organic matter that is leached from higher up in the watershed. When the concentrated iron and organic matter are exposed to oxygen it can cement to form a hardpan. These ortstein layers are usually indicative of the seasonal high groundwater table but may have a secondary, perched groundwater table, resting on top of the ortstein layer.

The most suitable soils for a green (or any other) cemetery are those that are deep to bedrock, have no hardpan, are well drained or better, are not on a steep slope, do not have a stony or bouldery surface and have some silt or clay below the burial depth to provide renovation of any leachate from the decomposing body before it can reach the groundwater table. That means the most suitable soils in for burial Maine are the well-drained ablation till soils. Outwash soils with a deep groundwater table are also very good for burials but may be too coarse below the burial depth for treatment of leachate. This can be remedied by placing a 12” layer of topsoil from the excavation in the bottom of the pit. Hardpan glacial till soils can be used but are difficult to dig in if the excavation is to be by hand. Also, a deep excavation into the hardpan will create a “bath tub” effect which will hold water and significantly slow down decomposition of a body placed in it. If there is a perched groundwater table above the hardpan soils, that will result in prolonged inundation and may cause contaminants to travel with the perched groundwater table to off-site areas. Lacustrine or marine sediments will act similar to glacial till hardpan soils except that the threat for impacting the groundwater table and then moving off site are less due to their fine textures and relatively low permeability. These soils also become quite soft when wet

and are therefore highly subject to trees blowing down unless moderately well drained or better. Alluvial soils are not generally suitable for burial sites due the fact that most flood periodically and they may be wet. They are also some of the best prime farmland soils in the State and should be protected for that use. Wet organic soils are not suitable burial sites but dry organic soils would work reasonably well if deep enough above bedrock. Because dry organic soils form due to cool temperatures, a body buried in them would probably not decompose or only very slowly and might actually become mummified.

The most suitable soils for burials, based on Soil Series established by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly called Soil Conservation Service), are shown below. The entire State of Maine has been mapped by NRCS soil scientists and those soil maps are available as part of published Soil Surveys at County Soil and Water Conservation District offices or on-line via the WebSoilSurvey. **A note of caution if you are thinking about using a County Soil Survey as your only source of soils information for selecting a site to be used as a green cemetery.** County Soil Surveys were made for general land-use planning purposes. **They were not designed for and should not be used for making site specific decisions such as locating a green burial site or a septic system.** The level of detail in each Soil Survey was limited by the scale of aerial photography which was used as a base map when the Soil Survey was made. In many of the more developed areas of the State, the map scale was such that the smallest area of soil that could be delineated and shown on the map (called a map unit), was about 3 acres in size. In the more undeveloped areas of the State, primarily large tracts of forest land, the scale of the maps were such that the smallest map unit that could be shown was typically between 20 and 40 acres in size. That means any soil type that differs from the named soil series in a map unit that is less than 3 acres in size in developed areas of the State or 20 – 40 acres in size in undeveloped areas of the State, even if they are known to exist, are not shown on these soil maps. They are called “inclusions” and may be similar to or much different than the named soil series for the map unit. Soil Surveys do however, include a discussion of individual soil map units which describe the likelihood of finding inclusions in them and landscape positions where they are most likely to occur. Because Soil Surveys were designed to be used for general land use planning decisions and because of limitations due to map scale, it is a very wise decision to use the county soil maps to do a preliminary soil assessment but to do a site visit with a soil scientist before making a final site selection decision.

Soil suitability ratings for burials by soil series. () are used to indicate a name no longer used for a soil series but may be still be found on county soil survey maps. The name in parenthesis is shown beside the name used today for essentially the same soil series:

Excellent: Berkshire (Charlton) and Hermon.

Very Good (also prime farmland soils): Bangor, Caribou, Salmon (Hartland), Melrose, Fryeburg (Hadley), Lille, Ondawa.

Good (most should have topsoil placed in bottom of deep pits to protect the apparent groundwater table): Danforth, Monadnock, Colton (Hinkley), Adams (Windsor, Merrimack), Masardis, Stetson, Allagash (Agawam), Sunday.

Good (have a hardpan making hand dug pits difficult and may trap water in excavations that extend below the surface of the hardpan): Plaisted, Marlow (Paxton), Becket.

Fair (depending on depth to and persistence of groundwater table and may need topsoil placed on bottom of excavation*. Some have a perched groundwater table resting on a hardpan and may be improved by installing an upslope drainage ditch or curtain drain ^): Dixmont ^, Shirley*Chesuncook^, Howland^, Perham^, Conant, Sunapee, Dixfield^, Peru^, Waumbek, Skerry^, Duane*, Croghan* (Deerfield), Sheepscot*, Madawaska*(Ninigret), Machias*,Skowhegan*, Buxton^ (Suffield), Boothbay^, Nicholville^ (Belgrade, Scio), Elmwood^ (Eldridge), Lovewell (Winooski), Podunk.

All other soils- have low to very low potential for deep burials but some may be suitable for shallow burials. Those most suitable for shallow burials are the soils that are moderately deep# (20" – 40") and deep@ (40" – 60") to bedrock, without any perched groundwater table. It should be noted however, that some of these soil series may have a groundwater table perched above the bedrock but were considered to be inclusions within the broader soil map unit of the named soil series: Penquis #, Winnecook #, Elliotsville #, Mapleton #, Sebasticook @, Penobscot #, Linneus #, Tunbridge #, Rawsonville #. Ragmuff has both a groundwater table and bedrock between 20" and 40" and Wassookeag has a water table between 16" and 40" and bedrock between 40" and 60". These two soil series may be improved by an upslope drainage ditch or curtain drain provided that they occur on sloping sites.

If a soil series is not listed above, it will generally not be suitable for shallow or deep burials but may have inclusions of more suitable soils.

2. **Groundwater Table Type** – There are two general categories of groundwater table types found in Maine. One is the apparent groundwater table and the second is called a perched groundwater table.

    a. **Apparent Groundwater Table** – The apparent groundwater table is present for the entire year though the elevation of the water table usually fluctuates throughout the year. An apparent groundwater table is commonly an aquifer. Aquifers are often sources of drinking water and are frequently used for irrigation purposes. They are found most often in sand and gravel outwash soils and ablation till soils but are also found in bedrock deposits that are highly fractured (provided the fractures are numerous enough and continuous enough to hold sufficient water). Of the two types of groundwater tables, this in the most important one to protect from sources of contamination. Once a contaminant reaches an aquifer, the only treatment available is dilution.

b. **Perched Groundwater Table** – A perched groundwater table is our most common type of groundwater table and is often referred to as the seasonal groundwater table. It typically is present in the spring and/or fall, when evapotranspiration is less than precipitation, on soils with a hardpan and/or bedrock (causing the water to perch). The most common positions on the landscape for the development of a perched groundwater table is on side slopes, flat areas or low lying areas. When rainfall and/or snow melt infiltrate into the ground on these sites, it can't penetrate the hardpan or bedrock (or can't penetrate fast enough) so it accumulates on top of the restrictive layer. These groundwater tables typically disappear (or are significantly reduced for low lying areas) during the driest part of the summer. Since this type of groundwater table is usually shallow and/or on a slide slope, contaminants that may reach it receive treatment by soil microbes, plant roots and by soil contact as the water moves through the soil. Contamination of a perched groundwater table is not usually as significant a concern as contamination of an apparent groundwater table because of this renovation process. Depending on the type and strength of contamination, setbacks from the source of contamination of a perched groundwater table are usually enough to protect such things as dug wells and gardens.

In order to protect the groundwater table, particularly an apparent groundwater table, from possible leachate (nutrients and pathogens) generated by a burial, and to speed up decomposition, the bottom of a burial pit should be at least 12" above the seasonal groundwater table. Not just the height of the groundwater table on the day of a burial, but the highest it is expected to be, on based on soil morphology. The coarser the soil texture, the more important it is to protect the groundwater table. As added protection, it is a good idea to put a layer (6" – 12" thick) of topsoil on the bottom of a burial pit in sandy or gravelly soils to absorb any possible leachate and provide some degree of renovation. If a burial does take place below the seasonal groundwater table when it is present, it may be upsetting to the loved ones of the deceased to see the body placed in a water filled pit or to see someone bailing water out of the pit as a body is about to be placed in the pit.

Depth – Depth of soil generally refers to the depth of soil to bedrock. In Maine, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Maine Soil Scientists map soils with several depth classes; 0" -10" very shallow, 10" – 20" shallow, 20" – 40" moderately deep, 40" – 60" deep and over 60" very deep.

Shallow to bedrock soils are not generally suitable for green or standard cemeteries for a couple of reasons. The first reason is that shallow soils will obviously limit the depth you can bury a body. A second reason is the potential for groundwater contamination, particularly if the bedrock is highly fractured. If a burial takes place on top of fractured bedrock and leachate enters a fracture, it will not receive any renovation as it travels to the groundwater table. Maine has many bedrock wells and it is possible to impact one from quite a distance away. In order to protect the groundwater table, any burial pit bottom should be at least 12" above the top of fractured bedrock.

3. **Slope** – The Natural Resources Conservation Service and most Maine Soil Scientists map soils in Maine with several slope classes designated by a capitol letter; 0% - 3% " A" slope, 3% - 8% "B" slope, 8% - 15% "C" slope, 15% - 25 "D" slope, 25% - 60% "E" slope and over 60 "F" slope. These symbols are the 3rd letter in a soil map unit shown on the typical soil map.

Burials on steeper slopes can cause difficulty for machinery, both with transportation and excavating the burial pit. Steep slopes are also subject to erosion of the disturbed soil and the eroded sediment may impact downslope protected natural resources.

4. **Surface Stoniness** – Soils mapped in Maine include an indication of the relative density and size of stones on the soil surface (you have to read the soil map unit description). Stones are 10" – 25" in diameter. Anything over 25" in diameter is called a boulder. The spacing between stones or boulders varies by whether they are stones or boulders and the size of boulders (the spacing between boulders is greater due to the difficulty removing them). Here are some averages: Non-stony - 25 meters or more between stones or boulders; stony or bouldery - 8 to 25 meters between stones or boulders; very stony or very bouldery – 1 to 8 meters between stones or boulders; extremely stony or extremely bouldery – 0.5 to 1 meters between stones or boulders; rubbly – 0.01 – 0.5 meters between stones or boulders and rubble land – more than 50% of the surface is covered by stones or boulders.

Surface stones or boulders present an obvious problem for preparing burial plots or even getting to them by means of vehicles. If the stones are not large, they will pose fewer problems than if boulders are present. For plots to be dug by hand, stones or boulders can pose a significant obstacle to overcome. A few boulders however, particularly glacial erratics, can add to the aesthetics of the site.

5. **Vegetation Type and Size** – Vegetation type and size is an important factor to consider when looking for a good site to locate a green cemetery, particularly if the cemetery will be located in a forested setting. Generally, forests comprised of large trees have greater spacing between trees than for forests comprised of small trees. This wider spacing provides good access to burial sites that do not require the disturbance of trees in order to accommodate the burial. Smaller trees generally grow closer together and may need to be cut down and have their roots removed to accommodate a burial. Large trees with large canopies block sunlight from reaching the forest floor, keeping them open and aesthetically

pleasing. Small trees, particularly small hardwood trees, let in a lot of sunlight and therefore typically have dense undergrowth. Large white pine stands make ideal forested settings for forested green cemeteries. Large trees however, require deep and reasonably well drained soils to avoid shallow rooting. If trees get too large in wetter or shallow soils, they can blow down easily, causing a significant maintenance issue as well as negatively affecting the aesthetics of the site. If a green cemetery is to be located on shallow or wet soils and is to be forested, it would be best to harvest trees before they get too large (particularly if the forest is not protected from strong winds). If a green cemetery is proposed for an area with a young forest, it may require the cutting of brush and small trees to create a desirable spacing and maintaining that spacing until the trees grow large enough to shade out ground cover. Green cemeteries can also be located in fields or both fields and forest. Either type will require some maintenance to keep the cover type and quality desired. Fields do not stay fields in Maine (they eventually become wooded), unless they are maintained as such. It is also possible to create sufficient spacing in a forest so that grasses can be grown between trees or to plant trees widely spaced in a field to develop a pleasing pastoral setting. In a forested site with large trees suitably spaced, the trees will weaken with age resulting in tops snapping off in strong winds and eventually die. That will require the planting of a new tree and efforts to prevent lots of sprouting of shrubs and brush/seedlings in the large opening. In a meadow with widely spaced trees and grass in between, mowing will be necessary to maintain the grassed portion or it will soon grow seedlings and brush.

6. **Protected Natural Resources** – When selecting a site for a green cemetery, it is important to consider the presence and location of protected natural resources on and adjacent to the property. These include streams, lakes, ponds, rivers, wetlands and rare plant communities or important animal habitat (deer wintering areas for example). Protected natural resources can add to the aesthetics of a green cemetery but can be impacted by it if not taken into consideration. Issues to be considered with protected natural resources include accessing the better soils for burials (do you need to cross streams or wetlands to get at the desirable sites), impact on protected natural resources located near burial plots such as erosion and sedimentation or alteration of important habitat for plants and animals and hydrologic modifications that may result from the construction of access roads.

7. **Accessibility** – It is important to consider access to a potential burial site as well as accessing burial plots within the cemetery. Not only does this include right-of-way issues but technical issues. The type of soil on which access roads may need to be constructed as well as slope of the land, surface stoniness, depth to groundwater table and vegetation type and size all will influence how difficult (and expensive) it will be to provide suitable access to the cemetery. Sites with significant limitations for road building will likely require significant alterations of the site and hydrology to construct access roads unless low impact techniques can and will be used.

8. **Adjacent Developments** – The only setback regulations for siting a cemetery (see statutes for Cemetery Corporations) are a minimum of 100 feet from "any improved land used for recreational purposes or dwelling house" and 200 feet from a well that is used for "domestic purposes". Planners looking for possible green cemetery sites should also consider compatibility issues with abutters.

9. **Burial Objectives** – From the discussions I have had with green cemetery operators in Maine, it appears that there are differing perspectives on exactly what constitutes a green burial. For some, it is primarily not being embalmed and not using a standard coffin and vault. They like the peaceful and natural (pastoral) setting of a green cemetery but do not care how deeply they are buried, how long it will take for their body to decompose, whether or not nutrients from their decomposition will be utilizable by plants growing nearby or leach into the groundwater table. For others, a green burial means being decomposed quickly with nutrients released from their decomposing bodies providing nourishment for soil microbes and nearby plants, particularly a specific tree.

   For those interested in how rapid their or a loved ones decomposition is, burial depth is an important consideration. That is because the majority of the microbial activity in soils takes place within the upper soil horizons and in the organic duff layer. As you go deeper in the soil, microbial activity decreases significantly and plant roots become fewer and fewer. This is because there is less food (organic matter/carbon) and the soil temperatures are cooler in

the summer growing season. It can also be because of the presence of a groundwater table causing saturation and a decrease in or lack of oxygen or very coarse soil textures which do not retain soil moisture or nutrients (low cation exchange capacity). For standard burials that are 5' or 6' deep, decomposition is very slow and there likely are no plant roots (including most trees) to take up nutrients generated from the decomposing body. For those interested in rapid decomposition and having the resulting nutrients taken up by surrounding plants, a shallow burial is recommended. A shallow burial is a burial with the bottom of a burial pit being 3 feet deep or less. Some people have expressed being concerned with wild animals and/or dogs digging up the remains of shallow burials. I have over 25 years worth of experience with designing domestic animal burial sites that require shallow burials and am not aware of a single incident where wild animals or dogs have dug up the carcass remains. One of the owners/operators of a green cemetery in Maine uses shallow burial in hand dug pits and has had no incidents where anything dug into the burial pit. If the decomposition is aerobic and does not experience extremely hot temperatures, it will not generate sulfidic odors associated with rotting flesh. With shallow burials, mounding up the excavated soil over the burial pit is recommended to accommodate settling as the body decomposes. The mounded soil also serves to increase the depth of soil over the buried body, further protecting it from being dug up by wild animals or dogs.

If a person is interested in very rapid decomposition with almost no disturbance of the burial lands, a body could be placed inside a pile or wind row of hot and active compost resting on the ground surface. Active compost can reach a temperature of 160 degrees F which greatly speeds up decomposition and repels animals from digging up the body. Once decomposition is complete, about two months, the compost can be spread on the land to improve soil health (kind of like scattering ashes after a cremation).

For those interested in locating a suitable piece of land for a green cemetery, if shallow and deep burials are to be included in the design plan, understanding the soil potentials on the property is an important consideration. The interested party should identify the better soils for deep burials and reserve those areas for deep burials. Soils with limitations for deep burials such as a shallow groundwater table, hardpan or bedrock can be reserved for shallower burials or compost decomposition burials.

10. **Aesthetics** – Aesthetic are a very important consideration when choosing a green cemetery site. Neat and clean sites that look natural and peaceful with desirable view scapes seem to be preferred by most green cemetery consumers. In reality though, most truly “natural” sites often look a bit ragged and need some degree of modification to achieve the desired appearance (unless it is an old growth forest). The number one consideration however should be soil suitability for the type or depth of burial with aesthetics being secondary. You can manipulate the vegetation on a site but you can’t change the soils. They also will need regular maintenance to keep their appearance and to accommodate burials.

11. **Maintenance** – In most cases, sites chosen for green cemeteries will need some degree of modification to achieve the desired appearance. If you are very fortunate, you may find a site with the desired appearance and suitable soils and other site conditions but that is highly unlikely. Chosen sites will also require some degree of maintenance to keep the desired appearance including mowing grasses, cleaning up downed tree limbs and tree tops, removing brush and seedlings (including invasive species) growing where future burials are to take place and the planting of replacement trees for large trees that become weakened by disease, insects or old age.

In summary, there are a number of factors you should consider when looking for a suitable site to locate a green cemetery. They all should be taken into consideration but the most important determining factor should be the soils. You can manipulate the vegetation to be what you want but you can’t change the soils. If the soils are unsuitable, in most cases, it will make for a very poor green cemetery unless modified which could be very costly and may involve regulatory issues.