

## WHO IS THE GREEN BURIAL COUNCIL?

The **Green Burial Council** (GBC) is an independent, nonprofit organization working to encourage environmentally sustainable death care and the use of burial as a new means of protecting natural areas.

The GBC has been stewarded by individuals representing the environmental/conservation community, consumer organizations, academia, the death care industry, and such organizations and institutions as The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, AARP, and the University of Colorado.

Requirements for a *Three-Leaf* rating (the highest available):

- Provider accommodates home vigils
- Provider allows for the families of decedents to have the option of a public viewing (requires embalming)
- Provider carries at least three GBC approved/rated burial containers
- Provider has at least one staff member who has participated in educational training (minimum six hours) approved by the GBC, which covers technical, practical, and ethical issues of eco-friendly funeral service
- Provider makes available the sanitation, preservation, and restoration of a decedent with the use of noninvasive techniques/materials

*Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service & Crematory is the only  
Three-Leaf provider in Montana.*

*Please address any questions you may have regarding green burial  
to one of our licensed funeral directors.*

*We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist you.*



*"There is a difference."*

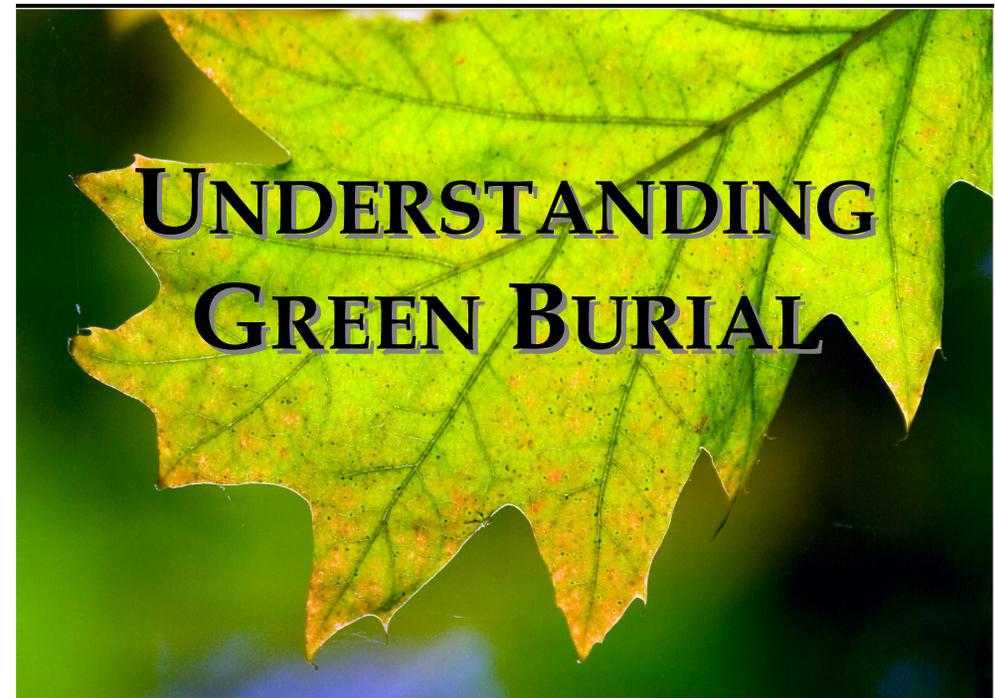
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Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service & Crematory  
is a certified Green Burial Council  
service provider.

*The information provided in this brochure will assist consumers  
in understanding some of the procedures and terminology  
associated with green burial.*

*Prepared as a Public Service by:*



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# UNDERSTANDING GREEN BURIAL★

## **What is green burial?**

Green burial is a burial option where all aspects of burial remain as “natural” as possible including non-formaldehyde-based care and cleansing products, natural fiber caskets, and no vault to facilitate a quicker return to the elements with minimal impact to the environment.

## **How can a burial be considered “green?”**

Green burial is any burial that limits the environmental impact of disposition by using products made of renewable resources.

## **What options are available for green burial services?**

Green burial funeral service options are similar to a traditional funeral service. The primary difference is the fluids used for sanitation and preservation are different. Options for a green burial service include:

- No visitation, no services (direct burial)
- Private family visitation, usually no embalming required
- Public visitation, utilizing embalming with formaldehyde-free fluids
- Home vigil

## **Is embalming required for green burial?**

Embalming is not required for green burial, unless a visitation that is open to the public is requested. In this situation, environmentally safe embalming fluids are used in the embalming process.

## **What kind of casket is used for green burial?**

Green burial caskets are made of natural, renewable resources that grow at an accelerated rate. These materials include willow, bamboo, and sea grass. A shroud, a burial cloth that is wrapped around the body, is also available for burial and is specially designed for lowering purposes at the grave.

## **How do I know that a particular product is suitable for a green burial?**

The GBC believes a casket, urn, or shroud is suitable for a green burial if it's made from materials/substances that are nontoxic and readily biodegradable. The GBC also requires that these products not be made from materials that are harvested in a manner that unnecessarily destroys habitat.

## **Does the Gallatin Valley have a “green” cemetery?**

While there are no official “green” cemeteries in the state of Montana, the Gallatin Valley has several cemeteries that do not require the use of a vault: Sunset Hills Cemetery; Reese Creek Cemetery; Fir Ridge Cemetery (West Yellowstone); and Dry Creek Cemetery.

## **What is a green cemetery?**

A green cemetery interments strictly green burials only with no mausoleums, headstones, sculpted markers, or permanent vases.

## **Is a vault required for green burial?**

No. A green burial should be designed to allow the body to naturally return to the earth at the fastest rate possible. By not using a vault, this allows the process to happen much more quickly.

## **Can I have a headstone and still have a green burial?**

Yes. A natural burial ground often uses grave markers that don't intrude on the landscape—such as shrubs and trees, or an engraved flat stone native to the area. The available marker options vary by cemetery.

## **Are home-based ceremonies available?**

Yes. Our staff will assist you in making arrangements to accommodate your desires for a home-based farewell.

## **Isn't cremation the most “green” option available?**

Cremation uses far fewer resources than almost any other disposition option but it certainly has an environmental impact. Fossil fuels are used for the cremation process, and the process produces emissions that are regulated by the FDA.

## **Is green burial more costly than regular burial?**

Green burial is comparable in cost to a traditional burial. In some cases, it may even be less expensive.

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*\*Some of the information provided in this brochure can be found on the Green Burial Council website.  
For more information about the Green Burial Council please turn the page or visit [www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org).*

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