



Received by _____

Rules and Regulations for a Natural Burial

The Natural Path Sanctuary is pleased that you are joining us in creating a legacy of care and respect for the earth through choosing a natural burial. We recognize that death is not always easy to accept, whether anticipated or unanticipated, and all involved with the Natural Path Sanctuary hope that you will find healing in the practice of a natural-life sustaining burial.

The Natural Path Sanctuary is committed to family and community friendly burials with as minimal of an impact on the environment as possible. It is our desire to preserve the natural beauty of the land in life and in death.

Embalming:

Given the toxic nature of traditional embalming fluid, and methods of disposing of bodily fluids, no embalming of **any kind** is allowed. This includes "green" embalming fluid. Funeral directors and morticians need to be instructed not to use embalming fluids, but rather to use alternatives such as refrigeration or dry ice.

Outer Burial containers and liners:

Vaults and similar outer containers are inconsistent with green burial and are not permitted at the Natural Path Sanctuary.

Biodegradable containers and coverings:

All burials shall be made in **biodegradable** containers such as shrouds, blankets, bare wood caskets, urns, and approved cremation grade cardboard boxes. Shrouds, blankets or drapes are preferred because they require less disruption of the root systems where the burial takes place. Shrouds or other cloth containers may be of any natural, biodegradable fiber.

Caskets can be made only with wood that is **not naturally decay resistant** (i.e. cedar, black locust, redwood, etc.). No finishes (oil, lacquers, polyurethane, etc.) of **any kind** will be allowed. All casket liners, if applicable, must be of **ONLY** natural fiber, biodegradable material. No metal of any kind may be used to decorate the casket. Screws, nails or other fasteners must be plain steel (stainless and galvanized are not allowed). Containers shall be constructed of sufficient strength to support the weight of an adult body. A list of possible sources for purchasing biodegradable containers and coverings is available upon request. **All containers must be pre-approved. Clothing and other items to be buried must also comply with these specifications.**

Cremated Remains:

We do accept cremated remains (cremains); however, we ask that the energy demand of cremation be considered in your decision making when comparing burial vs. cremation. All urns or other containers must be biodegradable, with no finishes. Urns must be approved by NPS staff. Cremains will be documented and recorded in the same manner as any burial.

Grave Markers:

In keeping with the understanding that the grave sites will return to their natural state, many families will choose not to have a grave marker. Some families may choose a simple log or flat field stone as a marker. An engraved permanent wood or stone marker is also allowable. All stones must be **“shaped by nature”** (no cutting, grinding, shaping, polishing, etc.), and must be installed flush to the ground so that only the top surface is exposed. Markers must meet the established size limitation of a maximum of 216 sq. inches and be no more than 24 inches in any dimension. No paints, stains or other highlights can be used on markers. All marker costs are the family’s responsibility, and may be purchased from the Farley Center. **All markers must receive prior approval of the Natural Path Sanctuary staff. Contact NPS staff before creating or purchasing a marker to make sure that it complies with the cemetery’s regulations.** An electronic record and map of the exact burial site is maintained at the Natural Path Sanctuary office. Families can access the computerized map and records kept at the Natural Path Sanctuary office.

Planting of Flowers, plants, shrubs and trees:

Flowers, decorative plants, shrubs and trees may not be planted at the cemetery without first securing the cemetery’s permission. Permission will only be granted for **species native to this part of Wisconsin from a list provided by the Natural Path Sanctuary**, within the limits of the existing flora. Because invasive organisms (i.e. seeds and **jumping worm**) may be present in the soil of the root ball, **only plants purchased from an NPS approved nursery or bare root planting will be allowed. Trees and shrubs that are planted at the family’s request require a \$750 maintenance fee.** Generally, the plant growth on the grave site will return to its natural state.

Floral Tributes and Decorations:

In keeping with preserving the natural environment, floral tributes and other objects must be removed after the completion of burial services. Biodegradable religious identifiers may be buried with the individual’s body. Religious and other information may be kept in the Center’s computer system that keeps a record of the individuals buried here.

Benches:

Benches may not be placed in the cemetery without first securing the cemetery’s permission. Permission will only be granted for benches that meet our requirements. A placement fee of \$500 is required. Please call or email for details.

Size of Memorial gathering:

Due to conditions established by the Town of Springdale, attendance is limited to a 20 vehicle parking limit. No parking is allowed along Spring Rose Road or the entrance right of way.

We hope that these regulations are seen as reasonable. They are based on our mutual desire that people buried here will be a part of the natural path of life and death buried amongst the trees and the plants, contributing to the sustainability of the nature preserve.