



## Membership Packet

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Red Hills Community Cemetery (RHCC). This document intends to serve as a “how-to” guide, addressing the steps for membership as well as most of the basic decisions surrounding the death of a loved one if you are planning a natural burial at RHCC.

*The RHCC Membership Packet is intended to be a guide, and will continue to be developed in concert with RHCC volunteers, Members, and the Board of Directors until the property of the RHCC is secured, and will continue to act as a dynamic tool for navigating natural burial at RHCC.*

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## About

The mission of the Red Hills Community Cemetery (RHCC) is to preserve and protect the land using natural burial methods. The RHCC aspires to create an expansive, affordable, protected, and natural cemetery in the Red Hills region which supports environmental conservation and biodiversity, developing meaningful relationships between people, life, death, and ecosystems.

By creating a death process reflective of humanity's relationship with the land, the RHCC Membership community will foster the shared understanding of how human connection with one another and the local landscape can inspire greater ecological balance and conservation of our natural environment.

## Steps to Becoming a Member of the RHCC:

1. Interested parties should fully review this Membership Packet and ensure they understand the benefits and requirements involved in natural burial with RHCC.\*
2. The Red Hills Community Cemetery, Inc. Membership Agreement must be completed and signed.
3. Members must make payment in full to the RHCC.

*\* Please note that more comprehensive RHCC Rules & Regulations will be incorporated into this document once developed and finalized by committee. The RHCC will abide by all state and federal laws regarding natural burial as well as the standards established by the national Green Burial Council.*

## Membership

### Member Definition

Community cemeteries connect people with shared interests and are established by selling “memberships” in the cemetery. The Members of the RHCC share the common interests of natural burial and environmental stewardship.

While Membership can include participation in the RHCC via volunteer participation, Membership does not require participation in any RHCC activities; instead it provides individuals with specific rights and benefits to the Cemetery.

Membership includes:

1. the interment right, which provides the right to the burial plot;
2. a certificate identifying the GPS coordinates of the interment;
3. the opening and closing of the interment;
4. the burial of the body or cremains;
5. marker with legal name of decedent for GPS location;
6. one vote per member at the annual meeting of RHCC (votes are non-transferable); and
7. an electronic copy of the annual report of the RHCC to include financial and other information.

## Membership Fees

The full membership fee for either whole body or cremated remains at RHCC is a one-time payment of \$4,000.00. This fee is a flat rate for both types of burials because the costs associated with both whole body and cremated remains are very similar.

Checks can be made payable to: *Red Hills Community Cemetery, Inc.*, and mailed, along with your Membership Agreement to:

Red Hills Community Cemetery  
2335 Grass Roots Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32311

## Associate Memberships

RHCC is a not-for-profit community cemetery, and a part of its mission to make the choice of natural burial available to as many as individuals and families as possible. Because of this, RHCC offers an "Associate Memberships" to those who are interested in becoming members but need to provide their membership fees over a period of time instead of as a one-time payment. Associate Members become full

Members when RHCC receives full Payment. It is our intention to have Associate Memberships become available , to those of limited means, only upon the determination by the Board of Directors that the RHCC has reached financial solvency.

## **Patrons**

The RHCC welcomes support from individuals or organizations interested in contributing to the mission of RHCC without obtaining Membership. Patrons may contribute through direct financial donations or via in-kind donations of goods or services identified as of-need by the RHCC Board of Directors. Recognition of contributions may occur via communications to the RHCC community, or other means.

## **Participation**

As the RHCC builds its community, we welcome organizational participation at many levels. As this is a Community Cemetery, it is key to have a robust network of volunteer community members to help support operations and development. As a Member, you should anticipate that some of the operations of the cemetery will be provided by volunteers, and you are offered the option to become a volunteer as well, though this is not a requirement or expectation of Membership.

The RHCC will also welcome specific and hands-on participation by Member family and friends in the burial process.

## **Burial Sites**

The RHCC will provide the GPS coordinates for burial upon notice of a member's death. RHCC reserves the right to select site placement for all burials. Members may elect to be co-located with other members through the Membership Agreement or Addendum and co-location will be honored, if possible. While the RHCC will make an effort to fulfill these site requests, the process for gravesite

determinations will be made in an effort to minimize disturbance to the land, as well as the requirements of Cemetery operations and maintenance.

## **Burial Containers**

Burial containers must be biodegradable, but can be constructed by you, family members, or another source. Funeral homes and online providers are convenient sources for biodegradable containers. Some examples of containers appropriate for burial at RHCC are:

- Shrouds made of cotton, linen, wool, or another natural fiber (i.e. bed sheets, blankets, quilts, etc.)
- Wicker or woven casket
- Natural wood casket (unfinished) with wood pegs, not nails
- Cardboard casket – (which can be decorated and memorialized with biodegradable materials.)

## **Gravesite Markers**

For each burial, RHCC provides a customizable, hand-stamped 2" brass disk to mark and memorialize the gravesite. To have the marker ready for the burial, RHCC requires required information prior to the scheduled burial date. Otherwise, the marker will be placed on the gravesite after burial. Designing the marker will be completed as part of RHCC's paperwork for burial, which will be provided upon need.

No other permanent markers of any kind are permitted at Cemetery or gravesite. This is to help preserve the environmental conservation mission of the RHCC, and must comply with the RHCC Burial Guidelines (*to be developed by RHCC Committee*).

## Decisions About Funeral Types

### Funeral Homes

Funeral homes can provide assistance with the fundamental logistics associated with a death. Funeral homes will complete all the state mandated paperwork, provide any needed refrigeration, and transport the remains. RHCC does not endorse any particular funeral home.

The service fees funeral homes charge can vary significantly, so it is important to call several to compare quotes. Any funeral home can provide the services necessary for a natural burial. Most funeral homes have a territory they service, but are willing to travel outside of that area for an additional fee. You can use a funeral home in our area, or choose one local to you. We will work with any funeral home who agrees to follow RHCC natural burial policies.

### Home Funerals

Some families find it meaningful to retain the possession of and care of their loved one's body after death and carry out all of the steps of the funeral process themselves, rather than it being done by a funeral home.

A Home Funeral is when family or friends care for their deceased loved one, usually at home. Instead of hiring a funeral home, family and friends do everything including keeping the body cool, transporting the body to the cemetery, and completing the state mandated paperwork. They are also sometimes referred to as "family-directed funerals". If there are specific tasks family and friends would rather not complete themselves, a funeral home may be willing to contract for those services.

We recommend a careful review of all State and Federal law related to Home Funerals, and making specific arrangements prior to need. While RHCC aims to participate as a community resource to facilitate the sharing of information, RHCC cannot provide legal guidance or consultation.

*Statutory requirements/items to consider:*

- A body must be buried within 24 hours of death unless embalmed or held in refrigeration at 40 degrees F (s. 497.386(2), Florida Statutes);
- Transportation of a dead body must be done in a container that does not allow seepage of fluids or offensive odors (s. 497.386(3), Florida Statutes);
- Cremation cannot take place until 48 hours after death (s. 872.03, F. S.);
- The physician verifying the death must be willing to work with the family rather than a licensed funeral director;
- Obtaining paperwork and getting the registration process started requires careful timing. It is important that the Member and family make a plan for contacting all required parties should the death occur outside of regular business hours.

Additional Resources

National Home Funeral Alliance ➤

*The National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA) is a nonprofit 501c3 organization committed to supporting home funeral education.*

Funeral Consumers Alliance ➤

*Funeral Consumers Alliance is the only national consumer organization that monitors the funeral industry, keeping a close eye on industry trends and advocating for fair practices on the behalf of consumers.*

It is best to communicate ahead of time with any facilities (hospitals, nursing homes, medical examiner, Vital Statistics Office etc.) about your plans in order to ensure their cooperation. Some funeral homes may be willing to assist with a home funeral and provide services you would prefer they handle. If you will require the use of a funeral home at some point in your process, you should determine in advance which ones are willing to work with you.

## **Disinterment**

Because the RHCC has the mission of maintaining a minimally disturbed woodland environment, Disinterment of remains may only occur under requirement by law.