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Updates & News from the Red Hills Community Cemetery

Congratulations for reaching 100(+) Members!

We crossed a major milestone on Halloween when our 100th member joined the RHCC! What started out as a mere idea, has taken a huge leap forward and the RHCC now has the funds to purchase land! This amazing milestone is thanks to YOU for supporting this project and spreading the word to your networks. This project began with a vision of developing meaningful relationships between people, life, death, and ecosystems, and through our founding members we are on track to achieve this goal. To all those who have become members: thank you. **The RHCC current membership is now 102 members and growing!**



What's Going on with the Hickory Preserve?

The Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) has made an offer of \$1.091 million to the Hickory Preserve (HP) for a conservation easement on the full 96 acres of the HP site. This offer, which will cover the majority of HP's debt, specifically excludes the presence of a natural cemetery on the land. We collaborated with HP throughout this process, including regular attendance of HP representatives

at RHCC Board meetings, and vice versa. Every effort was made by the RHCC to assist HP in securing a conservation easement that would include the cemetery's presence on the HP site, as planned. Though the RHCC reached 100 members by the promised date in October and was in a position to exercise the option in our agreement with HP to purchase 20 acres within the preserve, the deal from NFWFMD was determined by the HP Board to be the best means to retiring their debt, though it excludes the cemetery.

We deeply appreciate all of the RHCC members who stepped up when the RHCC Board made calls to action to donate to HP, as well as those who donated to HP after RHCC communicated their need during presentations to community groups; these donations resulted in thousands of dollars to support the HP effort. In spite of all of HP and RHCC efforts, the HP Board understandably determined that they needed this state funding from the NFWFMD to retire their debt. The RHCC Board has, therefore, formally released HP from our option to purchase agreement. HP has, in turn, refunded the \$100,000 that RHCC paid into escrow to secure the purchase option agreement.

The HP Board notified the RHCC Board of its decision on 12/10/25, and the RHCC board immediately began efforts to locate an alternate site for the cemetery. Right away, the RHCC Board established criteria and a methodology to review land, including: price, location, distance from downtown Tallahassee, soil, water table, open and wooded land mix, permit ability, among others. We are happy to report that our investigations thus far have led to over a dozen possible sites for consideration. The unencumbered funds raised through membership fees, along with some donations and the interest acquired due to thoughtful financial stewardship, are immediately available to purchase an alternative site. The board has assembled a site acquisition team with keen skillsets to spearhead this effort, including board members, builder/developer members, a former county land use planner, and a county administrator, among others.

Though circumstances outside of our control have led to significant changes in our plans, the RHCC Board is excited by the opportunities ahead. We will have a community natural cemetery here in our region, and we thank you for your part in this effort. We have the necessary funding to proceed, and combined with the continued

widespread interest and support for natural burial in our community, the timeline for achieving our goals is closer than ever. We are humbled by the prevalence of beautiful and meaningful land in this region. The RHCC Board does not anticipate the process of new land identification and acquisition to require any significant extension in timeframe for RHCC opening operations, but **we need your help!**

[Complete this short survey to volunteer your services to help us with this effort.](#)

While we are confident in the excellent abilities of the site acquisition team thus far, **additional volunteers are needed to assist with the site acquisition process.** We also need **additional members for our Board of Directors** as well as **volunteers to assist with other RHCC functions** including communications, volunteer coordination, and cemetery administration and policy. [Please get involved!](#)

Thank you again for your engagement, flexibility, and involvement. Important projects like this one inevitably require the vision and commitment from dedicated people seeking to update the status quo. It's clear that there is a growing number of people who want a natural burial option in our region, and we look forward to finding the right land for our community cemetery.

[Sign Up to Volunteer](#)

We are so excited for our new board members to join the team! Welcome to **Bob Deyle** and **Nancy Muller!** We thank them for their service to this important project, and are so grateful that they are willing to offer their unique and valuable skillsets to this important project. [Learn more about their backgrounds and why they are excellent additions to the RHCC team.](#)

[Learn about New Board Members](#)

NEW BLOG ARTICLE:

TECHNOLOGY

Rose Kelley, Conservation Cemetery Committee Chair, shares information about green burial and federal, state, and county legal systems from her most recent module of the Green Burial Masterclass.



The third module of the Green Burial Masterclass for natural burial cemetery operators focuses on the technology. An essential part of planning for the opening and operation of the Red Hills Community Cemetery (RHCC) will be matching the technology tools to our needs. Lee Webster lists three perspectives that apply to building an appropriate technological infrastructure for a burial site—on the ground, in the office, and from the sky.

“On the Ground” technologies focus on site plan creation to grids out specific gravesite and reduces disruption to soil and plant life and manages vehicular and foot traffic for burials while maintaining safe walking trails for visitors.

“In the Office” technologies focus on document control for maintenance of accurate records of burials with tools like QuickBooks and Google Drive or more sophisticated tools such as QGIS. This also includes development of document maintenance standards, along with mapping and accountability.

“From the Sky” technologies includes aerial photography of the site, GPS-to-GIS mapping, and partnering boots-on-the-ground with drone technology.

Throughout this module it was noted that digital recording is the most critical of all the advances in cemetery practice. While cemetery software packages are an emerging product line for document control, mapping and accountability, digital recording is a way to respect and honor those individuals beyond living memory.

The RHCC Team is excited about our next steps in this journey and welcome your questions and communications. Please engage with us!

Email the RHCC

Building a community cemetery takes a COMMUNITY, thank you for your support and involvement. Contact@RedHillsCommunityCemetery.com if you have any questions.

The Mission of the RHCC is to preserve and protect land using natural burial methods. Further, it is the Vision of the RHCC to further develop meaningful relationships between people, life, death, and ecosystems.

By subscribing to this newsletter, opting to become a paid member, or helping to volunteer *you* are part of the RHCC community.

*With Appreciation,
Red Hills Community Cemetery, Inc.
Board of Directors*



contact@RedHillsCommunityCemetery.com

More information and FAQs: www.RedHillsCommunityCemetery.com

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