



NEWSLETTER

January 2009

It's been quite a while since we put out a newsletter; we've been busy doing other things instead. The process of starting up a conservation burial ground is a lot of work, and it will take a long time it seems. But now, so much is happening, I feel I need to get something out quickly to everyone on our email list. I hope you're all doing well and are still interested in green burial. Please feel free to email me with your questions and comments at mcquillin@greenburialpittsburgh.org.

-Pete McQuillin, executive director

The *vision* of Green Burial Pittsburgh is to provide individuals, foundations and charitable organizations with a way to conserve land through the option of ecologically responsible burial.

The *mission* of Green Burial Pittsburgh is 1) to promote natural burial as an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional burial practices or to cremation, 2) to establish woodland 'green' cemeteries in or near Pittsburgh that offer natural burial exclusively, and 3) to locate those 'green' cemeteries in designated conservation burial grounds using a portion of cemetery income to conserve land and restore it to its natural condition.

GBP *values*:

- Protecting and restoring our natural environment
- Providing a natural and beautiful burial ground for all to visit
- Respect for families' funeral and other end-of-life choices
- Providing closure for family members after the death of a loved-one
- Land stewardship
- Honoring our need for "place"

Watch for articles in the Post-Gazette and Tribune Review this week on Green Burial Pittsburgh. Also, Jo Paul of Monroeville Public Television will interview me on January 27th. That program will be broadcast on Tuesday nights at 8 pm throughout February to anyone who has the Monroeville Channel 4 public access on Comcast (Monroeville, Plum, Turtle Creek, Forest Hills, and others). Maybe someone could tape it for us?



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We are now in discussions with two different landowners about possible sites for conservation burial grounds. Both sites are in Allegheny County. One is a fourteen-acre tract of former pasture land on an active farm northeast of Pittsburgh and the other is a twenty-six acre former farm also to the northeast but closer in. Discussions are still in preliminary stages, but both look promising.

Our advisory board has been growing and now consists of the following dedicated members:

- Dan D'Alessandro, CEO of D'Alessandro Funeral Homes
- Thomas Bellucci, Health Hope Network and Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania ([FCAWP](#)) board member
- Nancy Chubb, PhD., MBA, psychologist, current president of the Pennsylvania Psychologist Association, principal of Fourth River Associates, LLC, and my wife
- Paul Cox, PhD., retired English professor and our writing expert
- Susan Cox, retired nurse, our treasurer, development person, and Paul's wife
- Stephen Hirtle, PhD., Professor of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh
- Jeff Hodes, owner of Cemetery Management Solutions of Herndon, VA, a cemetery management consultant
- Alan McPherron, PhD., retired archaeologist and Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania ([FCAWP](#)) board member
- Tris Ozark, administrator of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania ([FCAWP](#))
- Edward Rockman, retired, business advisor
- Brenda Smith, Executive Director of the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association ([Nine Mile Run](#))
- Mark Tomlinson, independent computer consultant and previous executive director of the Rachel Carson Homestead ([Rachel Carson](#))

The next meeting of the board will be February 5th. Let me know if you'd like to attend.

We have filed for incorporation as a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation, obtained our EIN and filed and obtained our fictitious name (Green Burial Pittsburgh) from the state.



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We have an agreement in principle with University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Environmental Law Clinic, to help us prepare our bylaws and other corporate legal documents on a pro bono basis.

We have been working with Jay Gilmer, Esq. of Five C's Corporation in Homewood, who has been providing us with some pro bono legal advice on starting a non-profit. I also took a six-session course led by Jay on how to start a non-profit.

We have established a 'fiscal partner' relationship with the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania ([FCAWP](#)). FCAWP is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation, and our fiscal partnership with them means that we can solicit donations from individuals, foundations and others for GBP, which are passed through FCAWP on a tax-exempt basis to GBP in exchange for a small fee. Once all our corporate legal filings are complete, we intend to file with the IRS for our own 501(c)(13) [cemetery association] status, but until that happens we can use the FCAWP relationship for raising tax-exempt funds.

Green Burial Pittsburgh has made contact with and is seeking advice from Allegheny Land Trust ([ALT](#)) on land conservation options including conservation easements.

We completed a project last spring at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Information Sciences, under the direction of Professor Hassan Karami, PhD., which created a model for evaluating multiple parcels of land as to their suitability for use as sites for conservation burial grounds. As a part of this project, we created a list of criteria, which help us in determining the suitability of any particular parcel.

We have established on-going relationships with eight existing green cemeteries and the Green Burial Council in New Mexico, and they have been providing us with information we need for our business plan and general information about what it takes to get a conservation burial ground started.

We have researched some local foundations, which we believe may be able to provide us with start-up funds, but we need to wait until our legal incorporation is final before we can apply. In addition, we probably need to have a piece of land identified, before we will be taken seriously by funding agencies.



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Some have you have expressed an interest in volunteering to help us in various ways, and here's what we need if you're interested:

- Obviously, we need a newsletter editor.
- We need everyone's help in getting the word out about woodland conservation burial, so landowners will step forward to offer us land.
- At some point, maybe very soon, we will settle on a piece of land, and then we will need landscape architect and restoration ecology services, and volunteer help in establishing walking trails, planting trees, clearing brush and on and on.
- We need someone our board with environmental restoration and/or land conservation knowledge, and someone with access to land conservation donors would be extremely valuable.
- For our marketing and fund raising work we need someone to conduct a survey (on line?) of just how interested people are in green burial and are they willing to donate to GBP or to purchase burial rights in a conservation burial ground for themselves or family members.

Just email me if you'd like to volunteer. If you would like to donate to Green Burial Pittsburgh, contact the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania at fcawp@verizon.net or 412-241-0705. We hope to have exciting news for you soon.

-Pete McQuillin
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