

# Denman Island Natural Burial Cemetery – Planning a Green Future

By Isabelle Fusey – January 2018

The eighth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Denman Island Memorial Society will take place Monday January 15th, starting at 7:30 PM at the Denman Activity Center. The agenda will include short reports by the directors, presentation of the 2017 financial statement, and the election of directors for 2018. Members of the Memorial Society are encouraged to come a few minutes early to renew their memberships. New members are welcome. The cost of a membership is \$5. Membership is a way to show your support for the cemetery and is required to vote at the AGM. The meeting will be followed by refreshments.

The Denman Island Memorial Society operates the Denman Island Natural Burial Cemetery, the first exclusively green cemetery in Canada. Green burial is environmentally friendly, eliminating the harmful impacts of embalming chemicals, concrete, and toxic metals used in conventional burials. After a burial, nature follows its course, and over time our cemetery will become a forest with ferns, mosses, wildflowers, Oregon grape, salal, alders, and conifers. The cemetery has room for 1,000 graves, enough to meet the needs of our community for the next 100 years.

The Cemetery property was a gift from the Denman Conservancy Association, which holds a conservation covenant on the land. The covenant ensures that the principles of green burial are always followed and that the native vegetation is allowed to return. Visitors are welcome at the cemetery. Lots of people walk through the property, enjoying the paths in the Scattering Area or stopping in the Gathering Space to look at the bronze plaques memorializing those whose remains are in the cemetery.

The Society has now completed more than two years of operations, which included 11 burials and 16 scatterings of cremated remains as of the end of 2017. A highlight last year was the creation of a Manager's position. Charlie Johnston fills this role, bringing efficiency and sensitivity to every client interview and task.

The Society is there to support anyone in the community when a death occurs. But it can also offer peace of mind today. You can choose to purchase what is called a pre-need right of interment that gives you the right to be buried in the cemetery when the time comes. While few of us like to plan, much less plan for our own funeral, there are many good reasons for pre-planning and buying a pre-need right of interment.

- It is a tangible way to show that you care about the environment.
- It is an act of kindness for your loved ones, sparing them the stress of making hard decisions at a difficult time.
- It makes financial sense to purchase a service today that will be rendered in the future when costs are likely to be higher.
- It is a way of showing your support for a local community venture.

The cost of a right of interment in the Denman Island Natural Burial Cemetery is \$1000. An additional administration fee of \$120 is charged when rights are purchased on a pre-need basis. At the time of burial, additional expenses will include opening and closing of the grave and purchasing of a memorial plaque. A single purchaser can buy pre-need rights for up to six designated users.

To date, the Society has sold 31 pre-need rights of interment. If you are interested, contact Charlie at 335-1786 or [dinaturalburial@gmail.com](mailto:dinaturalburial@gmail.com). Charlie will arrange a time to meet with you, and will review the principles of green burial, explain the fees, and provide information booklets for you and your family members. There is no obligation to proceed.

Pre-need rights of interment can be cancelled or transferred to another eligible person at any time for a small administrative fee. The \$1000 fee paid for each pre-need right of interment is held in a separate trust account until the death of the designated user or until a cancellation or transfer occurs.

For more information about the cemetery, see the cemetery's website at <http://dinbc.ca/>, pick up a leaflet at the information kiosk at the cemetery entrance at 6400 Denman Road, or better yet, come to the AGM. We look forward to seeing you there.

