



PO Box 64, Crestone, CO 81131 • (719) 256-4313 • townofcrestone.colorado.gov

Crestone Cemetery Burial Information Packet

General Information:

The Crestone Cemetery and Natural Burial Ground may be visited at any time. The gates are closed but not locked. Those interested in obtaining lots may obtain a map of available lots from Cemetery Management at Crestone Town Hall (108 W. Galena Ave., Crestone, CO 81131). Town Hall can be reached by phone during business hours (Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-2:00 pm) at (719) 256-4313.

Purchase of Interment Rights

Once a lot has been selected, interment rights may be purchased. By Colorado law, cemetery lot purchasing is accomplished by an interment rights agreement. The Town of Crestone retains ownership of all cemetery land. Interment rights may be passed on to designated heirs. If seventy-five (75) years pass with no burials, Colorado law provides a procedure for the Town to reclaim such lots under the Abandoned Graves Act and CRS § 31-25-708.

A 20' x 20' lot allows for six (6) full-body burials, sixty-four (64) cremation burials, or a combination thereof.

A 10' x 10' lot allows for two (2) full-body burials, sixteen (16) cremation burials, or a combination thereof.

Burial Procedure

Each full burial or cremation burial requires completion of a **digging permit application and a check made out to "Town of Crestone" in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00)** to serve as a damage and cleanup deposit. If the burial site is completely restored following the interment, the deposit will be returned following an inspection of the gravesite. If restoration of the site is incomplete, Cemetery Management will advise the permit holder of improvements that must be made before the deposit will be returned. If the Town of Crestone has to complete restoration of the burial site, the associated costs will be deducted from the deposit, and the balance of the deposit will be returned with an accounting of work performed.

A copy of the **Authority for Final Disposition** (the name of this document varies) is **legally required** to authorize the burial, and also enables private individuals to legally transport human remains. This document is obtained from the local county's vital statistics office after the issuance of the death certificate. Saguache County Authority for Final Disposition Certificates are obtained from Coroner's Office in Del Norte. A photocopy of the death certificate is preferred, though not required, as it is a valuable addition to cemetery records in the event of future inquiries by descendants.

You are **required to furnish an Authorization for Final Disposition form prior to any burial** taking place. Please note that per Colorado State statute (CRS § 25-2-111), **it is illegal bury or cremate a body without having first obtained this form.** This form is issued by either the funeral home or the

coroner. It is possible to arrange for the funeral home or coroner to send the Authorization for Final Disposition directly to Cemetery Management.

The Crestone Cemetery does not have grave-digging equipment, but provides the contact information for local contractors with appropriate equipment to dig graves (See list of local excavators attached).

Burials of bodies are required to be six (6) feet deep. There are rocks and boulders underground that may make hand-digging impossible for a full-sized grave. However, hand-filling of graves is feasible.

Burials of cremains are required to be two (2) feet deep. Hand-digging is feasible for cremation graves.

Rocks that come out of the excavation should be placed back in the grave. Some rocks may be used to outline the grave. They may not be left elsewhere in the cemetery.

Families and friends are encouraged to be involved in the burial and ritual process.

Regular Burial Ground Information

The Regular Burial Grounds account for the majority of the lots in the Crestone Cemetery. There are no specific requirements relating to embalming or burial containers for burials in this section of the Cemetery.

Grave markers are not required by the Crestone Cemetery. While there are no specific restrictions on grave markers in this section, there are recommendations on standard sizes depending on use (See “General Burial Grave Marker Recommendations” attached).

Hybrid Burial Ground Information

****Colorado law requires that non-embalmed remains be buried within seventy-two (72) hours and permits private transport in a hermetically sealed container.****

The Interment Rights Agreement for the Hybrid Burial Ground includes the following restrictions:

- ❖ Burial containers shall be limited to those made from materials that are non-toxic/nonhazardous and natural/plant derived.
- ❖ Shrouds are permissible.
- ❖ Decedents can be embalmed only with Green Burial Council approved non-toxic chemicals, but do not need to be embalmed.
- ❖ The use of vaults (partial, inverted, or otherwise) is prohibited.
- ❖ Materials approved by the Green Burial Council can be found here:
https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/burial_grounds_cemeteries.html

Grave markers are not required by the Crestone Cemetery. While there are no specific restrictions on grave markers in this section, there are recommendations on standard sizes depending on use (See “General Burial Grave Marker Recommendations” attached).

Natural Burial Ground Information

****Colorado law requires that non-embalmed remains be buried within seventy-two (72) hours and permits private transport in a hermetically sealed container.****

The Interment Rights Agreement for the Natural Burial Grounds includes the following restrictions:

- ❖ Burial containers shall be limited to those made from materials that are nontoxic, nonhazardous and natural or plant derived.
- ❖ Shrouds are permissible
- ❖ Decedents are not to have been embalmed, or must be embalmed only with Green Burial Council approved nontoxic oils
- ❖ The use of vaults (partial, inverted or otherwise) is prohibited
- ❖ Materials approved by the Green Burial Council can be found here:
https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/burial_grounds_cemeteries.html
- ❖ **Grave markers** in this section come with the following requirements and restrictions:
 - Grave markers are not required by the Crestone Cemetery.
 - Only one memorial may be placed on any one grave, except with the express written permission of Cemetery Management.
 - Markers for grave sites may be made of the following types of unpolished stone: sandstone, granite, smooth river rock, or local stone.

- Markers shall be no more than eight (8) inches above ground level. Marker foundations are permitted, but not required. Some elevation of markers is recommended to minimize concealment by dust or sand.
- For single graves, the surface area of the marker shall be no larger than two hundred fifty (250) square inches, with a maximum dimension of twenty-five (25) inches.
- The surface area of a marker for two or more contiguous graves shall be no larger than four hundred (400) square inches, with a maximum dimension of thirty (30) inches.
- For cremation graves, the surface area of a marker shall be no larger than one hundred (100) square inches, with a maximum dimension of twelve (12) inches.
- No memorial shall be placed in the Natural Burial Ground without the prior written authorization of both Cemetery Management and the lot interment rights owners (or the deceased owner's next of kin or authorized representative).
 - ◆ In the event a memorial, foundation, or other object is placed or constructed in the Natural Burial Ground without such authorization, the Town of Crestone reserves and shall have the right, at the owner's expense, to remove any unauthorized memorial or other object.
 - ◆ Cemetery Management shall be notified of the date and time for any installation of a memorial in the Natural Burial Grounds.

❖ **Grave Decorations**

- Live or dried flowers and foliage that are fully biodegradable are permitted, and should be placed directly on or into the sandy soil.
- The following materials are not compatible with the objectives of the Natural Burial Ground, are not permitted on graves or anywhere within the Natural Burial Ground, and will be removed at the lot owner's expense without any liability to the Town of Crestone:
 - artificial flowers or arrangements
 - photographs
 - manmade or manufactured items
 - decorative containers: including, but not limited to, vases, pots, cans and jars

Information on the Natural Burial Ground

A natural burial ground allows burials in a natural environment with minimal grave decoration and monuments. It serves those who wish to have their untreated bodily remains or ashes buried to biodegrade in a natural area free of chemical or synthetic materials.

Green burials, also called natural burials, provide environmental restoration and are more harmonious with the life cycle. Green burials benefit the environment by restoring nutrients to the soil after decomposition. It spares the Earth from harmful embalming chemicals and non-biodegradable materials, including metals and treated hardwoods used in conventional coffins. Green burials also encourage greater involvement of survivors who may choose to prepare, transport and bury their loved ones. This age-old process of placing a body directly into the ground during a simple funeral ceremony and allowing survivors to create their own funeral traditions is less expensive and far more meaningful than its contemporary counterpart.

Green burial rules dictate that bodies must remain un-embalmed or only temporarily embalmed with approved natural products. Only biodegradable caskets and shrouds made of natural fibers can be used and grave markers, if utilized, must be low-profile and consist of natural unpolished stone in order to retain the overall view of the open woodland area.

History

In the United States, green burials have become a growing reality. The Green Burial Council was founded to provide a standard for the Green Burial movement—a standard rooted in transparency, accountability and ecological responsibility. To receive certification, a cemetery must promote green burial practices, provide encouragement to the public to make environmentally responsible choices, and make green burial options accessible. The Crestone Cemetery and Natural Burial Ground is committed to these principles and is proud to have become the first cemetery in the State of Colorado to be certified as a Provider of the Green Burial Council.

At 8,000 feet, beneath the towering Sangre de Cristo mountain range, the Town of Crestone is a forested hillside haven in the San Luis Valley. The San Luis Valley is the largest alpine valley in North America, and supports a diverse collection of unique plants, animals and ecosystems in the area, including the adjoining Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

The Crestone Cemetery and Natural Burial Ground is owned and administered by the Town of Crestone, a municipality incorporated in 1901. In 1911, a forty-acre parcel of open pinon-juniper woodland was deeded to the Town of Crestone to be used for cemeteries and parks. This land offers a spectacular view of the adjacent Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Six acres were fenced and platted with 20' x 20' plots and 5' aisles. Burial regulations have been minimal in the history of the cemetery, with no restrictions or requirements regarding types of caskets, embalming, vaults or decorations. Many burials have not been embalmed and there are no known burials with concrete vaults. Lots in most of the platted cemetery may still be used for either embalmed or non-embalmed remains.

In 2009, a portion of the cemetery was designated for green burials to support environmentally responsible burials. This portion of the cemetery has now been designated, in perpetuity, as a Natural Burial Ground, as certified by the Green Burial Council.

Grounds Maintenance

An Endowment Fund has been created by the Town of Crestone to provide for the long-term maintenance of the Natural Burial Ground. For each Natural Burial Ground plot sale, 100% of each sale will be allocated to this fund (Ordinance No. 2013-012).

The Town of Crestone does not encourage the use of any type of insecticide, pesticide or herbicide within either the incorporated town limits or the Crestone Cemetery.

The semi-arid, sandy cemetery environment does not support most biting insects or non-native plants. Occasionally, such as during a wet spring, biting insects are airborne on the prevailing wind from the San Luis Valley floor. They do not reproduce here and are temporarily tolerated. In the event of the appearance of an invasive plant, for example Russian thistle (tumbleweed), removal will be conducted mechanically by pulling the plants.

Land Sensitivity

An ecological assessment conducted at the Natural Burial Ground concluded that there were no ecologically sensitive areas. However, the native plants are fragile and slow to recover, so please use the designated aisle walkways as much as possible.

Local Excavator

Mark Potter

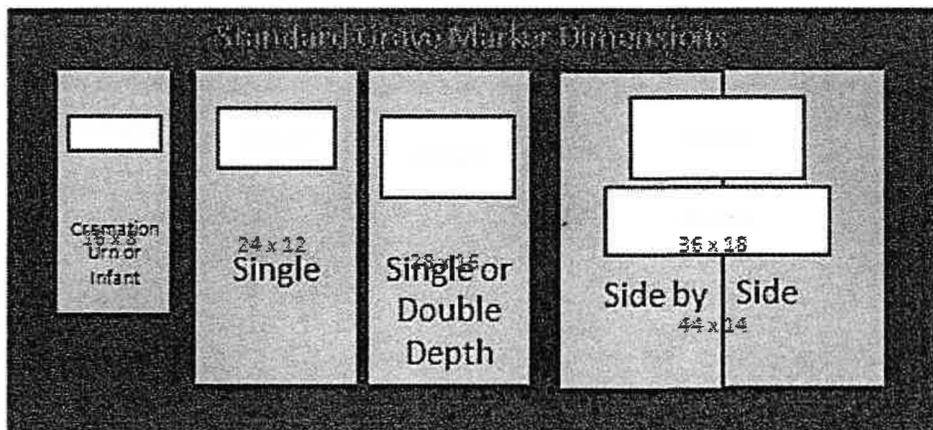
Home: (719) 256-2063

Cell: (719) 588-0426

General Burial Grave Marker Recommendations

The standard size for a grave marker typically depends upon the grave plot. There are general standard sizes for single, double, or infant plots. A standard size for a single grave is 24" by 12", although 28" by 16" is used for more elaborate single headstones or double depth graves where 2 names need to be inscribed on one headstone.

For a companion grave marker that sits centered over 2 side by side graves, the typical dimensions are 36" by 18" or 44" by 14". A headstone for an infant grave plot or a cremation urn interment plot is generally standardized at 16" by 8".



<http://www.us-funerals.com/memorials.html#.WdU1b1tSyUI>