

## CONSERVATION BURIAL, INC.

You've heard of recycling paper. You know about recycling plastic. But there is a new way to become one with the Earth—literally. Conservation Burial, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation that gives people an opportunity to go green when they pass away.

"This is the biggest recycling program of all. Recycling life," Freddie Johnson, president of Conservation Burial, Inc., said. "We are honoring the reality that we are in a cycle of life. We are trying not to do something other than what is natural."

The most common forms of putting loved ones to rest are vault burials and cremation. Although they preserve the dead, the methods involved in both are deadly to the living planet.

The amount of cement used in vault burials each year could pave a two-way highway from Tallahassee to Miami. The amount of embalming fluids used every year could fill three Olympic-sized swimming pools with

their culmination of different chemicals. The amount of metal used for caskets annually is enough to build the Golden Gate Bridge. Not to mention, the fuel, water and pesticides used to manage the lawns of vault cemeteries combined with the fossil fuel emissions from high-energy cremations add up.

Rather than taking the conventional approach, Conservation Burial, Inc. goes back to traditional, natural burials. The corporation encourages the simple and clean return to Earth with biodegradable materials. A burial without formaldehyde-based embalming fluids, concrete burial vaults or metal caskets.

Conservation Burial, Inc. founded Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery in late July 2010. It became the first certified conservation cemetery in Florida and one of the first four in the United States.

Prairie Creek is more than 75 acres wide and is essentially parkland. Visitors can hike and bike across this Alachua Conservation

Trust protected space, and if their loved ones are buried in its wide, grassy meadows, they can sit and have a picnic at the gravesite. The gravesites are limited to 100 per acre to prevent crowding and are marked by flat discs. Conservation Burial, Inc. plots the graves on a coordinate-grid system and with GPS so that the sites may always be found.

Freddie Johnson believes there are many reasons to go back to nature. Not only will it help the environment, it will also reconnect clients with their loved ones. Prior to the late 19th century, women bathed their loved one and men built the casket and dug the site.

Today, people are less involved with the healing process of a traditional funeral. The process is entirely handed to funeral homes. With Conservation Burial, Inc., the family can dictate what level of involvement it is comfortable with and people now have the choice to leave the Earth without polluting the Earth.