

Bluestem

ADDRESS AND DIRECTIONS

Bluestem is located at 1900 Hurdle Mills Road in Cedar Grove. The address is fully recognizable by Google and Apple maps. A flag, gate and sign are visible from Hurdle Mills Road. Please call Heidi or Jeff at (919) 621-4661 if you are lost.

WHAT TO EXPECT (*and how to dress*) FOR A GREEN BURIAL AT BLUESTEM

Bluestem staff and volunteers are ready to support you with the natural burial service of your choice. We are fully committed to Bluestem's mission offering green burial in a natural setting that embraces simplicity, individuality and sustainability.

Bluestem is a natural area. We recommend dressing for the weather, with comfortable clothing and in sensible shoes. Once the date is selected, Bluestem staff conduct the burial in rain or shine. Please bring an umbrella if showers are predicted.

When you arrive at Bluestem, you will be directed either to the gravesite or to a gathering space selected by the family. Park in the parking area and walk in, or we can provide you with specifics prior to your date of service.

Please note that Bluestem does not have bathroom facilities; only 2 porta-potties. One at the front of the property, the other in the interior.

The grass pathways at Bluestem reflect recent weather: generally dry in the summer and they can be muddy in the winter. Many have a slight slope to them. Some woodland trails are still under construction. Depending on your chosen gravesite, expect the area around it to be all natural. If desired by the family, staff can set up 16 chairs at the site. Please let us know if anyone has accessibility needs.

The grave will be open and undecorated. Depending on the season, Bluestem will provide wildflowers, grasses and/or cedar branches and other natural materials for laying in the grave, when the family is ready.

The service is led by the family or by a leader of their choosing. Bluestem staff and volunteers are present for support. We are happy to welcome people with a few words about Bluestem if the family wishes, but otherwise the service is entirely of your own making.

Bluestem ash burials require an amendment process. Speak with staff ahead of time to determine if your preference is to include the amending of the ashes as part of your ritual, or if you wish for staff to take care of this prior to the service.

Family will gather graveside and place the casket, shroud or ashes in the grave. If family prefers not to be involved, Bluestem staff and volunteers can manage this process.

After the casket, shroud or ashes are in the grave, family and friends are invited to lay natural materials on top of the vessel/remains. After this, they are invited to place a handful or shovelful of earth back

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into the grave and finalize the closing of the grave. Once the grave is filled a mound will be present and covered with pine straw.

Bluestem staff record the grave after the service with a burial marker placed in the middle of the mound, and by GPS.

The family is invited to select a gravestone for engraving the loved one's name and dates. Engraving of the stone occurs offsite and is the responsibility of the family. Samples are located beside the cabin steps. When the engraving is done, family returns to Bluestem to place the stone on the grave. Natural materials only are allowed inside and on graves at Bluestem.

Order of Gravesite Service

Participants at Bluestem have asked for guidance on how to prepare a graveside service. With the assistance of other death care professionals, we produced this template for families to refer to in crafting a burial service befitting their loved one and family's needs.

Gathering at Bluestem

Cars are parked alongside Bluestem Road, and Bluestem volunteers guide family and friends to the gravesite, where the casket, shroud or ashes, lies on top of wooden slats across the grave. If family prefers to process to the gravesite, please communicate this to Bluestem staff.

Song or Musical Selection

Welcome

Service leader welcomes family and friends to the occasion. Reflecting on the moment and acknowledging the beloved's life. Leader may wish to reference relationships with nature, the collective witness in saying goodbye, returning the body to the earth, or in any other manner appropriate to the person and occasion.

Gathering Prayer

Service leader opens with a prayer and attends to the sacred space. Leader may invite family and friends to lay biodegradable materials in the grave, flowers, messages on paper, meaningful mementos.

Song or Reading

Eulogy

Remembrances

Family and friends are invited to share memories.

Lowering into the Grave

Bluestem staff invite family and friends to help lower the casket/shroud into the grave. OR
Bluestem staff invite family and friends to place ashes in the grave.

Casket/shroud lies across burial slats on top of the grave. Individuals stand on a wooden frame and take hold of the burial ropes beside the slats. In unison, they raise the casket, Bluestem volunteers remove

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the slats, and slowly they lower the beloved into the grave. Service leader can offer a prayer, a blessing or a moment of stillness and silence.

Closing the Grave

Bluestem staff invite family and friends to lay wildflowers, cedar boughs, any other natural materials on top of the casket, shroud or ashes. Handfuls of dirt can be poured into the grave. Shovels are offered to anyone who wishes to help close the grave. Once the grave is closed and appropriately mounded, pine straw is spread across it.

Final Blessing

Service leader offers a final prayer or blessing, and closes the space. Guests are invited to rest awhile at the gravesite or to experience any other part of Bluestem as long as they wish.

Ringling of Bell or Musical Selection

Walking at Bluestem

Bluestem Staff and Volunteers Return Burial Materials to the Barn

We encourage family and friends to participate in the burial service, as much as they are comfortable doing so. Bluestem staff and volunteers are on standby, prepared to facilitate as much of the service, or as little as needed. If desired, staff can offer a few words describing how the loved one's choice of burial at Bluestem contributes to the sanctity of the cemetery and its community conservation mission.

Thank you for choosing Bluestem.