Upper Cemetery Site: _____

NARROW RIDGE NATURAL BURIAL PRESERVE
BINDING RULES AND STANDARDS

The Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center (the "Center") has an established history of providing its community with educational, recreational, and cultural experiences. The Center is dedicated to promoting harmonious interactions with nature in all stages of life. Thus, the Narrow Ridge Natural Burial Preserve (the "Preserve") functions as a non-profit, secluded cemetery whereby interested individuals from in and around the surrounding communities can bury their loved ones in a peaceful, natural setting.

In order to ensure compliance with green burial standards on the grounds of the Preserve, the undersigned agrees to carefully read, be bound by, and comply with the Rules and Standards provided below. To be clear, this document constitutes a binding agreement ("Agreement") between the Center and the undersigned whereby the undersigned agrees to be bound by the Rules and Standards and, in return, will be made eligible for consideration to receive a burial space on the Preserve …

1) The overall goal of a natural burial is to provide an environmentally sustainable form of interment where the body is returned to Earth to decompose naturally and to be recycled into new life. The Preserve will ultimately be managed for pollinator and bird habitat.

2) The Preserve follows practices that conserve energy, minimize waste, and do not require the use of toxic chemicals. More specifically, we prohibit the use of vaults (partial, inverted or otherwise), vault lids, concrete boxes, slabs or partitioned liners. **Again, to be perfectly clear, the use of burial vaults of <u>any</u> type is strictly prohibited.** Furthermore, we prohibit burial of deceased individuals who have been embalmed with toxic chemicals. Instead, in the event some form of temporary preservation is needed, the use of dry ice and coolers is strongly encouraged.

3) Participants are not required to use a burial container, although they may elect to use a qualifying container. If a burial container is desired, it must be made from natural and/or plant derived materials that are 100% biodegradable and non-toxic, including finishes, adhesives and hardware. Essential fasteners such as degradable steel nails or screws are permissible. If a wooden burial container is used it is recommended that locally and sustainably harvested, or reclaimed wood, be used. Endangered species of wood will not be permitted. Treated wood and metal handles are not permitted. Should an individual not wish to be buried in a container, families may elect to wrap their loved one in a shroud or some other qualified personal wrapping of their choosing. In the event an individual wishes to be buried in such a fashion, the shroud or other wrapping again must be 100% biodegradable plant derived and/or natural materials.

4) All graves at the Narrow Ridge Natural Burial Preserve are specifically tailored to minimize, as much as possible, impacts on the surrounding land and environment. Excavation techniques must therefore focus on protecting native plant diversity in and around the burial sites and they will be controlled and monitored by the Center in its sole discretion.

5) The Preserve is designed, operated and maintained in such a manner as to produce a naturalistic appearance based on the use of plants and materials native to the region. Landscaping must involve materials and patterns derived from and compatible with regional ecosystems. Furthermore, invasive and non-native species have been targeted for removal, with specific efforts to replace these species with

species native to the area.

6) If desired, families may be given the opportunity to be involved with the burial process so long as participation does not conflict with state law or with the protocols listed here in form or substance.

7) All grave markers must be positioned on the west end of the grave to eliminate confusion about the specific location of graves. Grave markers must be limited in such a way as to minimize intrusion on the landscape and into the habitat of local fauna and flora. More specifically, in order to preserve naturalistic vistas on the Preserve, individuals are encouraged to mark graves by planting a patch of wildflowers. To facilitate this practice, the Center has compiled a list of plants for use as memorial features in the area where burials take place, along with a list of plants appropriate for use in restoration or preservation of native vegetation in and around the site. Planting native flowers on or near the grave and native trees and shrubs in approved areas of the burial preserve establishes a living memorial and helps form a protected wildlife preserve. **No one is authorized to plant anything on the Preserve premises without first consulting with the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center staff.** This requirement is specifically tailored to prevent the introduction of non-native species to the area. It should be noted that **Narrow Ridge has amended the rules of the Natural Burial Preserve so that trees or shrubs may no longer be planted on or near the gravesite until the surrounding gravesites have been filled.** This amendment has been made because the root systems of trees have the potential to extend into nearby gravesites resulting in challenges to opening the graves as well as potential damage to the tree in the grave opening process. Furthermore, a standing tree on a gravesite presents an obstacle to the heavy equipment which must maneuver around it in order to open nearby graves.

In addition to plant markers, stone markers are also permitted, provided they are laid flat (not erect) on the grave with a maximum area of 2 square feet. Engravings are allowed on such markers, provided any such engravings are approved by the staff at the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center in advance. If such markers are used, the stone must be native to the area and consistent with the overall geology of East Tennessee. Only organic soil, fertilizer, mulch or other amendments are permitted for use in the Natural Burial Preserve.

8) The Preserve is maintained in a natural setting, with an emphasis on the promotion of native plants species and the eradication of invasive or non-native species. Note that maintaining the site in a natural setting has in no way prevented compliance with TENN. COMP. R. & REGS. 0780-05-09.12, which requires preventing accumulation of weeds, trash, or junk and the presence of any unsafe or unsanitary conditions on the burial preserve. No toxic herbicides or pesticides are permitted in the process of maintaining the grounds.

9) In order to enhance the ecological and social value of the Narrow Ridge Natural Burial Preserve, the Center may link the land set aside for burial sites with the remaining acreage owned by the Center. More specifically, the Center may establish trails and walkways between the Center and the Preserve so as to enhance the natural setting of the burial sites with an eye toward augmenting the educational opportunities created by the green cemetery. Further, the Center may engage in efforts to include community events, educational programs, and social gatherings in educational opportunities presented by the Preserve and the Center as a whole.

10) The Narrow Ridge Natural Burial Preserve is particularly dedicated to integrating the act of burial with the surrounding native ecological communities. The Preserve therefore serves as a multi-purpose operation, focusing not only on providing burial space to community members, but also on environmental education to any and all who are interested. To bring about these goals and the goals listed above, the Preserve focuses on limiting burial density, enhancing natural aesthetics, and providing the most enlightening experience possible for any and all participants and visitors.

11) The Center is in no way responsible for providing burial services to those interested in interment on the Preserve. Instead, the Center is responsible merely for providing a space for the individual in question to be laid to rest, provided said individual is approved by the Director. Aside from providing the space and maintaining it in a respectful and natural state, the Center is not responsible for providing any other services to the undersigned or his or her family or loved ones. Thus, the undersigned understands and agrees that he or she is fully responsible for coordinating, paying for, and otherwise providing for all the services associated with the funeral process, including but not limited to excavation, interment, hearse or other transportation services, all services associated with a funeral home, memorial services, and any other services related to the funeral or burial process. **To be perfectly clear, the Center is responsible only for providing and, after burial, maintaining the burial space of individuals approved by the Director for burial on the Preserve.**

12) The Director of the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, or the future equivalent thereof, is responsible for analyzing and accepting or denying applications for interment in the Preserve. The Director is not required but retains discretion to establish a procedure for receiving and processing applications for interment in the Preserve. The Director also retains the discretion to make exceptions to the "Rules and Standards" listed above and below when extraordinary circumstances arise from time to time. In exercising any of the powers contained in the section, the Director is encouraged to consult with the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center Board of Directors. However, for matters of expediency, the ultimate exercise of power or discretion granted by this section rests solely in the hands of the Director of Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, with consultation of the Executive Committee of the Board of Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center.

13) If the undersigned is using a funeral home for the burial under consideration, the undersigned agrees to disclose the name of the funeral home to the Director of the Center. Furthermore, the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center and its agents and representatives retain the right to contact the applicant's funeral home prior to interment of the applicant in question in order to verify that the applicant has complied fully with the Rules and Standards for burial on the Narrow Ridge Natural Burial Preserve.

14) Finally, because Narrow Ridge feels strongly that the death of a loved one should not result in debt or financial hardship for family members, we have no set fee for a cemetery plot within the burial preserve. However, Narrow Ridge welcomes and encourages donations in appreciation of the Natural Burial Preserve and of the time required of staff to maintain and oversee this important initiative. We hope that those who are able will give generously and also consider naming Narrow Ridge as the recipient of memorial donations.

In signing these Rules and Standards, I the undersigned acknowledge and represent that:

a. I have read the foregoing Rules and Standards, understand them, and I agree to be bound by them and to

comply fully with them;

b. I sign this Agreement voluntarily as my own free act and deed;

c. No oral representation, statements or inducements, apart from the foregoing written Agreement, have been made;

d. I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent; and

e. I execute this Agreement for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same.

f. I desire that the party responsible for my funeral and/or burial arrangements, in the event a funeral home's services are used, comply with the Rules and Standards stated herein;
specifically # 2 and #3.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this ___ day of _____, 20____.

_____ _____

Participant Name (Printed) Participant Signature

_____ _____

Witness Name (Print) Witness Signature

Please provide the following information:

_____

Address

_____

City, State, Zip Code

_____

Phone number

_____

Email Address

_____

Alternate Phone Number