

## Greening Your Funeral Care

While never easy, having conversations about end-of-life care for yourself and your loved ones is an important part of effective financial planning.

It usually makes sense to talk with your parents, your spouse or partner or your children about what your wishes and theirs are for your end-of-life care. There's real value in talking about exact wishes and even more value in putting those thoughts on paper for formal inclusion with wills and powers of attorney. It usually makes sense to consult an expert financial planning professional as well as tax and estate experts to coordinate both financial and end-of-life planning in a way that fits the individual.

**Five Wishes:** One well respected resource that can be used to guide these end-of-life care conversations is "Five Wishes," a booklet that lets your family and doctors know:

Who you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them.

- The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want.
- How comfortable you want to be.
- How you want people to treat you.
- What you want your loved ones to know.

**Consider the alternatives:** Traditional burials and cremation are no longer the only options available for funeral services. Increasingly, people are choosing natural burials that can:

- Leave a lasting beautiful memory for your loved ones.
- Limit the use of natural resources and hazardous chemicals in your funeral care and cemetery upkeep.
- Have your funeral costs go directly toward land conservation efforts.

The non-profit [Green Burial Council](#) has crafted the world's first standards and eco-certification program for burial grounds, funeral homes, products, and cremation disposition programs. They have a [provider search tool](#) that creates easy access to certified providers.

At the [White Eagle Memorial Preserve](#), a green burial ground founded in 2008 and licensed by the state of Washington, each gravesite becomes an opportunity to nourish, as a living memorial, the wildness and beauty already present. Every visit to a loved one's grave is an opportunity to connect with nature and feel the beauty and awesome presence of this wild place. Explore their website to find details on their green practices.

*November 2010—This column is produced by the Financial Planning Association and Goodfunds Wealth Management, and is provided by Eric A. Smith, CFP®, AIF®, a local member of FPA. Mr. Smith is registered with KMS Financial Services, Inc. of Seattle and manages branch office Goodfunds Wealth Management. For contact, disclosure, and disclaimer information: [www.goodfunds.com](http://www.goodfunds.com).*