

N.B. women offer greener ‘forest cemetery’ burial option

By [Shelley Steeves](#) Global News
Posted December 11, 2023 4:48 pm EST

Two friends from New Brunswick who share deeply rooted beliefs about the importance of protecting the environment and honoring those who have died are now offering people a greener burial option they say is growing in popularity across the country.

Ever since they were little girls, both Renelle Allain and Monique Saulnier of Cocagne have viewed the passage of life as a natural part of nature.

“I felt like the ceremonies that they did to commemorate someone at the end of life didn’t always resonate with me, even as a little girl. So I remember asking my mom, ‘Can’t I just be put in the ground? Why do we have to do all of this?’” said Allain, who is now the co-owner of Life Celebration de la Vie, a green forest cemetery in Renauds Mills.

“I had talked about that when I was young. I didn’t want fancy stuff around me and the casket because that is not me,” said Saulnier, Allain’s business partner and friend.

After discovering they shared the same dream, the pair decided to launch New Brunswick’s first forest cemetery.

“We use biodegradable urns in which we could put the ashes and the urns would regulate the pH of the ashes to make sure that it doesn’t pollute the earth,” Allain said.

There are no caskets or tombs. The cemetery is located on forested land that has been in Saulnier’s family for decades.

Remains are buried in the forest floor, where they will biodegrade over a period of three years, Allain said.

“So we use the trees that already exist and put a plaque on there with a QR code that people can scan — you can leave audio and video and fun facts about them.”

Allain said it took two and a half years to get clearance from the province to open the cemetery because the concept is so new to New Brunswick. They received approval from the province to open the business in September and they are now opening to future plot-seekers.

The friends say the concept of greener burial options is growing in popularity across Canada as more people are looking for a place where they can be returned to the earth in a greener way.

“The environment is important and there is also the part where we want it to be a beautiful place, a zen place for people to come,” Saulnier said.

Visitors can hike in the woods on their loved one’s lane and Allain said it is a place that is inclusive of all backgrounds and faiths.

“We just believe that we come from the earth and we return to the earth and everyone is welcome, even animals,” Allain said.

N.B. women offer greener 'forest cemetery' burial option

By **Shelley Steeves** • Global News

Posted December 11, 2023 4:48 pm EST



Monique Saulnier and Renelle Allain, owners of Life Celebration de la Vie forest cemetery in Renauds Mills, N.B. **Shelley Steeves/Global News**

