CHCs and Historic Cemeteries: A Framework for Preservation

Part 4: Cultivate

A Suggested Framework for County-Wide Cemetery Preservation

Identify all cemeteries in county.

Determine who is working with each cemetery.

Determine what each cemetery needs.

Determine how the CHC can help preserve the cemetery itself or help others preserve the cemetery. Take action accordingly.

www.thc.texas.gov/chc-cemeteries

CULTIVATE: Suggested Activities

CHCs know how to address a cemetery’s preservation needs and/or support the work of others.

- Connect cemetery trustees with potential partners to address needs.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to collaborate, when feasible.
- Cultivate new stewardship opportunities for abandoned or neglected sites by identifying and engaging existing and potential stakeholders.
- Raise awareness of preservation standards and best practices.
- Promote resources available from THC, CHC, and other relevant partners.
- Implement programs that foster an understanding of cemeteries as cultural landscapes.
- Generate public awareness and appreciation for cemetery preservation by publicizing and promoting success stories.
CULTIVATE: Suggested Activities

CHCs know how to address a cemetery's needs and/or support the work of others.

Raise Public Awareness & Build Capacity

The Path to Stewardship

Care For
Care About
Understanding
Awareness
Curiosity

Adapted from CIH Training, National Association for Interpretation

CULTIVATE: Generate Public Awareness

In Dayton, a fence comes down that marked a racial divide
CULTIVATE:
Generate Public Awareness

CULTIVATE:
Generate Public Awareness

CULTIVATE:
Implement or Sponsor Programs
• History
• Biography
• Genealogy
• Preservation
• Nature
• Photography
• Art
• Archeology
• Geology (gravestones are rocks!)

CULTIVATE:
Facilitate Partnerships & Collaborations
Assist existing cemetery stewards with establishing partnerships and pursuing collaborations to address preservation needs
• Specialty service referrals
• Sharing services
• Group rates
• Program partners
• Funding requests
The Health and Safety Code allows for direct and indirect assistance from the County to preserve historic cemeteries.

**Sec. 713.021* and 713.022***
- Establish a trust fund to maintain neglected cemeteries
- Accept gifts and grants to support the trust

**Sec. 713.028***
- For purposes of historic preservation or public safety, a county can use public funds, county employees, county inmate labor, and county equipment to maintain a cemetery that is at least 50 years old.

*laws are paraphrased; refer to statutes for full language

The Health and Safety Code allows for municipalities and nonprofit organizations to gain control of an unkept or abandoned cemetery.

**Sec. 713.009***
- A municipality can take possession and control and take steps to repair, restore and maintain cemetery

**Sec. 715.002***
- A nonprofit organization can petition the district court for authorization to restore, operate, and maintain cemetery

*laws are paraphrased; refer to statutes for full language

- Raise awareness of preservation standards and best practices.
- Promote resources available from THC, CHC, and other relevant partners.
  - NCPTT
  - AGS
- Implement programs that foster an understanding of cemeteries as cultural landscapes.
CAUTION! AVOID THE ONE-TIME CLEAN-UP OF ABANDONED CEMETERIES

• It’s not yours—permissions!
• It’s easy to lose critical data or features

CAUTION! AVOID THE ONE-TIME CLEAN-UP OF ABANDONED CEMETERIES

• It’s a temporary solution
• It doesn’t solve the real problem

Why Do Cemeteries Matter?

Photo: Florida Public Archaeology Network
CULTIVATE:
Suggested Activities

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www.thc.texas.gov/chc-cemeteries

Cemetery Preservation Program

www.thc.texas.gov/cemetery

Jenny McWilliams
Program Coordinator
512-475-4506
Jenny.mcwilliams@thc.texas.gov

Carlyn Hammons
Program Specialist
512-463-6044
Carlyn.hammons@thc.texas.gov