

CHCs can be great advocates for cemetery preservation. Take every opportunity to promote cemetery preservation—at county commissioners court or city council meetings, at social or civic club meetings, at the grocery store and everywhere in between. Talking about historic cemeteries helps recruit new volunteers and communicates to others the importance of maintaining community history and culture.

These talking points will help get you started, but try to be specific about the cemeteries in your county.

- There are at least 16,000 known cemeteries in Texas, and approximately one-third of those have no active caretakers.
- Historic cemeteries are a window into the past. They tell us about settlement patterns, epidemics, styles and fashions and individual stories.
- Cemeteries are public places that tell the history of the community, religious and social customs, medical information (disease, etc.) and folklore.
- Cemeteries, including gravemarkers and the historic landscape, provide unique information about the community that may not be recorded anywhere else.
- Sometimes the cemetery is the only tangible link we have with a community that no longer exists today.
- Sometimes the only written record we have about an individual is contained on a gravemarker – birth and death dates and once in a while gravemarkers reveal where the deceased was born, their occupation, the church they attended and comments from their friends.
- The cemetery is a directory of the people who lived, worked and built a community or cleared and developed the land.
- Kids who have worked hard to maintain a historic cemetery are less likely to vandalize cemeteries in the future.

Keep in mind that not everyone will share your passion for history, so make sure to develop talking points that might resonate with people who are motivated by environmental, economic or other benefits of cemetery preservation.

- Cemeteries are wildlife habitats that are great for bird watching. Historic cemeteries can contain a high concentration of trees and other natural shelters attractive to birds. Birding is big ecotourism money.
- Genealogy tourism, or “roots” tourism, is a fast-growing segment of the tourism market. Cemeteries draw these tourists—and their money—to communities across the state.
- Cemeteries can be a source for historic plant material that has vanished from other areas.
- Especially in urban areas, cemeteries can be a welcome green space. They can be a place for quiet reflection in an otherwise busy environment.
- Cemeteries are outdoor museums. They contain beautiful sculptures, unique carvings, and handcrafted folk art.

For more information about historic cemeteries, please visit www.thc.texas.gov/cemetery.