



Northern California Recycling Association

Recycling Update 2023 Speaker Bios and Presentation Abstracts

Marines' Memorial Theatre San Francisco, CA
March 28, 2023

In Alphabetical Order by Last Name



Maybo AuYeung, City of Palo Alto Zero Waste Program

Maybo AuYeung is an Environmental Program Manager with Zero Waste Palo Alto. She has over a decade of experience in the Sustainability and Zero Waste industry. Currently Maybo is implementing the City's Deconstruction Ordinance and managing the contracts between the City of Palo Alto and their waste hauler and processor with the recent emphasis on domestic processing and traceability of recyclables.

Redirecting Recyclables - One City's Journey

In 2021, approximately 60% of Palo Alto's recyclables were sent to international markets where their fate and any negative impacts were not known. This presentation brings you along Palo Alto's journey of finding alternative solutions to sending recyclable materials to be marketed and processed internationally, and initiating discussions on the traceability of recyclables and related legislations with other jurisdictions and industry experts.



Sarika Bajaj, Refiberd

Sarika Bajaj is the Co-Founder and CEO of Refiberd, a seed-stage startup that is tackling the textile waste challenge through novel technology that sorts textile waste by material for a range of recycling applications. Refiberd's material detection system involves using NIR spectroscopy and AI to be able to accurately detect multiple blends in textile waste, including traditionally problematic materials like spandex and nylon, as well as multi-layered garments and "disruptors" like zippers and buttons.

Refiberd: Textile Waste Sorting for Recycling

This presentation will discuss the challenges faced and future opportunities around textile waste sorting for recycling, including topics like accessing sources of textile waste and what type of waste processing needs to be achieved for recyclers. We will also be discussing Refiberd's novel textile sorting solution and how to support the growth of early-stage start-ups in the space.



Joanne Brasch, California Product Stewardship Council

Dr. Joanne Brasch holds a PhD in Textile Economics and Environmental Analysis from the University of California, Davis, and has held lecturer and research appointments at UC Davis, CSU Sacramento, and Donghua University in Shanghai, China. She currently works as Special Project Manager at the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC), using Product Stewardship and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to promote a circular economy, including the state's first publicly funded recovery pilot projects for textiles, solar panels, and marine flares.



Textile Recovery Pilots and Policies in California

Dr. Joanne Brasch from California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) will present recent updates on several publicly funded textile recovery pilot projects and proposed legislation. Pilot results highlight a large GHG reduction potential, collaboration with carpet/mattress recyclers, and opportunities to support textile recovery infrastructure at thrifts, alteration, and garment cleaning businesses. Join CPSC in recommending local, state, and federal policy updates for textiles to address barriers to circularity and engaging producers for funded solutions.



Susan Collins, Container Recycling Institute

Susan Collins is President of the Container Recycling Institute and has worked on recycling and sustainability issues for more than 30 years. She leads CRI's research and works with environmental organizations, activists and governments around the world to educate on the benefits of packaging recycling. She holds degrees in Manufacturing Engineering from Boston University and Business Administration (MBA) from the University of California at Los Angeles.

What's New for California's Beverage Container Recycling Program: AB 179 and SB 1013

Join speaker Susan Collins to learn more about California's recently passed legislation, AB 179 and SB 1013, which expands the bottle bill to include wine and spirits, and modernizes , and the redemption infrastructure. Learn some of the important information from over 20 provisions, including: more than a billion dollars in new funding for recycling infrastructure and other activities; dramatic changes to convenient access to recycling and retailers responsibilities; and environmental benefits of recycling wine and spirits containers; And more!



Sadye Easler, Clean Up the Lake

Sadye Easler is a passionate conservationist residing in Lake Tahoe, CA. She joined Clean Up The Lake in August 2020 and has been instrumental in planning nearly 300 successful clean-up events, and removing over 55,000 lbs of litter from Sierra Nevada lakes. With a focus on remediation and mitigation, Sadye is dedicated to continuing her efforts through public education and youth programs.

From Trash to Treasure: How Clean Up The Lake is Revitalizing our Waterways

Clean Up The Lake is a Lake Tahoe nonprofit organization whose mission is to fight back against plastic and all forms of pollution in our global environment both above and below the surface. This talk will explore their litter removal tactics, the life cycle of litter after removal, and how they have turned trash into treasure.



Neil Edgar, California Compost Coalition and Edgar & Associates

Neil Edgar is co-founder and Executive Director of the California Compost Coalition, a statewide lobbying coalition that focuses on legislative and regulatory development regarding composting and other organics management options. Neil is also a 20+ year Senior Project Manager with Edgar & Associates in Sacramento, CA, a governmental affairs and environmental engineering firm specializing in waste reduction and other climate change issues. Mr. Edgar is Chair of the United States Composting Council's Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee and serves as a co-chair and policy liaison for the California Organics Recycling Council (CORC).



Composters' Challenges in Closing the Loop on Organics

This presentation will provide insight into the current status and continuing challenges of providing infrastructure solutions for SB 1383 implementation across the diverse culture of California. Additionally, the looming specter of SB 54 implementation and the rigorous, but necessary, requirements of AB 1201 begin at a critical time where we attempt to eliminate “disposable” products in favor of “compostable” or “recyclable” while recognizing that consumer convenience invariably trumps good intentions.



Benjamin Fahrer, Deep Medicine Circle and Top Leaf Farms

Benjamin Fahrer is the Director of Agroecology and Land Stewardship for the Deep Medicine Circle (DMC) and the owner of Top Leaf Farms a design/build company based in Berkeley, CA focused on Innovative Ecological Rooftop Farming Systems that help rewild our urban centers. A farmer of 25 years Fahrer has played key roles with bio-intensive land projects that have helped define regenerative practices and climate solutions that are scalable and can be easily replicated.

Composting the EgoSystem for EcoSystem Health

What happens when we design systems that increase cycling for increased yield and allow a re-wilding of our urban centers? Top leaf Farms has designed and built numerous closed looped urban rooftop systems that create almost no waste and are highly productive ecological engines. The Deep Medicine Circle is a non-profit that positions farmers as health care providers through the growing of nutrient rich food and stewardship of soil. We will hear the technical aspects of this project, closed loop composting and nutrient cycling and how all the food produced in a year, almost 10 tons, is liberated from the market economy and given to community organizations as a public health benefit.



David Gunnison-Wiseman, San Francisco Environment Department

David Gunnison-Wiseman is an Engagement Coordinator with the San Francisco Environment Department. In his role, David collaborates with community-based organizations, small businesses, and stakeholder groups to promote Zero Waste and other environmental programs to the San Francisco community with a focus on equity and accessibility. He leads Environment Now, an outreach team that works with San Franciscans through grassroots engagement and community-based activations.

Reuse Looks Gorgeous on You: How SF Environment Made Reusables Sexy and Fashionable

San Francisco Environment Department ran an outreach campaign from August-November 2022 about how everyday reusable items are easy to bring with you and can even be fashionable! Learn about how fashion, glamor, and diverse representation came together to connect residents with cutting down on upstream waste.



Judi Henderson, Mannequin Madness

Judi Henderson's mannequin fascination led to her creating a business 20 years ago that recycles, repurposes, and reuses mannequins. Her company keeps hundreds of pounds of mannequins out of landfills every year. Their mannequin recycling has earned the company a special achievement award from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mannequin Madness - We Make the World a Little Greener, One Dummy at a Time



We make the world a little greener, one dummy at a time. How our mannequin business in Oakland, CA keeps thousands of mannequins out of landfills every year.



Megan Kalsman, Carbon Leadership Forum (CLF) at the University of Washington

Megan Kalsman is currently a Policy Researcher with the Carbon Leadership Forum (CLF) at the University of Washington; she has previous experience managing environmental programs in local governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Megan specializes in advancing the procurement of low-carbon materials and informs the development and implementation of cross-sectoral climate policies targeting embodied carbon. Before joining the CLF, Megan completed her Master of Science degree at Lund University in Sweden in Environmental Management and Policy.

Reuse and Deconstruction Embodied Carbon Policies on the West Coast

This session will explore; what embodied carbon is and why it is important, the embodied carbon policy landscape, and lessons learned from case studies of reuse and deconstruction policies on the West Coast.



Kiana Kazemi, Circularity and Intersectional Environmentalist

Kiana Kazemi is an environmental justice advocate, entrepreneur, and storyteller, passionate about democratizing access to environmental education through creating intentional community spaces and resources that harness the power of radical imagination. Kiana is a UC Berkeley graduate with a degree in Data Science and Environmental Management, focusing on the intersection of technology and environmental justice. She is the founder of Circularity, a startup dedicated to creating tools that reduce the burden of everyday decision-making around sustainability, health, and ethics. Kiana is the Co-Director and Programming Director at Intersectional Environmentalist, where she develops and implements community projects at the intersections of environmentalism, education, and art.



An Introduction to Intersectional Environmentalism

A discussion of how identity and culture intersect with environmentalism and how an intersectional lens can be applied to today's most pressing environmental issues via case studies and visual maps that explore environmental justice. Participants will walk away with an understanding of environmental justice, intersectional approaches to EJ issues, and place-based solutions that the community drives.



Nicole Kurian, Californians Against Waste

Nicole Kurian holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning at the University of California, Davis. As Legislative Director at Californians Against Waste, Nicole serves as a lobbyist and coordinates the organization's legislative advocacy efforts, collaborating with stakeholders to research, create, and pass essential plastics, reuse, and environmental justice legislation. She most recently worked on Senate Bill 1046, which made California the first US state to ban produce bags; her work has been featured in *Vogue*, *Politico*, and *People*, in addition to other publications.

Waste and Recycling Legislative Update 2022/2023

Nicole's presentation will cover waste and recycling bills that passed in California in 2022. She will also go over new waste and recycling bills introduced in 2023.



Huy Le, San Francisco Environment Department

Mr. Le has 16 years of experience with household hazardous waste, including four years working at San Francisco’s Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility. He holds a BS in Biological Sciences from California State University, Sacramento and a MS in Environmental Management from the University of San Francisco. He is currently the Residential Toxics Reduction Coordinator for the City and County of San Francisco’s Environment Department.

Managing HHW From People In Life Transitions

Many residents store HHW in their homes and garages until a transition point in their life. The transition may be selling their home, moving to a new home, clearing out the home of an elderly or deceased resident, or preparing for the birth of a child. The HHW outreach campaign connects residents with information on San Francisco’s programs for safe disposal of HHW at this moment of high motivation and likely action.



Sandi Manor, BayROC

Sandi Manor is a 30+ year Bay Area media and marketing professional. Currently serving as the campaign coordinator for the Bay Area Recycling Outreach Coalition (BayROC) and marketing agency for the Central Coast Recycling Media Coalition (CCRMC), Sandi is experienced in helping multijurisdictional organizations achieve common goals in waste reduction and sustainability outreach.

Stronger Together; Regional Public Outreach Campaigns

Stretching public outreach budgets to educate our communities about waste reduction and landfill diversion is not only challenging, but also critically important. Learn how local regional coalitions constructively collaborate and combine



resources to produce compelling media campaigns that advance their common goals and help meet regulatory requirements.



**Robin Franz Martin, Joint Venture’s Food Recovery Initiative and
Susan Miller-Davis, Silicon Valley Food Recovery Initiative**

Robin Franz Martin came to Joint Venture’s Food Recovery Initiative in 2017 to head the award-winning *A La Carte* pilot program, bringing 20 years of experience in public health and community team building. During her tenure at Joint Venture, she founded the Silicon Valley Food Recovery Council and the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program (on behalf of all jurisdictions in Santa Clara County), and has also authored numerous reports on the subject. She serves as a board member for the Santa Clara County Food System Alliance and the Edible Food Recovery Technical Council of the California Resource Recovery Association.

Susan Miller-Davis is associate director of the Silicon Valley Food Recovery Initiative. She co-authored a 2022 report identifying opportunities to make the most of surplus food in Santa Clara County, and a 2017 report assessing food waste reduction strategies in Alameda County (under the auspices of NCRA). Susan also has a consultancy, Infinite Table, supporting businesses, public sector organizations, nonprofits, and community groups to build resilient economies, create regenerative food systems, fight food waste and tackle climate change. Susan is a member of the NCRA Zero Food Waste Forum

Sharing Successes, Learnings, And Innovations From Santa Clara County’s Food Recovery Program

The Joint Venture Food Recovery Initiative team will share successes and learnings from its work managing an SB 1383-compliant countywide food recovery program in Santa Clara County, coordinating implementation among 16 jurisdictions. The team will also describe regionally-funded work to explore innovative food recovery solutions and pilots, which will bring recovered food directly to people facing food insecurity in affordable housing settings and via consumer-facing apps.



**McKenna Morrigan, Seattle Public Utilities and
Stephanie Thomas, Cascadia Consulting Group**

McKenna Morrigan is the waste prevention and product stewardship policy advisor for Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). In this role, she advocates for state and local policies to advance SPU's vision of zero waste, and to support the development of a circular and inclusive economy. She is also part of Reuse Seattle, a city-led initiative working to make Seattle home to the first standardized, citywide reusable food and beverage container system.

Stephanie Thomas is Co-Owner and Vice President of Cascadia Consulting Group, and is the consultant lead facilitating the design, implementation, and expansion of Reuse Seattle. She brings 15 years of experience designing and managing sustainability outreach, engagement, and behavior change programs. Stephanie has trained and managed teams that have engaged thousands of businesses in communities all over the west coast to reduce waste, save water and energy, prevent pollution, and mitigate climate change impacts.

Reuse Seattle: A City-Led Partnership To Support Reuse In Food Service

McKenna Morrigan, Policy Advisor with Seattle Public Utilities, and Stephanie Thomas, Vice President of Cascadia Consulting Group and consultant Project Manager for Reuse Seattle will summarize the steps Seattle took to bring Reuse Seattle to life—from visioning and concept design to program evolution, launch, and expansion—in under 10 minutes! You'll hear about the different channels for action to advance reuse in the food service sector, from promoting BYO and durables for dine-in to creating an integrated system of reuse service providers with shared infrastructure. We'll cover the theory of change behind our phased implementation approach, and how each of us can work together to create a scalable reuse system that is convenient, equitable, and accessible for all.



Trevor Probert, StopWaste

Trevor Probert is a Senior Program Services Specialist on StopWaste’s Community Engagement Team. He develops partnerships with urban farms in Alameda County through composting technical assistance, compost donations, soil carbon testing, and co-facilitating the SWEET program (StopWaste Environmental Educator Training). Trevor also connects urban farms and cities to develop local Compost Hubs – community-hosted sites distributing free compost on behalf of cities and providing public education to residents.

Compost Hubs – Rooting Compost Givebacks in Community Partnerships

Jurisdictions in Alameda County are retooling their compost giveback programs in a way that provides exciting community co-benefits! Compost Hubs are hosted at urban farms and community gardens and offer free compost and educational resources to residents year-round. Compost Hub partnerships offer a unique pathway for meeting SB 1383 procurement targets while building the capacity and services offered by beloved community organizations.



Lily Raphael, Solutions Lab at the City of Vancouver

Lily Raphael is a systemic designer, action researcher and community planner with the Solutions Lab at the City of Vancouver, BC. Lily works on systems transformation in the social and public sectors, facilitating dialogue, learning, and experimentation for collaborators to deeply understand complex challenges facing our communities and to imagine possible futures beyond them. She is currently the Design + Experimentation Lead for the Circular Food Innovation Lab (CFIL), a year-long collaborative project to understand and experiment around reducing wasted food and increasing circularity in and around Vancouver’s food system.



Getting Unstuck: Finding Patterns and Intervening In The System In The Circular Food Innovation Lab.

In Vancouver, the Circular Food Innovation Lab utilized systemic design and experimental processes to understand the complexities of reducing wasted food and fostering equitable circular economies in the food sector. The presentation will share some of the things the lab tried and learned when trying to get unstuck, along with some promising possible solutions.



Ben Schleifer, Center for Environmental Health

Ben Schleifer works as the EDC Food Program Coordinator and works closely with K-12 schools around the country to help them serve food off of safer (and preferably reusable) food ware. As a former Environmental Educator with StopWaste, Ben understands the importance of working with schools to transform their cafeterias to being more sustainable, as well as teaching students better environmental values. Ben has a Master of Science Degree in Cognitive Neuroscience, and uses this expertise to understand how toxic chemicals can adversely affect brain chemistry, but also how to influence the behavior of young people and the school community at large.

Transitioning K-12 Schools to Safer Reusable Food Ware in California

Single-Use food ware items in K-12 schools in California produce mountains of waste from school lunches and encourage students to participate in a throwaway mind set. What is worse is that some of these single-use Foodware also contain toxic chemicals which can be detrimental to human health. Come learn about how the Center for Environmental Health is flipping K-12 school cafeteria across the state to safer stainless steel reusable Foodware and how school are saving money while improving the lives of students, teachers, nutrition staff, school admin and custodian through reuse.



Jesse Simons, SolarCycle

Jesse Simons is Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer at SOLARCYCLE, a tech-driven solar circular economy platform. Prior to founding SOLARCYCLE, Jesse served on the Executive Team of the Sierra Club as Chief of Staff and then National Program Director, overseeing a staff of over 800 and a \$160M annual organizational budget. He brings in-depth knowledge on climate and the circular economy and has extensive experience scaling and managing large teams in both entrepreneurial and established environments.

Solar Panel Recycling: Crisis or Opportunity?

Solar is one of the most powerful tools we have in our fight against climate change, but solar panels are retiring faster than previous research anticipated, creating a potentially significant new stream of e-waste. This presents a unique and critical opportunity to create advanced processes for repairing, reusing and recycling retired panels. In this session, participants will learn how SOLARCYCLE is partnering with residential, commercial, and industrial (C&I), and utility companies to build and scale the circular solar economy.



Jordan Wells, National Stewardship Action Council

Jordan Wells joined the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC) at its formation in 2015 and currently serves as the organization's Director of Advocacy and Communications. NSAC is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that will advocate for an equitable, circular economy anywhere in the U.S. Jordan is NSAC's registered lobbyist in California and has navigated numerous bills from inception to passage, including the first-in-the-nation Truth in Recycling Labeling law of 2021 (SB 343, Allen).



From a Linear to Circular Economy: How CA Policies are Leading the Transition

Historically, our make, take, waste, linear economic system has allowed producers to externalize the end-of-life costs of what they put on the marketplace onto people and planet. Transitioning to a circular economy will require policies that require producers to internalize these costs. Learn how cutting-edge producer responsibility legislation has the potential to take us circular.



Briana Zhen, San Francisco International Airport

Briana Zhen is the Environmental Operations Specialist at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). Brie plays a critical role in moving SFO toward its zero waste goals, including relaunching SFO Unites Against Hunger, which recovered over 12,800 pounds of surplus food for human consumption over 10 months, and ensuring ongoing compliance with SFO's Zero Waste Concessions policies, which eliminates single-use plastic foodware while transitioning to reusable, compostable, and recyclable alternatives. Brie is also the Green Business Coordinator at SFO, supporting businesses to certify as members of the California Green Business Network by implementing waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and pollution prevention measures.

Flying Toward Zero Waste: SFO Unites Against Hunger

Airports aren't often thought of as food recovery leaders or targeted locations to launch food recovery initiatives, despite having immense potential with the wide breath of various food service offerings, from airline lounges, sit down restaurants and retail shops. SFO Unites Against Hunger, the Airport's food donation program, offers a convenient way for Airport businesses to donate excess food to Bay Area residents who are food-insecure, and helps SFO maintain California Senate Bill 1383 compliance. In this presentation, SFO Environmental Operations Specialist, Briana Zhen, will share details on SFO's waste reduction initiatives, SFO Unites Against Hunger's operations, and how SFO has achieved over 14,000 pounds of food recovery within the past year.

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