



WORC December Newsletter

Congratulations to our new and newly re-elected board members

New to the WORC board are Andy Smith of King County Solid Waste Division and Liv Johansson of the Woodland Park Zoo.

Re-elected to the WORC board are Nehemias Chamla (Natural Selection Farms), Mary Harrington (Department of Ecology), and Reingard Rieger (Tilth Alliance).

Congratulations and thank you for your service.

Compost and Phosphorus Nutrient Claims

American Association of Plant Food Control Officials agree to recognize slowly available phosphorus claims in recycled organic soil amendments.

Phosphorus (P) is a plant essential nutrient that has increasingly become an environmental concern, and its use is limited because if excess phosphorus in the soil migrates to waterways, it can cause problems such as algal blooms and eutrophication. While most phosphorus fertilizers (inorganic) supply P in the form of orthophosphate, which is water-soluble (highly water-extractable phosphate), compost and most other carbon-based products possess only a small fraction of orthophosphate and other water-soluble forms of phosphate.

As such, the majority of phosphorus in recycled organics products is bound to organic matter and is provided in a slow-releasing form. To calculate appropriate fertilization rates, it is important to use testing methods that appropriately estimate the available, or water-soluble amount of P in a product. The problem is that phosphorus regulations and restrictions typically require total P, rather than water-extractable P testing data, as they are typically developed for chemical P fertilizers.

Last summer, WORC joined a large list of environmental organizations asking the American Association of Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO) to consider the water-extractable phosphorus test to be acceptable when making nutrient claims about compost and other recycled organic soil amendments. At the July AAPFCO meeting, the test method for WEP was found to be acceptable, however, sampling methods need to be further 'fleshed out' and the definition will likely go 'official' at the next AAPFCO meeting, scheduled for February 2022.



For more details on this topic see this article on [BioCycle.net](https://www.biocycle.net)

Soils For Salmon: Have scientists have found armor against the killer of Coho?



In the winter of 2021, about one year ago, news broke out [across the country](#) that UW and WSU scientists identified a specific chemical found in vehicle tires to be linked to Coho salmon deaths. The culprit is a chemical called 6PPD, which is essentially a preservative used to keep car tires from breaking down too quickly. It remains unclear how exactly this chemical kills coho salmon, but it may be doing something to the lining of the salmon's vascular system, says Jen McIntyre, an aquatic ecotoxicologist at Washington State University who has been studying this mystery for more than 15 years. While stormwater coming off roadways contains many pollutants, pinpointing 6PPD as a primary culprit affecting salmon is good news.

With this information, policymakers and stormwater program managers can plan mitigation efforts for this chemical. While that work is expected to take years to implement, the good news is that bioretention and rain gardens, which rely on mixes of sandy soil and compost to filter stormwater pollutants, have [long been observed](#) to be effective strategies to remove toxic pollutants from stormwater runoff.

Experiments have been done that demonstrate 100% of observed coho salmon being killed by exposure to stormwater road runoff, but 100% survival when coho are exposed to the same runoff that is first filtered through bioretention soil media. We look forward to keeping abreast of the emerging research, and learning if bioretention and similar soil-based stormwater BMPs are effective at removing 6PPD.

To learn more about this emerging research, visit [WashingtonStormwaterCenter.org](https://www.washingtonstormwatercenter.org)

Compost Facility Operator Training returned in 2021 with a hybrid in-person and virtual model

After a two-year-long hiatus, WORC's Compost Facility Operator Training (CFOT) has returned in 2021. But more importantly, it was a success! Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we were able to hold a 'hybrid' class with online and in-person components. This year's CFOT still had all of the best parts of the training (namely the unofficial pile building contest). Students toured two composting facilities and networked with peers in-person and online. The students got hands-on (and olfactory) experience with compost and compost feedstocks. And they learned about the various aspects of composting: biology, pile-building, regulations, marketing, math, facility design, and much more. The class had 44 students and the group was split into groups to attend the course at 5 composting facilities across Washington.

They were: Cedar Grove (Everett), Dirt Hugger (Dallesport), Natural Selections Farm (Sunnyside), Olympic Organics (Kingston), and Silver Springs (Rainier). We want to thank these facilities for hosting CFOT and making the training possible. Without the in-person component, our CFOT course would not have met the regulatory training requirement for compost facility operators (WAC 173-350-220). 2021 was a unique year and hopefully we'll be able to return to full in-person trainings for 2022 and beyond. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's training successful!



Legislative Updates

A lot is going on in virtual Olympia related to organics recycling. This is an exciting and also an important time to stay up-to-date as legislation can move fast during a short session this year.

The biggest potential legislation is being discussed in the statewide *Organics Management to Reduce Methane and Combat Climate Change Workgroup*. This group was convened by Zero Waste Washington along with other stakeholders. The purpose of this endeavor is to improve the organics management system in Washington. This group is using California SB1383 law as a starting point and gathering stakeholder input to inform policy tailored to fit Washington. Some policy provisions being discussed include:

- Statewide, mandatory organics collection programs with diversion targets
- Edible food recovery programs and how that ties to Ecology's new Use Food Well Washington Plan
- Procurement requirements for jurisdictions
- Significant capacity planning and regulatory improvements
- Increased education and outreach
- Contamination reduction strategies

Here is the website to the working group: <https://organicsworkgroup.org/>

Nominate Your Organization for a Member Spotlight!

Every newsletter, WORC features one of our member organizations or board members, and yours could be in the 'spotlight' next!

Not everyone may know about what you do, so let us know and we can feature you. If you've been featured in the past, you can be featured again!

Let us know if you have a cool new project or awesome staff you want to highlight

If you are interested in becoming more involved with WORC this year, consider submitting a spotlight or even joining a committee.

A full list of committees is here: <https://www.compostwashington.org/committees>

Email kate.kurtz@seattle.gov for more information.

Check out the latest news, view past newsletters, and see legislative updates on the WORC website

<https://www.compostwashington.org/latestnews>
<https://www.compostwashington.org/legislation>