

# US COMPOSTING COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2015



US Composting Council®

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**The US Composting Council (USCC)** is a national, non-profit trade and professional organization promoting the recycling of organic materials through composting. The USCC is the only national organization committed to the advancement of the compost manufacturing industry.

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*Synagro*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



There has always been a certain tension between technology and Mother Nature, yet during the past year we've seen some good examples of both at work for the US Composting Council

and the compost manufacturing industry.

We're moving with technology, as our members in the past year add smartphone apps to their products that allow compost depth estimation, temperature gauges and other convenient timesavers. We even went high-tech for the first time this year at COMPOST2015 with a Conference App.

But even as we put these new tools to work, the essentials of our industry remain the same. Compost continues to be the answer of choice and of nature for challenges like stormwater management, erosion control, and environmental remediation. In the past year (the International Year of Soils) we've heard more and more about compost and its role in fighting soil degradation, food insecurity and climate change. We were all inspired by John Wick's news of the work of the Marin Carbon Project and climate change at this year's conference.

The Market Development Committee and International Compost Awareness Committee have been moving these messages out with

the sustainable solutions kit and presentations, and work with Joe Lamp'l of "Growing a Greener World". Compost is going mainstream, and we're seeing articles about organics recycling in more daily media every day; it's one of the reasons we chose to highlight this year's I.C.A.W. by advertising in the *Wall Street Journal*.

It's been a good year for membership, with our first benefactor member, Caterpillar Inc., stepping up to the plate and a new, exciting partnership with BioCycle Magazine that provides that publication now to every member for their full year of membership, and our Compost Communicator newsletter is now published quarterly in the magazine.

We continue to need your support for the USCC and our sister foundation, the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation. We need you both as members and financial supporters, to keep our industry voice strong—even more so as organics recycling finds a permanent home in the mainstream.

Nature has provided a solution to a large part of recycling our organic resources. So Be Loyal to Your Soil—thank you for your commitment and continued dedication to the industry.

— Rod Tyler, President

## Board of Directors

Matt Cotton, *Integrated Waste Management Consulting*

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**Board Emeritus:** Eliot Epstein, Ph.D.,  
*Epstein Environmental Consultants, LLC*

**Interim Executive Director:** Al Rattie

# HISTORY

Established in 1990, the US Composting Council (USCC) is the only national organization in the United States dedicated to the development, expansion and promotion of the composting industry. The USCC achieves this mission by encouraging, supporting and performing compost related research, promoting best management practices, establishing standards, educating professionals and the public about the benefits of composting and compost utilization, enhancing compost product quality, and developing training materials for compost manufacturers and markets for compost products. USCC members include compost manufacturers, marketers, equipment manufacturers, product suppliers, academic institutions, public agencies, nonprofit groups and consulting/engineering firms.



BioCycle, a premier industry periodical, is the official magazine of the Council.

# VISION

We believe that the recycling of organic materials is central to achieving healthy soils, clean water and a sustainable society.

We will work to achieve this vision by:

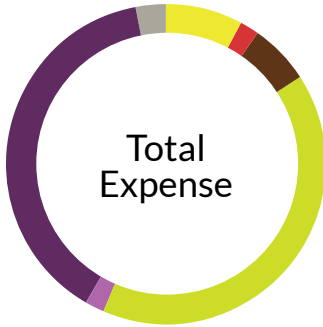
- Educating professionals, policy-makers and the public;
- Serving as an advocate to promote composting;
- Encouraging and promoting research and adoption of best management practices;
- And bringing together organics management and allied professionals, generators of organic residuals, policy-makers, regulators, and product users to pursue this vision.

# MISSION

The US Composting Council (USCC) advances composting and promotes compost use to enhance soils and provide economic and environmental benefits for our members and society.



# THE FINANCIAL PICTURE



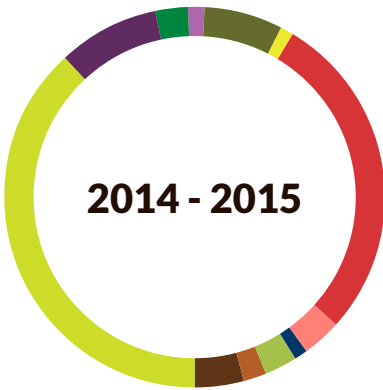
- Goal 1: Promotion
- Goal 2: Market Development
- Goal 3: Advocacy
- Goal 4: Education & Conference
- Goal 5: Governance
- Goal 6: Operations
- Goal 7: Research

	Total Income	Total Expense
Goal 1: Promotion	1%	8%
Goal 2: Market Development	13%	2%
Goal 3: Advocacy	5%	6%
Goal 4: Education & Conference	56%	41%
Goal 5: Governance	0%	2%
Goal 6: Operations	24%	39%
Goal 7: Research	1%	3%

*\*Note: The USCC ended the fiscal year more than \$90,000 ahead of budget expectations*

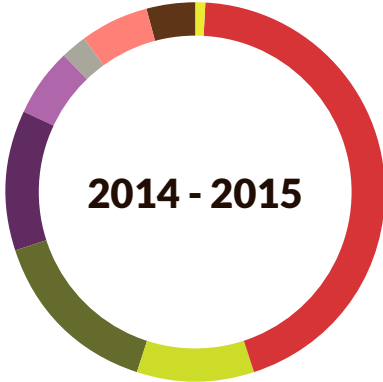


# MEMBERSHIP



## Membership Levels

- Benefactor (<1%)
- Corporate (4%)
- Corporate Sustaining (<1%)
- Farm Composter (3%)
- Friend of Composter (6%)
- Government (58%)
- Individual (13%)
- Large Business (4%)
- Large Government (2%)
- Medium Business (10%)
- Non-Profit (2%)
- Small Business (42%)
- Student (5%)
- University (2%)



## Membership By Industry

- Compost Manufacturers (44%)
- Academic (10%)
- Equipment (heavy & products) (15%)
- Individual (12%)
- Consultants (6%)
- Affiliates (2%)
- Public Agencies (6%)
- Non Profits (4%)
- Haulers (1%)

# CHAPTERS & COMMITTEES

Chapters are a significant asset to the compost manufacturing industry with their on-the-ground familiarity with local issues, local decisionmakers and their ability to effect change. We're proud that two new chapters and a new committee formed this year: the Minnesota Composting Council, Virginia Composting Council and MD-DC Committee. The USCC website now features an official chapters page where visitors can find chapter contacts and steps for forming a chapter.

## Chapters:

California Composting Council (*Association of Compost Producers, Dan Noble*)

North Carolina Composting Council (*Jorge Montezuma*)

Minnesota Composting Council (*Ginny Black*)

Virginia Composting Council (*Pieter Conradie*)

MD-DC Composting Committee (*Mike Toole, Brenda Platt*)

Watch for more growth in Colorado!



Our members return each year for the advocacy, networking and leadership that they expect from the USCC as the voice of the organics industry and compost manufacturing. We increased membership benefits this year with BioCycle magazine subscriptions to all members for the duration of their membership (formerly only a 3-month benefit) and a free Member Marketplace, a great program for national members who want to offer discounts, promotions and incentives to fellow members; we expanded our state chapter outreach and the services to our Young Professionals.

## CATERPILLAR<sup>®</sup>

We were proud to welcome Caterpillar Inc. as our first Benefactor Member and they are already providing training, support and direct benefits to our members.



FY2015 membership had a great start as a result of Biodegradable Products Institute and Kimberly Clark becoming Benefactor members.



### Young Professionals:

This important membership group is active and energetic under the leadership of Gary Nihart, with 100 people on its interest list. The group held its second networking event at COMPOST2015 and successfully rolled out its first five pairs of Mentor/Mentees for the Mentoring Program.

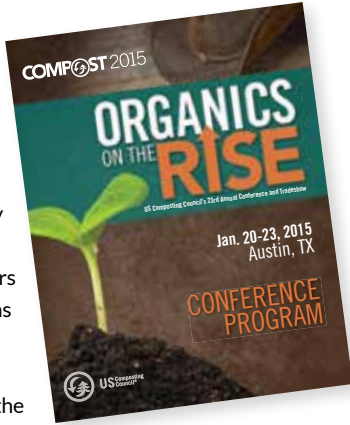
*Pictured Right: Corinne Coe and Scott Woods, Mentee and Mentor*



# COMPOST 2015

## Professional Composter Certification is on the way!

The 11th Hour Project awarded the Composting Council's Research and Education Foundation (CCREF) a \$75,000 grant that will lead toward professionally certified compost facility managers. By 2017, compost facility operators can join other professions with credentials as CPC, or Certified Professional Composters, escalating the profile of an industry that already has hundreds of facilities in the U.S. The 11th Hour Project, a program of the Schmidt Family Foundation, seeks projects that cultivate conservation of natural resources.



# 1,300

Total Trained in Compost Manufacturing and Organics Recycling Issues

# 900

Conference Attendees

CompostNOW Workshop for Austin Restaurants and Food Establishments

# 75

people trained

Pre and Post-Conference Workshops and courses taken:

# 190

people trained



## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS, COMPOST2015

Pashon Murray, *Detroit Dirt*  
John Wick, *Marin Carbon Project*





## Compost Event Training:

 **12**

**People Trained** (Kansas)

## Compost Technician Training Sessions:

 **88**

**People Trained**

(Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, and State of Georgia)

## Compost Operations Training Course:

 **107**

**People Trained**

(Upstate New York, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Pomona, California)

## Scholars and Compost Manufacturing Professionals

Two students earned scholarships at the high school and college level through CCREF's second year program—among an increasing pool of applicants—17 for the Young Investigator (college) scholarship.



Brandon Erny, a student at Sterling College in Craftsbury, VT and originally of Milwaukee, WI, received \$2,500 toward his research project on the impact of biochar on nutrient retention in compost. Haley Wall of Fort Worth, Texas, is the 2014 Sustainable Scholar, from Fort Worth Country Day School receiving a \$1,000 scholarship. This year she is a freshman at The University of Texas at Austin.



CCREF also secured and managed a grant that will pave the way for a Certified Professional Composter designation. The \$75,000 grant was awarded by The 11th Hour Project to the Composting Council's Research and Education Foundation (CCREF).

As a result of the grant, by 2017, compost facility operators can join other professions with credentials as CPC, or Certified Professional Composters. The 11th Hour Project, a program of the Schmidt Family Foundation, seeks projects that cultivate conservation of natural resources. The Communicators Inc., a Dallas-based certification company, is working with the USCC training team which has been tapped by the Foundation to carry out the program.

CCREF also headed up upgrades to the Curb to Compost and Compostable Plastics Toolkit websites.

# COMPOST MARKETS



STA Certified Compost has been on the mind of gardening guru Joe Lamp'1, of the PBS television show, *Growing A Greener World* (GGW). The USCC has partnered up with Joe to raise awareness about the importance of buying and using Certified Compost. GGW is broadcast on PBS stations across the U.S., to help spread the news about the many benefits and uses of STA Certified Compost. All of those who attended our 2015 annual conference got a sneak peek at Joe's work through his introductory video.

You can read more about GGW at: [www.growingagreenerworld.com](http://www.growingagreenerworld.com)



Joe Lamp'1  
Host, *Growing a Greener World*

## State Agencies Requiring STA Labeled Compost Only:

AKDOT	SCDOT
CalTrans	TXDOT
CODOT	WIDNR
FLDEP	WIDOT
NCDOT	WSDOT
NYDOT	IADOT
ORDOT	MNDOT

Companies in the STA Program = 251

Compost Products = 283

Compost in the STA Program =  
Approx. 3.9 MM tons  
Approx. 7.8 CYs

States with STA Participants = 35

Labs in STA Program = 12



## Happy Birthday, STA!

The STA program, which was inaugurated in 2000, is now 15 years old!

# Compost: The Sustainable Solution on the Road

USCC continued to press forward on reaching consumers—from private-sector and government officials interested in water conservation, stormwater runoff prevention and erosion control, to nurseries, landscapers and consumers—with a user-friendly approach, beginning with a simplified web address: [Compostsolution.org](http://Compostsolution.org).

A series of white papers on compost use for green infrastructure is part of the new Sustainable Solutions kit for use by STA members.

3

**Presentations**

3

**Exhibit Booths**

3

**STA Members Who Exhibited Materials**



# ADVOCACY

## Advocacy Initiatives: The Voice of Compost Manufacturers

USCC power comes from being a cohesive group pressing for fair regulation of compost manufacturing operations.

### 2014 Actions:

Comments on the Washington State Department of Ecology stormwater regulations and handbook integrating compost; that approving compost based on feedstock is an onerous and unscientific approach.

\*An Action Alert urging California USCC members to support Assemblywoman Eggman's sales and use tax exemption for equipment purchased for the purpose of recycling organics and other materials.

- Comments and meetings with US Food and Drug Administration leaders urging limits in the Food Safety Modernization Act's restrictions on compost that meets federal pathogen reduction standards; webinar on Avoiding Pathogens in Compost.
- Meetings with various US Legislators about pressuring EPA on persistent herbicides
- Support of AB 1594, California's bill to transition away from a practice of using green material as "alternative daily cover" (ADC) to a higher use of compost and mulch production and supporting California AB 1826, requiring businesses to separate their food scraps and yard trimmings for composting or anaerobic digestion.

### 2015 Actions:

The first Lobbying Bootcamp session was featured at COMPOST2015 in Austin, TX, instructing attendees on the basics and best practices of lobbying and legislative action.

\*In Maryland, USCC supported for the second year bill requiring large food generators to source separate and recycle their organics if facilities for compost manufacturing exist within 40 miles. The bill was tabled for a Task Force to study the issue.

- The USCC supported Hawaii's Diversion of Organics Measure requiring organic residuals discarded by large generators to be recovered through composting or other means, instead of landfilled or sent to waste-to-energy facilities. The bill was deferred.
- In Hawaii, USCC supported a bill that would allow composting to occur with a special permit on agricultural land having soil classified as Class A or B productivity, by the state Land Study Bureau.
- USCC was called on to lead the white-paper content, discussions and planning of the organics management portion of the National Recycling Coalition's Sustainable Materials Management Summit, advocating for policies such as our Model Compost Rule Template, better product testing and labeling, and increased training and certification of professionals.

# STRENGTHENING THE INDUSTRY

## Fight Persistent Herbicides: We Escalated the Effort in 2014

Thanks to successful fundraising and active lobbying through the Downey McGrath Group, in 2014-15 we stepped up the fight:

- EPA has incorporated several key requests as part of the reregistration process, including research to establish limits on persistence impacts; and EPA will not approve any new herbicides pending the research that is being required for renewal of current herbicides.
- Fred Michel, a Ohio State University professor, conducted a survey of incidences in spring/summer
- Three new factsheets will educate compost manufacturers about persistent herbicides
- A confidential online reporting mechanism is now live on the USCC website to report suspected persistent herbicide contamination



Photo: Tom Creech, of Creech Services, Lexington, KY, was one of the USCC representatives to visit elected officials on Capitol Hill in 2014.



US Composting Council  
Proud Member

## USCC Re-Registration Comments to EPA

1. Approved uses are restricted so that the likelihood of compost exceeding 1 ppb of Aminopyralid or 10 ppb Clopyralid is minimized.
2. Labels are revised to reflect those restrictions
3. Use is restricted to licensed applicators
4. Lab methods are developed and approved that allow independent labs to test and verify the amounts of herbicides in compost and feedstock samples.
5. A persistence limit, or maximum half-life in compost, be established



## International Compost Awareness Week

May 5-11, 2014 | 92 Poster Entries

ICAW Entries, Countries Represented

51% US | 6% Iran | 5% Czech Republic | 38% Other

1,200 posters distributed, including a poster to every member of the California State Assembly



# Join Us for the Big25 of Bringing the Compost Industry Mainstream





2015 is a big year for the US Composting Council—we celebrate not only our 25th Anniversary of formation and 15th anniversary of the USCC's Seal of Testing Assurance program (STA). We're proud of the role the USCC has played both in the rise of organics recycling and the compost manufacturing industry; training and education of our facility operators; and the demand for quality compost (STA began with 23 companies

and we closed 2014 with 213 companies, from 36 states, representing over 270 compost products—more than 7,800,000 cubic yards of STA compost!)

Watch next year for a more consumer-friendly trademarking of STA compost...Certified Compost! The concept already resonates well with the landscaping industry; our goal now is to make certified compost a household word in garden centers as well. Another way you'll see more of this is a national promotional campaign for Certified Compost featuring Joe Lamp'l, gardening guru and host of the PBS TV show, "Growing A Greener World". Lamp'l will also be our keynote speaker at the January 2016 USCC Annual Conference in Jacksonville, FL!

We're delighted to roll out the carpet following for Professional Composter Certification after years of planning. A year of researching and organizing the program thanks to a grant from the 11th Hour Foundation, in 2016 you can watch for opportunities to take the exam that, along with meeting educational and experiential requirements, will award you with the new designation. At the same time we'll be marketing to the world that these credentials are sought after for high-quality compost operations.

In the upcoming year you can also expect The Composting Council Research and Education Foundation to grow its impact with a new part-time development officer. We will also unveil handy, information-packed fact sheets to help you understand and deal with potential incidences of persistent herbicides; and you can look forward to enjoying the Annual Conference in a city that is new to USCC—Jacksonville, FL January 25-28, 2016.

This year's efforts will all put compost manufacturing solidly in the mainstream, where communities, public agencies and advocates are expecting to find us. Our 25th will be a year to celebrate!

— Al Rattie, *Interim Executive Director*



**US** Composting  
Council®

[www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)

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