WORC 2018 Awards

Nomination: Barr Tech

Category: Composter of the Year

Prior to opening in 2010, Ted Condon spent more than three years running around the state drumming up support. With tenacity, he managed to secure grants and wisely partnered with a construction company. He also got an ideal piece of property at a sweet price. While he worked hard to get it started, Ted Condon did an excellent job of reducing his exposure to financial risks.

Barr-Tech was a start-up that would make a great match for an experienced operator. In 2010, Tim O’Neill, President and founder of Engineered Compost Systems, played match-maker and introduced Ted to a very good operator, Scott Deatherage. Tim twisted Ted’s arm to have Scott fly in from California for an interview. Scott got busy working on Bart-Tech’s marketing. Barr-Tech set about penetrating the ag market. At first the traditional farmer wasn’t interested – they were habituated to chemical fertilizers. But the company made a deal with one of them to start applying compost. After a couple of seasons, the other farmers wondered why the first farmer was out-producing them. Since then, Barr-Tec pretty much sells out most years. Barr-Tech also forged a relationship with a company that trucks and applies the compost to farmer’s fields – so it easy for farmers to get it done. Barr-Tec has a uniquely isolated spot, so even if they were producing strong odors likely no one would know. Here is a picture of Ted and Scott at the facility smiling proudly on top of their new equipment supplied by ECS.

Nomination: John Cleary, WA Department of Ecology, Eastern Regional Office, Spokane

Category: Composting Champion: Qualifying Air Emissions at WA Compost Facilities

In an effort to understand the types of emissions and volumes of chemicals being released to the atmosphere during the composting process, John Cleary has performed air emission sampling studies at most of Washington’s large compost facilities. This information will be instrumental in developing air quality parameters that are specific to Washington State facilities.

John sought and received the training he needed on an “EPA certified” sample procedure for assessing emissions so he could help composters reduce emissions and odors and improve composting operations. After the training, John fabricated the necessary equipment and obtained the supporting digital probes and meters for on-site measurements, creating a sampling kit for the Spokane Office. Not content to just look at composting operations in Eastern Washington, John received permission to travel to other parts of the state to sample the air at other compost facilities.

John has an excellent understanding of the technical side of his sampling procedure and he can translate that information so the rest of us can understand it, too. While John does a great job in the technical
arena, it is his energy and enthusiasm combined with his outgoing nature that make him a pleasure to work with. He is received warmly by both staff in the agency and by facility owners and operators. His highest goal is to provide excellent personal service to clients while also doing solid technical work.

Aside from the air sampling project, John also started a project at the WSU compost facility which is now developing into a major initiative. This project is co-composting with admixed biochar to decrease emissions and keep more of the volatile S and N compounds within the compost.

John’s dedication to improving Washington’s organics management systems and to helping operators understand odor emission issues makes him a composting champion!

Nomination: David McDonald

Category: Lifetime Achievement

As a biologist and environmental scientist, David McDonald’s long career at Seattle Public Utilities, has focused on soil science, environmentally friendly landscape design and development practices. His involvement with the organics industry spans more than 30 years. He was part of the WORC team that conceived of and launched the Soils for Salmon Initiative, which initially resulted in multiple one day workshops that were attended by many hundreds of participants. At one of them, then King County Executive Ron Sims gave a rousing speech about how compost would save the world and left giving hugs all around on his way out. It was an exciting time and these workshops had big impacts, bringing people together that typically would not know each other or have any idea why compost was important to their work. They would leave inspired and with new ideas and new connections. This also paved the way for significant new requirements in the Western Washington Stormwater Manual for using organics to restore soil functions.

As the excitement passed and cornerstone regulations were changed, other team members shifted their focus to other activities, but David carried on the work from then to now, making presentations, designing websites, updating materials and continuously teaching all of us the enormous importance of compost, organics and healthy soil. David continues to be active in developing and promoting programs that are beneficial to the organics industry and beneficial to the environment. WORC owes a deep debt of gratitude to this pillar of the organization.

Category: Lifetime Achievement

Andy Bary, a senior research scientist at WSU in Puyallup for more than 30 years, has long supported and helped guide WORC’s mission to the organization’s great advantage. His lengthy career includes extensive research and educational programming focused on soil science, nutrient management and agricultural utilization of organic byproducts such as biosolids, composts and animals waste. WORC is indebted to him for his instrumental role in putting on WORC’s Compost
Facility Operator Training, perhaps the organization’s most influential activity. His liaison with WSU-Puyallup is critical to the effectiveness of this training and multiple other outreach events. Throughout projects, CFOT classes and the unplanned challenges that come along, we can rely on Andy to reduce our stress. His sense of calm, his ability to maintain an even keel and to offer a sense of humor, and his practical outlook all added to WORC's effectiveness. Andy’s “It depends” mantra is a light-hearted invitation to be not afraid of complications. As a scientist, Andy consistently encourages us to think through a problem rather than accept the bumper-sticker answer. He always makes himself available for consultation on technical issues that arise for WORC and its members. Andy has made innumerable contributions to the organics industry through his work conducting and guiding research on a range of organics applications. Thanks to Andy’s studies, we’ve gained a deeper, richer understanding of appropriate ways to use compost, biosolids and animal wastes. Over the years, Andy has been there to counsel the changing Boards, helping to keep us on track through the multiple issues we’ve addressed. We continue to learn from this understated master who has given so much of his time to guide so many of us. His dedicated presence remains a valuable anchor at WORC’s Board meetings. Thank you Andy.

Out-Going Board Members:

It is with massive appreciation, great respect, and sadness that we say good bye to members of the Board who are stepping down at the end of this year: Jetta Antonakos and Tami Thomas.

Jetta Antonakos: We will miss the enthusiasm, dedication, and humor of Jetta Antonakos as she spearheaded efforts on the annual conference. Her thoughtful input and gentle humor made working with her a pleasure. Jetta is switching places with Dan Corum so she will be the alternate Board member from City of Tacoma so we haven’t lost her completely, but we may not get to see her and interact with her as much as we want to!

Tamara Thomas: The Board was appreciative of the clear thinking and focused ideas that Tami Thomas brought our Board meetings and event planning. WORC as a whole benefited from her participation and commitment to making WORC better.