

Organics Recycling Working Group Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 4, 2026 1:00- 2:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Contact/Chair: Michael.Wonsidler@sdcounty.ca.gov

Agenda

1. Introductions

- Ashley Swauncy
- Dave Didonato, City of Chula Vista
- Diana Jamaledine, City of Solana Beach
- Dr. Craig Kolodge, San Pasqual Valley Soils
- Edward Baskin, City of San Diego
- Emily Schuetz, CalRecycle
- Heather Heckman, City of Santee
- Heather Holland, SD Master Gardeners
- Jessica Toth, Solana Center
- Julia Gallaway, County of San Diego
- Leana M, UWE
- Michael Wonsidler, County of San Diego
- Monica Martinez, City of El Cajon
- Natalia King-Quick, County of San Diego
- Nicole Grucky, City of Solana Beach
- Priscilla Flores, City of Oceanside

2. SB 1383 (General, Education/Outreach, Procurement, etc.)

- a. County of San Diego mailed out an educational newsletter to all unincorporated properties reviewing organic waste programs and how and why to participate. This effort has led to increased visits and engagement on the County website.
- b. San Pasqual Valley Soils (SPVS) has a new Dairy Support Program for SB 1383, offering compost procurement credits at a reduced cost to jurisdictions across California. SPVS will produce material and spread on its own land – \$10 per yard, \$14.50 per ton. There is currently no limit on the tonnage available, with potential for expansion in the San Pasqual Valley's 14,000-acre agricultural preserve, and that the program operates on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - i. Contact craig.kolodge@spvsoils.com for more info or to express interest.
- c. WWF is doing a new series of grants to support food waste prevention.
 - i. [Ending Wasted Food - Grant Application](#) World Wildlife Fund is funding organizations on the front lines of change — with a goal of significantly reducing wasted food in grant-supported communities. Two tiers of grant opportunities are now available:
 1. Innovator Grants (\$75K–\$300K). Support focused creative, locally tailored strategies to motivate target audiences to prevent wasted food.

- 2. Catalyst Grants (\$300K–\$750K). Support larger-scale projects to implement household wasted food prevention strategies across a variety of communities.
 - ii. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, tribal and local governments, U.S. territories and states, and higher education institutions.
 - iii. Applications are due September 1.
 - d. Compost Caravan recent tours in Irvine
 - i. [The Compost Caravan | Association Of Compost Producers](#)
 - ii. Group discussed interest and potential to hold a similar event in San Diego
3. Compost & Mulch
- a. Discussion on challenges in compost procurement and application, including contamination, acceptable particle size depending on spreading location, and misconceptions about compost effects. Solutions offered included finer screening processes, improved protocols, and educational outreach.
 - i. An unforeseen contamination issue that jurisdictions have observed is contamination from vehicles used to transport compost, emphasizing the need for inspection and proper protocols to prevent unwanted materials from entering compost during distribution.
 - b. Is the use of compost a stormwater concern?
 - i. No. When compost is produced and applied correctly and meets the specs, it will filter and clean watersheds. An expert on the call confirmed compost is one of the best management practices for stormwater management and watershed protection. The key elements are the type and quality of the compost being applied in the watershed, namely:
 - 1. Not all compost is created equal. Inputs, particle size, etc. all impact differently. Some are extremely effective compared to others.
 - 2. A common myth is that all compost is full of nitrogen, however this varies based on the materials in the product and its intended application. Some compost products can be used to remove nitrogen and phosphorous.
 - ii. [The Soils for Salmon program](#) in Washington is a project designed to clean up creeks from fertilizer runoff using compost and mulch. The program has many successful case studies.
 - c. Does compost cause weeds because of what's in the blend?
 - i. This is a common misconception. Weed seeds lie dormant in soil so when you're applying compost to this soil, it allows for the right conditions for the weeds to finally germinate.
 - ii. Using a layer of compost followed by a thick mulch layer (3 to 4 inches) will effectively smother weed seeds. Mulch prevents weed emergence by exhausting seed energy and conserves water.
 - iii. Always think about a refresh program when you're adding compost and mulch to maintain the levels of material annually.
 - d. Giveaway Events
 - i. [City of San Diego Miramar Greenery Open House](#)

- ii. Discussion on countywide fall planting season compost/mulch giveaway push. September-October would be best time.
 - iii. September 12 Master Gardener event
 - e. Countywide Resource Hub by Jurisdiction
 - i. Master Gardeners are looking to start a page for county-wide compost information.
 - f. Application
 - i. Guidance, Trainings & BMPs
 - 1. Tip sheets and specifications
 - a. [Compost and Mulch Use Toolbox](#)
 - g. Conversation on the use of palm for mulch material as a fibrous, low-nutrient mulch suitable for erosion control and stormwater filtration. Discussed the production, including the double grinding and composting process, market demand, environmental safety, and connections to urban wood studies and fire suppression applications. There is interest from watershed sector for a local alternative to imported coconut coir, which is also often more expensive. SPVS is producing the product under the term “Monkey Hair” mulch and it is very popular.
4. Member Topics:
 - a. Compostable Plastics
 - i. Petco Park use of compostable products. The ballpark is working directly with the Republic’s compost facility to evaluate which materials can be accepted and ballpark management will ensure they are using the approved items.
 - 1. More details at biocycle.net/petco-park-padres-composting-zero-waste/
 - b. Agritourism & demonstration sites
 - i. Group discussed connecting with the Farm Bureau and seeking out existing committees working on this issue, potentially including the [Farm Bureau Working Group](#).
 - ii. There is a San Diego oceanography study assessing how manure application impacts the ocean.
 - c. Healthy Soil connections
5. Legislative Updates
 - a. No updates.
6. Roundtable, News & Events
 - a. 6/4 Compost Caravan Tour
 - b. 6/5 Tour of Otay Landfill/Sustainability Park
 - c. 6/13 [City of San Diego Greenery Open House](#)
 - d. 6/16 at the County Operations Center: [San Diego Urban Forestry Workshop and Roundtable](#)
 - i. Unified Wood Economy is conducting a local urban wood study, exploring market opportunities for palm and eucalyptus, including potential use as

brush management for fire suppression. Invite collaboration with local stakeholders to design wood waste solutions.

1. [San Diego: Phase II - Unified Wood Economy](#)
2. For more information Contact Leana - leana@uweconomy.org

7. Adjournment- next meeting 7/2/2026 (first Thursday 1:00- 2:30 p.m.)