



CDRA Member Spotlight: September 2021



Tracie Bills
SCS Engineers

What materials do you recycle? Can you describe the volume and types of incoming materials you process?

My company does not recycle material; we design, build and construct C&D landfills and facilities, and assist collection companies and processors with permitting.

How did you get started in the business?

I have an environmental studies degree focused on teaching and decided to shift gears into the environmental world. I was trying to find an environmental job and it was back in the days when super fund sites were big, and most jobs posted in the newspaper (before internet!) were environmental engineering positions. I answered an ad "customer service representative needed for garbage company", and I got the job! I spent five years at Recology (Norcal Waste Systems back in the day).

What are the biggest challenges in your market and C&D recycling?

I worked for a county government years ago and was responsible for the waste assessment forms for C&D recycling through the planning department. I would tell contractors to take their material to an approved C&D recycler, and make sure at least 50 percent was recycled. For me, the biggest challenge has always been to get contractors to understand what is recyclable and to work with the processor to make sure they meet the recycling standards. The RCI verification has been a fabulous addition to getting facilities signed up and accountable for reporting, as well as a tool to educate construction companies and contractors on being more aware of the material they bring to the facility.

Where are the biggest opportunities?

C&D material weighs a lot and for cities, recycling C&D material is a huge opportunity for increasing diversion numbers. There is also a lot of opportunity for innovation with reuse and creating new products, which many of the facilities we work with have tried to capitalize on.

How long have you been a member of CDRA?

SCS has been a member for 11 years.

What inspired you to join CDRA?

Michael Gross with Zanker Recycling inspired me to join. I attended the first CDRA conference and found the people honest and passionate about what they do. I have been hooked ever since!

What do you find most rewarding about working in this industry?

I find that the people I work with are the most rewarding. Our industry is small but mighty. We are innovative and creative, and I love being around those who love being in the recycling industry as much as I do.

What challenges have you faced over the years and how have you overcome them?

I find it difficult to get government to understand the importance of supporting C&D infrastructure, and to assist with providing funding and other opportunities to help increase recycling. I have worked with jurisdictions to not just check the box, but to fully understand the repercussions of what they are doing, and how they can support our industry in a way that will benefit them in the long run.

What's something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know?

I am an identical twin and, according to my twin, we are mirror twins. I guess it is true because she is left-handed and I am right, and we part our hair in opposite directions.

How do you think the industry is changing and what trends do you see coming up on the horizon?

I believe the industry is changing due to the demand in making choices that are better for the environment, while keeping aligned with company profit. While we always hope that sustainability and saving the world is a driver for change, we know the most important component to any business is money. More automation will help with labor issues, newer more innovative processes for end markets, and reuse of materials will be a big component in the future.

What advice would you give to someone interested in this industry?

Seek out mentors to guide you, listen to those around you to understand the problems and lessons learned to make change, enjoy the work you do, and always be a part of the CDRA!

Best piece of business advice you've gotten or learned over the years?

Once you join this industry, it will become part of you, and you won't turn back. Enjoy the ride!

Join Now (<https://cdrecycling.org/membership/>)
