



2026 Winter Training

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

MCIT | 100 Empire Dr., St. Paul, MN, 55103

Tentatively accredited for 5.5 hours for Type II or Type III MPCA Solid Waste Landfill Operator Recertification

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Check-In for Registration & Social Time

Coffee and snacks will be provided!

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Welcome & Presentation of the Mike Hanan Solid Waste Administrator of the Year

Gabbie Batzko-Conley, President | SWAA



9:00 – 9:45 a.m.

EPR Update

Mallory Anderson, Packaging EPR Coordinator | MPCA

Angie Lemar, Lead Environmental Planner | Foth



Mallory Anderson leads implementation of the new Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act, which requires producers to fund a statewide program that will result in all packaging being refillable, reusable, recyclable, and/or compostable by 2032. Prior to the agency, she worked in solid waste and policy for Hennepin County where she supported the business recycling program, including the food waste requirements.

Angie Lemar has over 20 years of solid waste, recycling, and organics planning experience. She has been working with Foth since 2022 and has been focused on many MN based projects during that time. Angie is part of the team assisting the MPCA and Eunomia with the Needs Assessment for Packaging EPR.



9:45 – 10:00 a.m.

Break

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

MoviTHERM & Fire Prevention Panel

Todd Faulkner, Sales Director | MoviTherm

Dave McNary, Assistant Director | Hennepin County Department of Environment & Energy



Todd Faulkner is a thermal technology professional with 19 years of experience delivering solutions for industrial condition monitoring and early fire detection. After spending 15 years with FLIR Instruments on the hardware side, he has served as a consultant, certified thermography instructor, and now a solution provider with MoviTHERM, holding Level II thermographer certification. He has worked extensively with utilities, recycling facilities, and manufacturing operations, and outside of work he enjoys family life with his wife, three children, and five grandchildren.

Dave McNary has over three decades of experience working on solid waste issues for local governments. Currently, Dave oversees Hennepin County's Solid Waste Division, which includes Waste Reduction and Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste, Waste-to-Energy and transfer station operations.



11:00 – 11:30 a.m.

SCORE Update

Ben Crowell, Planner | MPCA

Ben Crowell has been a solid waste planner and the SCORE Coordinator for the MPCA since 2015. Prior to that, he was the Solid Waste Administrator for Jackson County. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family.

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

MN Biochar Update

Jim Dnten, Carbon Sequestration Program Manager | City of Minneapolis

Jim Dnten is a professional geologist with 40 years of experience in the environmental field. Jim created the Carbon Sequestration Program at the City of Minneapolis and is constructing a pyrolysis facility by the University of Minnesota. In 2012 he first encountered the concept of biochar in Afghanistan while on an agri-business development team.

12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:00 – 2:15 p.m.

SWA 101: PFAS Panel

Ryan O’Gara, Government Affairs | SKB Environmental

Steve Vrchota, Director | Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management / Chair MRRA

Trista Martinson, Executive Director | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

Nathan Danielson, Senior Consultant | Plasma Blue



Ryan O’Gara has served as the Government Affairs liaison of SKB Environmental for the last 25 years. Ryan is also currently serving on the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and serves as the Solid Waste Subcommittee Chair for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

Steve Vrchota has worked in the Waste to Energy and material separation industries for over 30 years. After a few years consulting on mixed waste processing plants, Steve is currently in the position of Director for Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management Board and oversees the operations of the Mixed Waste Processing Facility, the Waste to Energy plant, and recycling and recovery operations.



Trista Martinson is a seasoned public servant, military veteran, and nonprofit leader with over 30 years of experience across military, nonprofit, and government sectors. In August 2024, she became the inaugural Executive Director of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E), a joint venture serving over 800,000 residents and 70,000 businesses in Minnesota. In this role, she leads initiatives focused on waste reduction, recycling, and clean energy production, including the implementation of the Food Scraps Pickup Program and the development of an anaerobic digestion facility.

Nathan Danielson has more than 30 years of experience in agricultural and industrial biotechnology product development and is currently assisting Plasma Blue in introducing their technology to the market. Mr. Danielson graduated from the University of Colorado with a Bachelor of Science degree in molecular biology and biochemistry. He earned a Master of Science degree from the University of Colorado for his work on metabolic engineering in ethanol producing organisms to utilize cellulose. He has an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis.



2:15 – 2:45 p.m.

CDL Proposed Rule Updates

Jon Buck, Land Permits Unit Supervisor | MPCA



Jon Buck has worked in several regulatory roles at the county and state level over a 12-year career in solid waste, hazardous waste, and recycling programs. Currently, he oversees the Major Aboveground Storage Tank Facility program, Hazardous Waste TSD Facility permitting program, and CDL Rulemaking at the MPCA.

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Legislative Update

Brian Martinson | Association of Minnesota Counties

Brian Martinson is the Environment & Natural Resources Policy Analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties. In that role, he also serves as government relations staff to the Solid Waste Administrators Association, Minnesota Association of County Planning and Zoning Administrators, Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers and Minnesota Association of County Agriculture Inspectors. Brian has a strong background in state legislative and policy work with previous work as a Minnesota Senate staff member and Director of State Government Affairs for an agriculture cooperative.



3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Save the Date!

SWAA Annual Conference

September 23 – 25, 2026

Holiday Inn – St. Cloud