



**Mission:** The Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition (IFSCC) is a thriving not-for-profit organization advancing diversion and composting of all organics in Illinois through advocacy, program implementation, market and business development, policy, and outreach.

### Minutes November 6, 2023

# of Attendees: 64

**Welcome** (Amy DeLorenzo, IFSCC Conductor)

**Speaker Spotlight:** We learned about Mindful Waste's new vermiculture and environmental education center, The Wormery! IFSCC Member Mindful Waste presented on their vermiculture operations as well as their inaugural season of facilitating onsite educational camps, field trips, and multi-generational learning events for their region.

Website [HERE](#).

Presentation [HERE](#).

Jennifer Kainz is a co-founder of Mindful Waste, where she is Chief Worm Farmer and Co-Educator (among countless other roles). Jennifer holds a B.S. in zoology and geology from the University of Wisconsin. She developed a passion for low-waste living while serving for two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural West Africa. Upon returning to the States, she worked as an animal care specialist at Brookfield Zoo, where she continues to serve as a governing member ambassador. Jennifer earned her master's degree in conservation biology through Miami University with a focus on organic waste recycling. She has applied her passion for composting to many jobs, including managing a zero waste food pantry and a spent grain composting program at Wild Onion Brewery, located in Lake Barrington, IL. You can reach Jennifer at [jennifer@mindfulwaste.org](mailto:jennifer@mindfulwaste.org).

Renee Blue is a co-founder of Mindful Waste, where she serves as Chief Wordsmith and Co-Educator (among countless other roles). Renee holds a B.A. in English from Kenyon College, and has worked as a professional writer and informal educator for more than 20 years. She grew up exploring the outdoors alongside her father, a biologist and geologist, and is passionate about inspiring children to feel connected to the natural world. After observing the amount of food waste in her sons' public school cafeteria, Renee delivered a TEDx talk on the topic of school food waste, entitled Lessons from the Lunchroom. In addition to her work with Mindful Waste, Renee serves on the Village of Barrington's Environmental Advisory

Committee. You can reach Renee at [renee@mindfulwaste.org](mailto:renee@mindfulwaste.org).

### **Q&A**

Q: What kind of worms do you use? Red worms?

A: Red wiggler worms (there are no more native worms). Red wigglers are everywhere! These are the composting worms that are in the top six inches of the soil. They are very good at breaking down nutrients. Jumping worms are doing damage to the forest floors, etc. We have not seen invasive jumping worms on our property yet. Hot tip: Source compost locally! This helps reduce the spread of the invasions. Be careful! But know that red wigglers are helpful/good worms.

Q: How long do the red wiggler worms last?

A: 1-3 years. The population can double very quickly! Red wigglers in the wild may not survive a Chicago winter, but the ones that are near/in a compost pile may actually thrive. If they live above 30 degrees they (or their cocoons) will survive!

Q: Where do you sell your worm castings?

A: On site two major times/year! \$4/lb per bag. We do not sell by the ton though.

Q: How to harvest?

A: "Bessie!" A custom made tool/equipment we use for sifting. We are not hand sifting anymore. See [HERE](#).

Q: Do you ever visit schools with the worms? I would love to see this sort of edu for CPS schools.

A: Yes, during COVID that was all we did! A traveling worm show. It is GREAT!

Q: Is it possible to visit the Wormery w/o being w/a school?

A: May-October YES! To schedule a tour, etc. Contact us.

Q: Mark Teegen: incorporates red wigglers in his backyard compost models.

A: Red wigglers do weather our winters and come back! KEEP IT UP.

**IFSCC Executive Director update** – (Benjamin Krumstok) [benjamin@compostingpartners.com](mailto:benjamin@compostingpartners.com)  
Happy to see the exceptionally widespread profile of our membership in IL –we are unique. We are not just an advocacy org. We also have a generator side: including grassroots orgs, homeowners, restaurants, etc to complete the loop. Benjamin expressed interest in folks joining the Strategic Planning this Thursday (or participating via this [Google Form](#)) and gave helpful tips to prepare everyone for the 2024 membership season. Invoicing is possible too. New members are always welcome!

**Board Chair and USCC update** – (John Lardner, IFSCC Board) [jlardnerpe@aol.com](mailto:jlardnerpe@aol.com)  
John gave reminders about IFSCC Strategic Planning and Membership Drive. Charting our path and see where we'll go in the future TOGETHER. You can help IFSCC identify topics YOU

think we need to focus on in the next 1-3 years (even if you're unable to join us) Fill out a few simple questions [HERE](#).

**Food:Land:Opportunity, funded by a grant from the Kinship Foundation and the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust.** (Jen Nelson, IFSCC Board) (No update)

[jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org)

**Admin update:** (Amy Bartucci) [illinoiscomposts@gmail.com](mailto:illinoiscomposts@gmail.com)

- [New on the IFSCC Blog](#): Compost Industry Tour photos and captions
- Save the Date: Membership Appreciation Event, March 2024: Details, forthcoming! Collaboration with Midwest Grows Green's Lawn And Land Forum: Natural Lawn Care Workshop and the IFSCC CMD Committee –stay tuned.

### **Committee Reports:**

- We Compost: Mary Beth Schaye and Amy Bartucci, Co-Chairs, [illinoiscomposts@gmail.com](mailto:illinoiscomposts@gmail.com)
  - We continue to seek new partners and build committee relationships to expand organics diversion in Illinois
  - We Compost window decals and our IFSCC social media shout outs continue to be our “fist bumps” to recognize six categories of entities that remain listed in our Directory
  - Future ideas for We Compost Program: 1) increase collaboration with all haulers, especially our member haulers. An e-intro with a point person goes a long way to getting the ball rolling 2) dust off our website with new content to show the diversity of our reach beyond restaurants 2) update our form to simplify the application process
- Communications: Amy DeLorenzo and Steph Katsaros, Co-Chairs, [amy.delorenzo@gmail.com](mailto:amy.delorenzo@gmail.com), [steph@brightbeat.com](mailto:steph@brightbeat.com)
  - Please join our committee meetings (even if it's just one meeting) to talk about future plans, including our committee budget requests
  - We try to best represent IFSCC in tabling and presentations, etc.
  - We can always use additional support –this can help increase visibility of your own efforts too.
- Policy: Liz Kunkle and Tommy Vaughan, Co-Chairs, [liz@ilenviro.org](mailto:liz@ilenviro.org), [tommy@wastenotcompost.com](mailto:tommy@wastenotcompost.com)
  - Tommy updated us on the IFSCC Policy Committee Compost Industry tour planning. Underway –stay tuned and read the recent [blog](#) for more info.
  - Liz reminded us that making the policy connection during ICAW is great timing with the Illinois legislative season. Compost Awareness Week and International Compost Awareness Weeks are valuable education campaigns and increase our impact/build power throughout the state.
- Education: Jen Nelson, Chair, [jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org) (No update)
- Compost Market Development: Kila Harwick and Mike DiMucci, Co-Chairs, [kharwick@greensoilsmanagement.com](mailto:kharwick@greensoilsmanagement.com), [mike@gpocompost.com](mailto:mike@gpocompost.com)

- We are educating and marketing the importance of having good quality feedstocks coming INTO facilities so that we can create clean, good, quality compost to be sold and applied and implemented throughout Illinois communities.
- All are welcome to join this committee to help support market development.
- International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW), Merleanne Rampale, Chair  
[MRampale@swalco.org](mailto:MRampale@swalco.org)
  - Amy provided an update on behalf of the committee.
  - We are waiting for the poster and video contest results and will begin meeting to plan ICAW 2024 later this month. Join us! [illinoiscomposts@gmail.com](mailto:illinoiscomposts@gmail.com)
  - New this year: adding an additional Adventures in Composting day (one will be Sunday, May 5 and one will be Saturday, May 11) Look for a Google Form to participate/be a site host in your community.
  - Hoping to increase our reach and include more counties throughout Illinois.
  - We're growing compost!

**Committee Meetings for 2023 (Contact [illinoiscomposts@gmail.com](mailto:illinoiscomposts@gmail.com) for links to join)**

- Communications - 2nd Monday, 2pm
- Compost Market Development - 3rd Tuesday, 9am
- Education - 2nd Tuesday, 12pm
- Policy - 3rd Thursday 10am
- We Compost - 3rd Friday at 12pm

**News from IFSCC Membership:**

Meeting adjourned:

NEXT MEETING: Dec 4, Noon

Please plan to join us. [illinoiscomposts.org](http://illinoiscomposts.org)