PANEL · TUE, OCT 13 · 9:25-10:00 AM

Circularity Expanded: Agriculture and Materials in the Local Climate Loop

Wood River Valley leaders showed how circularity works across waste, food and farms, with programs that last because they make fiscal sense and run on local partnerships, not big budgets. Diversion, smart compost bins, reuse drives and farm tours are models any small town can borrow.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Local and regional systems need each other.** Southern Idaho Solid Waste's 7-county cooperative and Blaine County partners diverted about 20,000 tons last year before it reached the landfill.
2. **Landfill methane can become local power.** SISW's 3.6 megawatt landfill gas facility turns methane into electricity sold to Idaho Power, which serves the same communities.
3. **Start small and let demand set the scale.** Hailey's smart compost pilot began with 4 locked bins in fall 2024. It now has 7 bins in 6 locations diverting about 2,000 pounds of food waste a week.
4. **Reuse can fund community services.** The Building Material Thrift Store at the Ohio Gulch Transfer Station resells materials locally, and proceeds fund the crisis hotline.
5. **Food dollars are an economic lever.** Produce travels about 1,500 miles on average. Shorter supply chains keep spending circulating locally, especially in resort towns that buy a lot of food.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Study your waste stream first.** Hailey found food waste was the county's second-largest landfill category, after construction and demolition debris.
- ☐ **Pilot without new policy.** Hailey launched its compost bins through a conversation with city leadership and grant funding, no ordinance needed.
- ☐ **Partner with your hauler and composter.** Clear Creek Disposal runs a twice-weekly food waste route to a local commercial composter, and compost goes back into local soil.
- ☐ **Find local homes before landfilling bulk items.** Sun Valley Resort rehomed 150 lodge beds through employees and the community in two weeks instead of a 4-hour haul.
- ☐ **Take elected officials on a farm tour.** Partner with your land grant extension office. Blaine County's tour served lunch from 20+ local farmers and food artisans.
- ☐ **Manage public land soil as a carbon sink.** Soil with more organic matter holds more water and carbon on parks, rights of way and buffer zones, not just farms.

BY THE NUMBERS

~20,000 tons
Diverted from the landfill last year, SISW and partners

3.6 MW
SISW landfill gas to energy facility

~2,000 lb/wk
Food waste diverted by Hailey's compost bins

~19
Recycling streams at Sun Valley Resort

150
Lodge beds rehomed locally in two weeks

~1,500 mi
Average distance produce travels to the plate

WATCH OUT FOR

! Demand can outrun a pilot: Hailey's bins overflowed within weeks, and funds set aside for outreach went to buying more bins.

RESOURCES

Southern Idaho Solid Waste
sisw.org

Western SARE
westernsare.org

Future Roots
futureroots.org

USDA NRCS
Cost-share programs for more efficient farm irrigation

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