



Healthy Land  
Clean Water  
For Life

## COMPOST: Turning Waste into Wealth (a residues-to-riches story)

Southern New England Chapter serving Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island since 1946

### SPEAKER INFORMATION – SNEC SUMMER MEETING, 5 AUG 2016

<p><b>Bill Obear</b> Owner <a href="mailto:bearpath@comcast.net">bearpath@comcast.net</a> (413) 320-1262 cell</p>	<p><b>Bear Path Farm</b> 134 Webber Road West Whately, MA 01039 <a href="http://www.bearpathfarm.com">www.bearpathfarm.com</a></p>
<p>When I left my last engineering position, I was committed to starting a business in the environmental field. I wanted to make the world a little bit better thru my work. I slowly began to investigate a few recycling related business opportunities. I was somewhat familiar with composting, since I had composted my food scraps and garden wastes for many years. Then it occurred to me that I had the land and already owned a small front-end loader. So I just needed to get a quantity of some basic compostable materials (manure, sawdust, horse-bedding, leaves etc.), mix them, turn them and see what would happen. Bear Path Compost now has a customer base of over 1,200 users in over 50 Western Mass towns.</p> <p>Bill's commitment to sustainable forest management is less well-known. Of the farm's 50 acres, 35 are forested with a diverse mix of hardwoods (red oak, sugar maple, black cherry, yellow birch, white ash etc.) as well as eastern hemlock and some white pine. Bear Path Farm has been an official Tree Farm since 1984 and takes pride in the fact that our modest woodland is being sustainably managed under the guidelines of the American Tree Farm System and is certified as such by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). By meeting the rigorous FSC forest management standards, Bear Path Farm reaps multiple environmental benefits for its forestland as well as for the greater good.</p>	
<p><b>Mike Mahar</b> Owner <a href="mailto:mike@bearpathcompost.com">mike@bearpathcompost.com</a> (413) 386-4932 cell</p>	<p><b>Bear Path Compost LLC</b> 134 Webber Road West Whately, MA 01039 <a href="http://www.bearpathcompost.com">www.bearpathcompost.com</a></p>
<p>Brothers Mike and Pete Mahar grew up on Poplar Hill Farm just a half a mile up the road from Bear Path Compost. Since Poplar Hill Farm's dairy operation ended in 1998, Mike and Pete have worked alongside their father selling hay and raising a small beef herd. They've known Bill as far back as they can remember, having spent many years cutting the hay on his land. The three men often passed time talking about their interests in farming traditions as well as the future of Bill's compost operation.</p> <p>As Mike and Pete's interests in composting peaked, these casual conversations among neighbors grew to become a solid business plan for the future of Bear Path Compost. In the winter of 2015, Mike began working closely with Bill, learning how to manage and run the day-to-day operations of the compost business. Before long, Bill had prepared Mike to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure that Bear Path Compost remains a leader in producing high quality compost with impeccable customer service. Having worked alongside each other since childhood, it was only natural that Mike's brother Pete would join in this venture, allowing the brothers to continue to work on the Pioneer Valley land they grew up on.</p>	



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<p>Katie Campbell-Nelson is an Extension Educator for the University of Massachusetts Vegetable Program, with expertise in soil and nutrient management and sustainable agriculture. She conducts applied research and provides educational programming for vegetable farmers in Massachusetts and is an editor of Vegetable Notes, a publication with practical and up-to-date research based information for farmers.</p>	
<p><b>Geoffrey A. Kuter, Ph.D.</b> CEO <a href="mailto:gkuter@agresourceinc.com">gkuter@agresourceinc.com</a> (978) 313-5110</p>	<p><b>Agresource, Inc.</b> 100 Main Street Amesbury, MA 01913 <a href="http://www.agresourceinc.com">www.agresourceinc.com</a></p>
<p>Dr. Kuter has more than twenty-five years' experience in the design and operations of composting facilities for biosolids, leaf and yard waste, food processing residues and various organic wastes. One of the original employees of International Process Systems (IPS), he was directly responsible for the design, start-up and operation of numerous in-vessel composting facilities and for the development of biofilter systems for controlling odors.</p> <p>A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he conducted postdoctoral research with Dr. H.A.J. Hoitink on the use of composts for the suppression of soil-borne plant diseases. This pioneering research has led to the widespread acceptance of composts in the nursery industry and the patented process of inoculation of composts with various microorganisms for biological disease control. Dr. Kuter is the author of more than thirty-five scientific and technical papers in the fields of solid waste management, composting, and soil microbiology.</p>	
<p><b>Hotze Wijnja</b> Environmental Chemist <a href="mailto:hotze.wijnja@state.ma.us">hotze.wijnja@state.ma.us</a> (617) 626-1771</p>	<p><b>Mass Department of Agricultural Resources</b> 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500 Boston, MA 02114-2151 <a href="http://www.mass.gov/agr">www.mass.gov/agr</a></p>
<p>Hotze Wijnja, Ph.D., joined MDAR in 2008 as the Environmental Chemist. He serves as the technical specialist for the agency to support various programs. In the Division of Crop &amp; Pest Services, he is responsible for various aspects of the pesticide regulatory program. He also contributes to programs that address environmental quality issues. Hotze is a member of the team that developed and implements the new plant nutrient regulations. His background is in agriculture and soil &amp; environmental chemistry. In addition to his position at the MDAR, he teaches chemistry courses at Suffolk University in Boston.</p>	