

Bio for Gretchen Olsen

Gretchen currently manages the Solid Waste and Recycling Division for the City of Stockton. Prior to her position with the City, she managed the Solid Waste Division for Tuolumne County from 2007 through 2011.

Gretchen began her career in the environmental field with Kitsap County, Washington in 1991. During her time as Solid Waste Manager for Kitsap County, she worked with the Cities, Tribes, and Military bases to develop an integrated solid waste system. The system included curbside recycling, drop-off recycling and garbage facilities, construction and operation of a household hazardous waste facility, and a public-private transfer and waste export station.

In addition to coordinating solid waste services and facilities, Gretchen and her staff in Kitsap County worked on many regional environmental initiatives. Kitsap was one of the founding members of the Northwest Product Stewardship Council and participated in the many challenges in early versions of Extended Producer Responsibility initiatives. Kitsap County has been a long time participant in EPA's Waste Wise program which truly features waste reduction as the core of successful waste management. Gretchen and her staff were continuously involved in legislative efforts to expand the role of EPR and many other projects to manage the solid waste system more effectively.

Spending time in Tuolumne County provided a clear lesson about how much can be done with limited resources. Gretchen and her staff of three coordinated the conversion of the curbside recycling program from a blue bag system to a commingled collection system. They also constructed a household hazardous waste facility which is much appreciated by the residents. Working with other rural counties under the umbrella of the Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC) demonstrated the value of pooling resources to address complex regulatory issues and pulling together to work on legislation.

Having experienced the benefits of working in a variety of collaborative partnerships throughout the years in product stewardship programs, recycling programs and sound solid waste systems, Gretchen looks forward to working with the Board of CPSC.

At home, in Copperopolis, Gretchen tries to be a good steward of her local environment and keep her gardens healthy and productive.