

Member Spotlight

Name: Natalie Reese, Program Director, (Certified Recycling Professional – CRP)

Organization: Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling

Email: nreese@westmorelandcleanways.org

Tell us about your PROP journey! Why did you join PROP and how long have you been a member?

I became a PROP member in 2011 and became a certified recycling professional in 2013. I also earned a specialization in recycling education, as educator is my primary role at Westmoreland Cleanways. Truthfully, I joined PROP because it was a requirement of my job. But I quickly realized that the certification classes and the contacts I made through the organization not only helped me understand my job, but also helped me be better at my job.

What has PROP membership meant to you both personally and professionally? Include relationships developed through attendance at conferences and/or participation and volunteer activities in your chapter and committees.

Why reinvent the wheel, when PROP or other PROP members have already done it for me. The classes and conferences I have attended have provided me with a wealth of knowledge. Yes, the organization's email blasts, and conference classes are a great resource for keeping up to date with the changing recycling industry. But they have also given me the opportunity to take tours of MRFs, Waste to Energy Plants, and different recycling manufacturers. These experiences have been a great addition to my presentations in the classrooms. I have also had the opportunity to steal lessons, teaching methods and program ideas from other PROP members either through a presentation, or simply talking with my classmates on breaks. Through PROP training, I have gained insight on human resources, public relations, digital media strategies, advertising strategies, and grant writing.

What's something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know?

Prior to this career, I was an environmental educator working seasonal jobs at a variety of nature centers and summer camps. At one such job, I taught on a buy boat in Baltimore, where we took students either on day trips or overnight trips out onto the Patapsco River and the Chesapeake Bay. We would perform water quality tests, trawl for fish, and at times go crabbing. The experience itself was great, but to make the experience more interesting during the duration of the job, (about 6 months) I lived on a National Historic Landmark, the Coast Guard Cutter Roger B. Taney. The Taney is the last warship floating that was present during the attack on Pearl Harbor. She was decommissioned in 1986 and has since served as a museum ship in Baltimore's inner harbor.