Facility Spotlight: New River Regional Landfill

Carol Sawyer, Jones Edmunds

The SWANA Florida Sunshine Chapter Landfill Management Technical Division Committee presents the first Facility Spotlight column. This column will feature Sunshine Chapter facilities and members while discussing issues and challenges with planning, designing, constructing, operating and closing landfills.

Q: How has life at NRRL changed from when it opened in 1992?
A: When I began working here as an operator, we were accepting about 100 tons per day total between Class I and Class III waste just from our member counties. I was working in non-air conditioned equipment in a 7-acre cell. Today, we handle on average 1,000 tons per day of Class I waste conversion project. The final product will be pipeline-quality fuel directly injected into the local pipeline. This will be a great beneficial reuse project for our facility and for the State.

Q: What project or feature at NRRL are you most proud of?
A: I am most proud of how progressive we are. We embrace new approaches and technology. We are proud of our positive impact on the solid waste industry through research and innovative designs. We have leadership and staff longevity; we are committed to operating a safe and reliable facility in our community.

Q: What is your biggest challenge?
A: Honestly, in Florida—weather. This impacts everything, and you have to be flexible and plan ahead. Regardless of the weather, you always have to think ahead of how to best take care of your customers, staff and the environment.

Q: What is the worst smell you can ever remember coming from the dump or a bag of garbage?
A: Years ago, a chicken farmer would bring containers of dead chickens that he had stockpiled for a few days. The smell from those containers as he emptied them was unbelievable.

Q: What does a landfill guy do for fun outside of work?
A: I really enjoy working on cars and hot rods. I will tinker with most things.

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