

Monroe Conservation Commission

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Susan Muro



Susan Muro

The Monroe Conservation Commission is pleased to recognize resident Susan Muro as Conservationist of the Month for August.

Susan is the "market master" of the Monroe Farmer's Market.

Freshness & fun at the Monroe Farmers Market

Monroe Courier

Written by Karen Dydzuhn

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Although their parents were busy picking out some luscious, mouth-watering, home-grown vegetables and fruits, children were having a good time Friday afternoon frolicking on the grass in front of Town Hall and eating organic blueberries purchased at Monroe's first farmers market.

The Monroe Conservation Commission manages parks and open space properties for the town's enjoyment and use, including Webb Mountain Discovery Zone and Webb Mountain Park. It is in the planning stage for the Chalk Hill Nature Trail, Lane's Mines Park, and the Halfway River properties.

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Hundreds of residents were eager to sample not only fresh produce but also a wide variety of homemade pies, jams, honey, salsa, baked goods, herbs, plants, goat soap and cut flowers displayed by local farmers.

According to Market Master and professional nutritionist Susan Muro, owner and operator of Perfectly Natural, a company offering personalized, holistic-living programs, this week's Farmers Market will include a visit from a goat and other "pets" owned by Kellie's Kreations. Vendors selling homemade breads, pesto and fresh mozzarella cheese also will be on hand this week.

The Farmer's Market is open every Friday, from 3 to 6 p.m., on the green in front of Town Hall, throughout the summer and early fall.

To kick-off Monroe's inaugural Farmer's Market, the town's Chamber of Commerce sponsored an official ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday afternoon. Joining First Selectman Tom Buzi were several state and local dignitaries, such as State Rep. DebraLee Hovey, Town Council Vice Chairman Tony Unger, Town Treasurer John Dry, and Chamber of Commerce President Terri Rotella.

A strong supporter of the Farmer's Market, Buzi praised Muro's outstanding efforts, saying that this was the culmination of one of the campaign promises he made to his wife.

"When I was running for first selectman, she made me promise to bring healthy foods into Monroe," he said, smiling. "When Susan first approached me, I told her it was a great idea. I think this is a tremendous opportunity for people to become healthier by eating nutritious, good foods. This is exactly what the town has been looking for, and I know Susan worked tirelessly to make this all happen."

Like Muro, Buzi's wife, Pam, was accustomed to spending a great deal of time and money traveling to farmers markets in Monroe's neighboring towns.

"I'm thrilled that we now have a market so close by," she said. "I also think it's great that it's on a Friday because then we have fresh vegetables for the weekend."

Many residents obviously shared her sentiments because business was steady throughout the day. Muro admitted to being overwhelmed by the market's tremendous turnout and positive response.

"It was a huge success," Muro said. "I never expected it to be this well received, but this proves that Monroe's residents really want this in town."

Muro also was especially pleased to see so many children present. "It was so great to see children playing and eating blueberries," Muro said. "It's so important that our kids come and see where their food really comes from, and have the opportunity to talk to the farmers and help to pick out what they are going to bring home."

Hundreds of residents were on hand when the market first opened at 3 p.m. About an hour later, more than 40 people were waiting in line to purchase fresh vegetables, such as cauliflower, cherry tomatoes, zucchini, broccoli and corn on the cob, from Shelton's Gazy Brothers' Farm.

According to Muro, two organic farmers sold out of their products, and several other farmers needed to restock their tables.

"I think this is really cool," said Sophie Winnick, 9, as she patiently waited in line with her mother, Sandy. "There are so many fresh

plants, vegetables and fruits here, and I love eating this rather than getting stuff at the store. This tastes so much better."

The Curry children also agreed. Mary, 7, was looking forward to eating fresh broccoli cooked with garlic and oil that evening. Her brother, Jack, 9, though, said he preferred to munch on raw carrots at home.

As she sipped on organic lemonade, Madison Julian, 3, added that her favorite vegetable was "corn on the cob."

Her mother, Tammy, commented that the arugula was especially delicious and couldn't wait to purchase more fresh produce this week.

Hovey, too, was pleased with the opening of Monroe ' first farmers market, saying that it certainly would foster "a sense of community."

"We have been promoting farms in the legislature, and I think it's really exciting that we will have a farmers market right here in town," she said. "I think it will bring a sense of community and be a place where people will be able to run into each other every week."

Dry agreed. "This is an exciting day for Monroe," he said. "This brings our community together and helps to stimulate the local economy and support the overall business climate here in Monroe."

Although Monroe's market originally was supposed to be held in the parking lot behind Monroe Congregational, Muro and Buzi agreed that it would remain on the grassy area in front of Town Hall.

"After seeing how smoothly everything ran, it feels right to have here, at this location," Muro said. "This is a beautiful area; it is visible from the road, and the farmers themselves really appreciate having the shade."

Actually, several farmers also complimented Monroe's government officials, saying that they appreciated all of the publicity and support for the market. They also noted that the customers here were friendlier than at other sites.

Seeks nominations

Residents can nominate themselves or other Monroe residents who are making a difference and having a positive impact for people, their resources and the environment (not necessarily only in Monroe). Nominations can be e-mailed to monroeconservation@monroect.org or mailed to the Monroe Conservation Commission 7 Fan Hill Rd. Monroe, CT 06468.

"We hope the Conservationist of the Month program will stir additional interest in the community to think about the environment and conservation, not just on Earth Day, one day a year, but on a monthly, weekly, even daily basis," Ellbogen said.

The Conservation Commission reviews all nominations at its regularly scheduled meeting on the first Wednesday of every month and will announce selections for Conservationist of the Month in the Monroe Courier and on monroeconservation.org.

In a society where millions of water bottles end up in landfills every day, and where fast food detritus defaces America's roadsides, activists like Mario and Kathy Hering are paving the road for the future. As spring comes into bloom, and the trash from the long winter is revealed, the Herings will continue to lead by example.

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The Monroe Conservation Commission
meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm
in the Town Hall conference room.

Public participation is welcome.

Email us at [Monroe Conservation](#) with questions, comments
or concerns about our properties and nominations for Conservationist of the Month.

