

Washington Earth Day Rained Out

Mother Nature Thoroughly Cleanses Herself But WEC Celebrated Anyway



Washington Environmental Council

Volume XXII, No. 2

Spring 2006 Update

Leadership - Denise Arturi – Build Grassroots Involvement



Denise checks in one of many participants at a sunny HHW Day.

She claims not to be a “contact sports person”, but plays ice hockey, rows fours and eights on Bantam Lake and teaches kickboxing. Denise Arturi is the out-going President of the Washington Environmental Council and during her two-year tenure has guided the organization back to its grassroots legacy. She has done this with a mild mannered, participatory style.

Her strategy has been simple – get as many people as possible involved with the smaller community events that define environmental stewardship in Washington. For

example, with her leadership, the growth in Washington's participation in Hazardous Waste Day has outpaced the adjoining towns. The photo above shows Denise at work at Hazardous Waste Day 2005. She has been a strong proponent of increased recycling, management of invasive species and major outreach educational programs.

Born in Greenwich, CT, Denise and Peter, an attorney, moved to Washington in 1982. They raised two boys – Toby, 21 and Sam, 18. Sam is off to college this fall moving the Arturi household to the empty-nest category with more time to “re-find myself”, says Denise.

When asked how the town has changed in the last 20+ years, Denise points out that Washington has always been a town of “second homes”. However, she goes on to observe Washington

has shifted from a community of summer homes to one of weekend homes producing a new challenge for organizations like WEC. “How do we ensure that weekenders are fully informed and involved in the environmental issues faced by Washington when they are here only briefly?”

One solution is the creation of the WEC website - WashingtonEnvironmentalCouncil.org. Accessible even when out of town, information will be available on critical local environmental issues such as the 109 North development at the town border with New Milford or the status of the Shepaug River Agreement with Waterbury. To be launched in early summer, the site will also provide newer Washington home owners with Best Environmental Practices for the maintenance of their property. Denise observes, “many weekenders over-groom their properties, for example, clearing the understory of their woodlots, not realizing this reduces the wildlife that brought them to Washington in the first place”.

Education has been a hallmark of Denise's WEC presidency. The Harwood Lecture Series has been increased to several times a year. At the upcoming Earth Day (Sunday April 23), there will be a demonstration planting of native species at the Town Hall pond. And under the committee leadership of Board member, Elliott Davis, a trout-in-the-classroom and water monitoring program has met with enthusiastic support from local schools.

On WEC's 35th Anniversary this year, Denise commented, “Many of the issues Washington faced 35 years ago are still with us today. WEC's challenge is to continue as the guardian of Washington's natural environment and make sure the entire community is engaged in the process. It's been my pleasure to continue that legacy during the past two years”.

Washington Environmental Council

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Guardians of Washington's Natural Environment

Announcement of Annual Meeting

Washington
Environmental Council
2006 Annual Meeting

Monday, June 5, 2006
7:00PM

Steep Rock Offices
(Old Firehouse)
Bryan Memorial Plaza
Washington Depot, CT

- Review of Accomplishments
- Election of Board of Directors
- Presentation of Scholarships

Nominees for Officers:

- President – Elliott Davis
- Vice President – Dan Sherr
- Treasurer – Kathy McGarry
- Secretary – Natalie Dyer

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