



Beallsville, MD – June 12 marked the opening of a new farmers market, **The Common Ground Market**, which highlights the produce, artisans, vendors, and natural beauty that Montgomery County’s Agricultural Reserve offers to the DC metro region.

[The Common Ground Market](#) is a result of partnerships between Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA), Montgomery Parks, local councilmembers and regional planners, and individual farmers and agricultural groups. The market is run by Christina Nanof of [Our Green Acre](#) in partnership with the Common Ground Co-Op, a collaboration of the Reserve’s female farms including [Plow and Stars](#), [Moonflower](#) and [From the Earth Foods](#).

Other Vendors Included:

Three Graces Farm

Persistence Farm

[The Reserve Tours](#)

Wooly Queen

[RB Savage](#)

The Pampered Chef

Allie’s Prickly Art

[Montgomery Countryside Alliance](#)

[Linda’s Luncheonette](#)

[Grandma Kona](#)

[Java Cruiser](#)

Councilmember Roger Berliner, Planning Chair Casey Anderson, and MCA Co-President Jim O’Connell and MCA Executive Director Caroline Taylor collectively participated in the ceremonial ribbon cutting at Owen’s Park in Beallsville.

Major goals for the market include providing supplemental income for farmers, enhancing producer-consumer relationships, and increasing access to locally-sourced food.

“This market has the opportunity to be a real economic engine for these rural communities,” said MCA Co-President Caroline Taylor.

The market’s opening day saw larger-than-expected crowds and hosted farmers selling vegetables, meats, eggs, and dairy products- market goers remarked that they had done their weeks’ worth of shopping at the market. Vendors had to restock inventory several times during the market hours to keep up with demand. The market also hosted artisans supplying handmade soap, wool; multiple food trucks; and a variety of educational farm animals.

More than a place to get the freshest food, the market will promote local support for the County’s 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve.

“In choosing a name for the market we thought of our community. Common Ground Market is meant to reflect our common values along with the fact that we all share in the benefits from the Agricultural Reserve. It is in our common interest to save it,” said Common Ground Market manager and founding partner Christina Nanof.

“By bringing people to the Agricultural Reserve – rather than bringing food into the city as is more common – we hope this farmers market will encourage market-goers to develop a deeper connection to this special place” said MCA Research Fellow Nicole Motzer.

Located just 35 miles from Capitol Hill, the Agricultural Reserve contains 500 farms and an active agro-tourism industry, and serves as an innovative approach to water preservation and food and fiber production within the bounds of a major metropolitan area.

Rapid population growth, rising land values, and the loss of agricultural livelihoods, however, continuously threaten the viability of the Agricultural Reserve as well as the land use regulations, re-zoning efforts, and limited-development policies upon which it relies.

The next market date is July 11 and every subsequent second Sunday through October. [The market is seeking more vendors to round out offerings to customers.](#)