



Targeted Grazing to Control Invasive Species



Partnership Brings Goats to Gaithersburg

The City of Gaithersburg and the Izaak Walton League have partnered on a project that will use goat grazing as a means of eradicating invasive plant species on adjoining properties at the Izaak Walton League headquarters on Muddy Branch Road in Gaithersburg.

Two herds of goats will call the property home for a 16-day period beginning July 5, 2011. Following the grazing, the treated area will be replanted with native species to prevent the regrowth of the invasive plants.

The Problem with Invasive Species

An invasive species is a non-native species whose introduction does, or is likely to cause, economic or environmental harm or harm to human, animal, or plant health. Since they evolved outside of the local environment, they lack the natural controls that keep their populations in check, such as predators, parasites, and pathogens.

Non-native invasive plant species present one of the greatest threats to the health and biodiversity of our parklands. These unwelcome plants disrupt the ecology of natural ecosystems, displace native plants, and impact native wildlife. Invasive species often outcompete native species, and can cause population declines or extinction.



Mile-a-Minute vine blankets the project area.



The treatment area (shown in red) is 7 acres.

The Benefits of Goats

The parcels are afflicted by overgrowth of a number of invasive species, including Mile-a-Minute vine and Autumn Olive.

Goats are an effective means of invasive species control, and many agencies have used them with great success. Goats use less energy than mechanical methods of removal, are more effective than volunteer labor, and are better for water quality than chemical methods of eradication.

If the project is successful, the City may consider using the goats in other areas of the City.

For more information, please contact:

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