

Goats at Gallup Park – Pilot Program 2019

The Parks department is piloting a brush removal technique known as 'goatscaping'. The city is contracting out 10 goats from the Twin Willow Ranch out of Milan for three weeks in early June to help clear out the overgrown brush on two of the Gallup Islands.

Background: City staff met last fall to discuss the possibility of contracting out goats to address brush-clearing needs. There are areas in our park system in which poison ivy and buckthorn are difficult to address in non-chemical ways and staff wanted to explore this old-fashioned solution to brush control. Various cities and park departments across the country are dealing with the same challenges we have here-- poison ivy and unwanted brush/invasive growth that is encroaching into mowed areas, pathways, around playgrounds and impacting views and park experiences. And they are hiring goats to help clear unwanted brush without the use of chemicals. Goats are an earth-friendly, effective and natural land clearer—happy to eat poison ivy and buckthorn!



Pilot program specifics: It will cost \$50/goat, per week from Twin Willow Ranch. The total cost is \$1,625 which includes a setup and transportation fee. This pilot program is intended to supplement the work already being done by park staff and volunteers. Overgrown brush and invasive plants are a challenge all over the park system and goats are not a replacement but an expansion of our efforts to manage brush and invasive overgrowth in the parks. This particular site where the goats will be working poses unique challenges for traditional removal of brush. The Gallup islands are only accessible from one end which requires extra time and labor to get brush off the island and to a truck in addition to the transportation back for composting of the brush. Goats working at this site will allow volunteers and staff the ability to address other priority projects. GIVE 365 will be holding volunteer work days at different areas within Gallup Park but in conjunction with the working goats and intends to educate volunteers and anyone in the community interested in learning about the goats' work and their progress through scheduled nature walks.

