



“THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK”
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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For Immediate Release:

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CITY OF WHITE PLAINS USING GOATS AT BALDWIN FARM

WHITE PLAINS, NY – September 30, 2016. The City of White Plains is taking an innovative approach to clearing the overgrown city-owned land at Baldwin Farm: Goats. That’s right, Goats. Goats are efficient munchers with, as it turns out, a special taste for poison ivy (and there’s *a lot* of poison ivy at Baldwin Farm).

Baldwin Farm is a passive park on Hall Avenue best known for its community garden plots. The land was privately owned and used for farming until 1979. Since its acquisition by the City in 1974, it has been used for passive recreational purposes and, since 1983, for community gardens as well. While it’s amazing to think that there was farming going on in White Plains until relatively recently, wouldn’t it also be pretty amazing to return that land to its original use?

Fear not, community gardeners, your plots are not in jeopardy! The City does not contemplate intensive farm uses on the property. It would, however, like to slowly re-introduce low intensity agricultural uses back to the property while maintaining public access. Toward this end two bee hives were brought in this past June. The bees have been busy making White Plains honey for several months now.

Insofar as the rest of Baldwin Farm is concerned, however, the first challenge was to clear the land, which had become seriously overgrown, infested with non-native plants, and used for illegal dumping. Enter the goats. Twenty-nine goats have been given seasonal employment at Baldwin Farm and tasked with tackling an all-you-can-eat buffet of invasive plants, vines and poison ivy. In doing so, they will be making room for native plant species, which will in turn attract more birds and butterflies and restore a sustainable ecological habitat.

(More)



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Goats have been successfully used in clearing and maintenance projects by the NY / NJ Port Authority, National Park Service, New York City Parks Department, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and cemeteries and colleges. The cost of the goats, which arrived in early September, was found to be half of what it would have cost to clear the land with machinery and cart away the debris. So, use of the goats is not only environmentally friendly but economical as well.

A fence has been erected along a 4 acre perimeter of Baldwin Farm. The goats are kept within this fenced in area and have been making steady progress clearing the land. The neighbors around Baldwin Farm have been driving a little slower down Hall Avenue, hoping to catch a glimpse of the friendly goats, and have been walking down to the Farm to pay frequent visits.

There was some excitement this morning when the City was alerted that the fence had been breached and the goats were loose on Hall Avenue. Thanks to the quick work of City staff and neighbors, all twenty-nine goats were safely retrieved and once again corralled inside the fence. The City is taking the incident very seriously and has opened a police investigation into the matter.

Baldwin Farm, like all city parks, is open from dawn to dusk. Residents may visit the goats during daylight hours but are cautioned *not* to pet them (for safety reasons, of course, but also because of the large quantities of poison ivy the goats have been living among means that if you pet them you could contract poison ivy from the oil on the goats' faces). Children must be accompanied by an adult.

The goats are expected to be on site until November. They will then take a break and spend the winter inside at the home in Rhinebeck, NY and be back in White Plains next spring.

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