



ENVIRONMENT METRO THE CITY

# Silo City Meadow Gets Goatscaped



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Goats are all the rage these days. Although they are not exactly replacing lawnmowers, *yet*, they have definitely replaced a few weed wackers. That's because these goats are typically unleashed into harsh habitats full of all sorts of backwood nasties that would have most people running for the hills. But these goats love it. They eat up the invasive knotweed, the poison ivy, and anything else that comes their way, including mugwort which acts as a deworming agent for the goats.





Now these Let's Goat Buffalo goats are tackling some of the overgrown thickets at Silo City (the meadow at 630 Ohio Street). These goats recently made an appearance during a press conference that was attended by Congressman Brian Higgins, Rick Smith, CEO, Rigidized Metals Corp. and owner of Silo City, Nancy Smith, Executive Director of the Western New York Land Conservancy, and Jennifer Zeitler, Director, Let's Goat Buffalo. The unveiling of the goats was also supported by NYS Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul.

It's good to see these decision making factions supporting greener pastures in Buffalo. This pilot project at Silo City is the perfect way to restore balance at a waterfront site that has experienced its fair share of industrial turmoil over the years. The industry left behind a dead Buffalo River, and a headache for everyone that has had to deal with its cleanup ever since. But after realizing \$75 million in federal remediation funds, the river, and its surrounding environs, is finally on its way towards being, dare I say it... swimmable. At least that's what Rick Smith hopes for his kids someday, in the not too distant future.





Rick Smith ponders the future of the meadow



Rick Smith plots his next move

Smith attributes much of the environmental rebirth of the Silo City grounds to Director of Ecology, Josh Smith, who continues to push the eco

envelope. Smith has led the charge on beekeeping, composting, rain gardens, invasive plant removal, pollinator plantings, and everything in-between. Now, the crew is embracing goatscaping, in order to weed out the hard to get to brambles that are considered *relentless*. An added bonus is that the goat droppings provide nutrients to the soil, which will then foster the growth of native species.

The newest additions to the Silo City ecology line-up come at a time when Rigidized Metals – a deep-textured metal fabrication company – is celebrating its 80th year in business. The company, located adjacent to Silo City, is synonymous with the site. For years, Smith and his family have been dedicated caretakers of the lands that host Silo City, because they understand that the business and recreational components are all intertwined. The new Blue Economy is escalating, replacing the industry that wantonly polluted the lands.

“When you visit this site the first thing you see are the historic grain elevators,” said Rick Smith. “But there’s nearly 30 acres of land surrounding those grain elevators, and developing a healthy ecosystem filled with biodiversity is part of our long-term plan for the site. It will be a natural attraction for future residents of Silo City, for visitors, and for the plants and animals that call Western New York home.”





Josh Smith keeps everyone guessing

The new Silo City goatscaping project is also a precursor to the pending Riverline project across the river – the nature trail and greenway connecting Canalside to the Buffalo River across from Riverbend (spearheaded by the Western New York Land Conservancy). This will be another waterfront project that will connect the people to the water, in a healthy and wholesome manner.

“This formerly industrial landscape will become a place where people can reconnect with nature and each other,” said Nancy Smith. “And we’re thrilled to partner with Let’s Goat Buffalo and Silo City on this innovative method to restore wildlife habitat. When The Riverline becomes a reality, this pilot project will put us ahead of the curve.”

More and more, people are pointing to our current COVID-19 crisis as the result of the environmental hardships that continue to escalate on this planet. Collectively, we must – literally – *get back to nature* if we are to begin the healing process.

It's so odd that we consider a gas powered lawnmower “normal” and a goat eating grass “foreign.” We have our wires crossed thanks to the lawn care industry that has polluted our minds for decades, telling us that we need to “mow mow mow” in order to be righteous citizens. *Spray chemicals! Mow the lawn! Make it look as unnatural as humanly possible, and you have achieved success!*

But in actuality, we have been harming the planet with these unnatural practices, which might ultimately be our downfall. The good news is that we know how to fix it, if we can care long enough for the planet to heal. The crew at Silo City understands this, which is why these goats are such a big deal.

“This Silo City project speaks to the heart of what Let’s Goat Buffalo was founded to do, which is re-introduce old ways of managing land to address modern problems. We are honored to work with the Western New York Land Conservancy on such a historically significant site at Silo City. We hope to do the same along The Riverline on the other side of the Buffalo River soon,” said Jennifer Zeitler, founder of Let’s Goat Buffalo.

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