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How to clear invasive species from Silo City? Get the goats!

By [MICHAEL MROZIAK \(/PEOPLE/MICHAEL-MROZIAK\)](#) • JUL 10, 2020

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The Western New York Land Conservancy's Riverline project, which aims to transform the former DL&W rail corridor in a waterfront featuring a nature trail and public art, is addressing the matter of invasive plants and weeds at Silo City in an unusual way. You could say they're letting some goats chew on the problem.

The pilot project at Silo City involves goats from the company Let's Goat Buffalo, who are dispatched to an enclosed space to eat away the existing vegetation. What will result, according to Conservancy executive director Nancy Smith, will be a more desired and balanced ecosystem.

"They're tipping the balance towards a more diverse ecosystem. The result will be beauty and color in the landscape, new homes for butterflies improved water quality and a stronger web of life," Smith said. "It's a great investment. Besides, it's really fun to see the goats doing their work right in the heart of our city."

Rick Smith, who owns Silo City and is chief executive officer of Rigidized Metals Corporation, welcomes the goats on to his property. But he gave credit to Joshua Smith, who was hired in May as Silo City's first-ever Director of Ecology, for putting forth the idea.



https://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wbfo/files/styles/x_large/public/2009 Niagara meadow.jpg

One of Let's Goat Buffalo's busy workers feasts on the weeds and vegetation on the grounds of Silo City in Buffalo. Goatscaping is a strategy being utilized by the Western New York Land Conservancy to reset the ecosystem along its Riverline project.

CREDIT MICHAEL MROZIAK, WBFO

The Conservancy also announced that the Riverline project, along the former DL&W rail corridor, has been added to the High Line Network of infrastructure reuse projects. This, Smith explained, will allow the Conservancy to share ideas for urban transformation projects.

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"It's very consistent with what Rigidized and Silo City and what Joshua's work is, which is really sort of healing this land in a very natural way, instead of digging up this stuff and carting it somewhere else because it's not quite up to speed," Smith said.

Since Let's Goat Buffalo opened last year, the goats have been quite busy satisfying their seemingly unending appetites. Let's Goat Buffalo's Jennifer Zeitler explained a second team of goats was busy that morning eating unwanted vegetation at the Stella Niagara Preserve in Niagara County.

The goal at Silo City is to eliminate invasive mugwort. But Zeitler says the animals are also able to safely eliminate unwanted plants that may be hazardous to humans.

"Poison ivy is a great example, which we actually have a lot of up at the [Stella Niagara meadow](#)," she said. "That's a tough plant for humans to get in and mitigate. A lot of landscaping companies are not comfortable going in, for obvious reasons, and taking care of a plant like that. Homeowners struggle with it. It doesn't bother the goats at all, and they actually quite enjoy munching away on that."



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