



ARDEN HILLS  
MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** June 13, 2023

**TO:** Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee

**FROM:** Mark Kelliher, PTRC Member

**SUBJECT:** Interim Buckthorn Management Solution

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**Proposal:** Hire the goat herding company known as *We Got Chew* to bring in a herd of 25-30 of its goats for browsing an area of ~7.2 acres in the Chatham Trails Area. Cost of project estimated to be \$4,500.

**Background:** Using Great River Greening as an intermediary, the City has applied for grant monies from the Minnesota Legacy Fund to remediate Floral and Hazelnut Parks. Any grant awards made will not become available until June or July of 2024, and will only be applicable to those two parks.

On a related note, in tandem with the goal of remediating our parks, considerable work has been underway by an intrepid team of volunteers in the Chatham Trails area in removing mature buckthorn. There are now approximately 7.2 acres where mature buckthorn has been eradicated or mitigated. With the removal of the mature buckthorn canopy, the understory is now benefiting from the previously obscured sunlight. Unfortunately, much of the understory is nothing more than just smaller buckthorn trees and shoots.

By waiting for the next cycle of Legacy Fund grant monies to address the Chatham Trails area, there is a risk that the buckthorn resurges, as small buckthorn becomes big buckthorn. To mitigate this risk, it is imperative that the momentum from all the accomplished work not be lost. According to Great River Greening, there are two methods for eliminating the smaller residual buckthorn. The first is to use herbicides. The second is to use goats to browse down the growth. Because Chatham Trails surrounds a wetlands which drains into larger aquifers, using chemical herbicides does not seem advisable. Goats are the answer. Great River Greening suggests an August or September goat grazing for optimal results.

Because of the interim time period that exists before the Legacy grant monies arrive next June for remediating Floral and Hazelnut, my proposal allows us to keep active in the buckthorn battles.

**Bidding Process:** I sketched the approximate areas of Chatham Trails where mature buckthorn has been harvested. Because of the wetlands and the various trails running through the area, I had to break the maps into three parcels, the total of which is ~7.2 acres. The Google Maps are below.

I sent these maps to the seven vendors with whom I had previously discussed the opportunity. Only two of the seven vendors still have capacity for this season. Of these two firms, *We Got Chew* offers the most competitive pricing and has offered to bring in 25-30 of its goats to work the three parcels. The firm has bid the total project at \$3,500, and expects the browsing exercise would take place over the course of two weeks.

In addition to the goat herd, I am also budgeting \$1,000 for seeding grass and sedge, to be planted at the same time as the goats arrive, thereby benefiting from the goats scratching in the seed as they browse.

**Later Steps:** After the projects at Hazelnut and Floral get firmly underway, we will want to expand our endeavors and begin the process of applying for grant monies to remediate the entire Chatham Trails area, (not just the 7.2 acres now under consideration for this project). When the Chatham Trails area does come into focus, the work done on the 7.2 acres now under consideration will reduce the total amount needed to be requested in that future grant application.

**Attachment-A: Chatham Maps**