



PRESS RELEASE

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HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT UTILIZES GOATS TO ASSIST WITH HABITAT RESTORATION

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) is hosting a herd of over 150 goats at FM Law Park to assist with habitat restoration. The goats are being used to remove unwanted vegetation in the forested area of the park where the Parks and Recreation Department is implementing a habitat restoration project.

Goats are one of the many ways the Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Natural Resources Division manages habitat in city parks. Other methods include mowing, prescribed fire, and manual removal. The combination of methods helps HPARD save costs, reduce chemical use, and decrease fossil fuel emissions.

"The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is excited to use a variety of methods to help us care for our important natural areas in parks," said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The use of goats in this manner is a safe and proven alternative to chemical treatments for weed control."

Once the goats have cleared the thick vegetation, a young adult crew from the Student Conservation Association will come in to manually remove invasive species within the park.

"Goats are an important tool for HPARD to clear out invasive vegetation in our habitat restoration areas," said Kelli Ondracek, Natural Resources Manager for HPARD. "The goats will be placed in the areas with the thickest vegetation to help open it up for our habitat crews to safely enter."

HPARD's Natural Resources Division manages the natural areas within City of Houston parks, totaling over 17,000 acres of forests, prairie, and wetland habitat. This habitat restoration project at FM Law is funded by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and is in partnership with the Student Conservation Association.

Visitors are asked to not feed or touch the goats. The herd will be surrounded by electric fencing and will have 24/7 monitoring.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 382 parks and over 39,501 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all ages and abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.