

http://www.newjerseyhills.com/mt_olive_chronicle/news/videos-sheep-goats-chewing-through-invasives-in-budd-lake/article_68b65d46-3fc7-5e37-9b7f-8fac4bc613bd.html

(VIDEOS) Sheep, goats chewing through invasives in Budd Lake

By PHIL GARBER Managing Editor Jul 15, 2018



One of five goats and sheep is hard at work chomping on invasive plants at the Land Conservancy of N.J. property in Budd Lake.

Photo by Phil Garber

MOUNT OLIVE TWP. – O'Malley, Trouble, Screwy, Louie and Doobie have been hard at work in Budd Lake.

They aren't part of a large legal team but rather are two goats (O'Malley and Trouble) and three sheep (Screwy, Louie and Dooie) who have been brought to the South Branch River watershed property off Wolfe Road to help rid non-native, invasive plants, without using pesticides or other chemicals.

The un-paid goats and sheep arrived in Budd Lake last month as part of the "Project Chew" program, a pilot project sponsored by the Land Conservancy of N.J., the N.J. Water Supply Authority and the Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary in Newton.

On Thursday, July 12, the three non-human workers were busy munching on brush behind an electrified fence to keep them safe from people. The animals will work at a few months at a time, for the next three years, eating and removing invasives including mile-a-minute weed, mugwort, autumn olive, multiflora rose and oriental bittersweet from a four-acre tract near the Community Garden off Wolfe Road.

The animals have been provided by the Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary, an all-volunteer wildlife rehabilitation center that provides care to orphaned or injured wildlife, including fawns, raccoon, skunks, opossums, squirrels, rabbits, woodchucks and other small mammals.

Kelly Corless and her husband, Jim Simonetti, bought the 120-acre farm in 2000. Corless is a registered nurse who was a longtime volunteer at St. Hubert's Animal Shelter in Madison.

Sixth Year

The Community Garden is in its sixth season and all 145 plots have been sold for the season. The garden is located on a quarter-acre on the westbound side of Wolfe Road, near the intersection with Route 46 East. The land has been purchased and preserved by the land conservancy and the township.

On a recent Thursday, one of the community farmers, Joe Frommelt, 74, of Budd Lake, was busy tending his three plots where he grows strawberries, spinach, radicchio, Swiss chard, escarole, beets, tomatoes, string beans and garlic. Frommelt said he was pleased with his garden, though many of the produce was late in growing because of the long winter.



Frommelt will take home some of the produce but he and the other community farmers will donate much of the yield to the food pantries at Christ Episcopal Church and Crossroads Church.

The 10-foot by 10-foot plots cost \$35 per plot and gardeners are able to select their individual plot. There is a one-time irrigation fee of \$30. Water is provided by individual spigots located through the garden. The fee for non-residents is \$45 a year plus the \$30 one time irrigation fee.

Periodic workshops on gardening are offered as is mulch. Among those participating in the garden is "Girls on the Run," a group of 15 students from the Sandshore School. They are working on a plot as part of a community service project.

The garden, along with others around Morris County, also was opened for public tours on Saturday, July 14, as part of "Friends of Frelinghuysen Open Gates."

The garden is just one aspect of the work of the Land Conservancy, whose purpose is to maintain land that produces drinking water for 1.5 million people.

Visitors can take a hike along a loop trail to see beautiful views or to relax along quiet walkways. It is an area rich in wildlife; staff has identified 109 different bird species and 48 kinds of butterflies.

To control the growth of the invasive purple loose strife, state entomologists have released more than 3,750 predator beetles.

A bee pollinator habitat was created on two acres under the Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) power lines. The project is supported by JCP&L and the N.J. Beekeepers Association.

The conservancy has planted 7,305 trees and shrubs on 37 acres of former corn fields. The goal is to return the area to a native forest.

A total of 26 bluebird boxes have been put up on fence posts throughout the preserve, donated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Staff workers, interns and volunteers have wrapped 1,625 trees to prevent rodent damage.

The declining monarch butterfly population also will get a boost as seeds have been planted to grow wild flowers and attract the butterflies on four former corn fields totaling 28 acres along Smithtown Road.



At work
Jul 13, 2018



Feeding time
Jul 13, 2018