



For Immediate Release

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**ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY EMPLOYS HERD OF GOATS AS AN
ECO-FRIENDLY WAY TO REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS AROUND ANACOSTIA WATERSHED**
*Herd of 60 Goats to Return to Hyattsville, MD to Feed on Destructive Kudzu Plant in an Effort to
Restore the Overall Health of the Anacostia River*

Bladensburg, MD - The Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS), a nonprofit organization currently celebrating its 25th anniversary of cleaning the water, recovering the shoreline, and honoring the heritage of the Anacostia River and its watershed communities, today announced that the organization, in partnership with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, will utilize a herd of goats to help manage invasive plant populations along the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River in Hyattsville, Maryland. Beginning on May 8, 2014, 60 goats will feed on non-native kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*) to naturally and safely clear a large section of the invasive plant which will improve the overall health of the river. Kudzu is a non-native, invasive vine that spreads quickly and outcompetes native vegetation.

The herd of goats, provided by EcoGoats of Davidsonville, MD, will feast on the kudzu for a total of 8 days. Grazing the kudzu night and day, the herd of goats will be supervised and checked on daily by AWS and EcoGoats staff members. Employed by many land management entities, this removal technique is considered a low impact and sustainable land management practice. Unlike machines or herbicides, the herd of goats will not compress or contaminate the soil around the river's habitat and will reduce the invasive plant biomass that would routinely be disposed of in local area landfills, potentially furthering the spreading of kudzu through composting and mulching products.

The goats will be removing kudzu from an area within Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, a site selected because of its large infestation of the destructive plant and the viable restoration opportunities along the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. Following the removal process with the goats, AWS plans on hosting volunteers at the site to remove the kudzu's large root crowns that grow underground and create more kudzu. Removing the root crown is one way to prevent the kudzu from returning. After all root crowns are removed from the area, AWS volunteers will help to re-stabilize the area by spreading native seed and laying hay. Those interested in volunteering should check AWS's event calendar for opportunities: www.anacostiaws.org.

AWS also plans on engaging their education department in this project and is currently working with Rosa Parks Elementary School to educate their students about the project. The students will learn how removing kudzu will improve the eco-system, and will get to see first-hand the work that the goats accomplish. AWS' Education Department is also planning on having the students participate in some of the kudzu root crown removal and replanting effort.

"The Anacostia Watershed Society is excited to continue our stream restoration efforts in Prince George's County by bringing back a herd of goats again this season to remove invasive plants along the river," said Jim Foster, President of the Anacostia Watershed Society. "Thanks to our partnership with

the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, AWS is able to use this opportunity to not only physically improve the health of the Anacostia River and its watershed communities, but also engage the local community in this effort. AWS is very excited at the prospect of restoring this segment of the stream's ability to naturally filter and better manage polluted runoff currently flowing untreated into the stream from surrounding roads and developments."

Once the kudzu has been removed, a native plant buffer will be re-established within along the stream which will improve the river's overall health. The native plants provide a natural vegetative filter which reduces polluted runoff flowing into the Anacostia River and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. These native plantings will also enhance wildlife habitat and provide greater seasonal interest for parkland users.

The kudzu removal project is part of a larger initiative led by AWS. In June of 2013, the Anacostia Watershed Society was awarded a grant from Maryland Department of Natural Resources to engage communities within Prince George's County in implementing stormwater management retrofits and stream restoration projects. These projects will serve to demonstrate the connection between sustainable methods of handling stormwater to create a safer and healthier environment for the plants, animals and humans in the Anacostia watershed. Future Anacostia Watershed Society plans in consideration, for this immediate area, include a wetland to help treat polluted runoff from nearby communities as well as stream, wetland, and habitat restorations.

About the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS):

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage. The vision is to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable, in keeping with the Clean Water Act, for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the community. Community involvement is critical to achieving this vision and AWS seeks strong partnerships and coalitions, with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders. Anacostia Watershed Society's programs include environmental education, stewardship, recreation, and engaging the community through public affairs.

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