

THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND

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HERD AROUND TOWN: TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND INTRODUCES NEW SHEEP EMPLOYEES

Five sheep from Albany will summer on the Island, eating invasive plant species, as part of innovative landscaping program

NEW YORK (April 19, 2021)--Today, the Trust for Governors Island officially introduced its five newest employees to New York City—a family of five sheep. These fluffy friends—Flour, Sam, Evening, Chad, and Philip Aries—hail from Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm in Albany and will spend the next four to five months on Governors Island, helping to control invasive plant species in beautiful Hammock Grove by eating them.

Sheep's love for herbaceous plants, such as grasses, phragmites and flowering plants like mugwort and sunflowers make them a natural fit to join the Island's horticultural division. Replete with such delicacies (phragmites being the sheep's favorite), the flock will live on the Island, enjoying a lush grove and eating its invasive plants all summer long.

“The shear genius of this idea lies in its simplicity. On behalf of the thousands of New Yorkers flocking to open space on Governors Island every season, I want to thank Flour, Sam, Evening, Chad, and Philip Aries for doing their part to bring New York City baaaack,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Bon appetit, fellas.”

“The sheep are very happy to be joining us on Governors Island for the summer, and we are thrilled to have them here,” said **Clare Newman, President & CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. “This innovative, environmentally friendly landscaping program will protect our Island's plant life from invasive species while allowing our horticulture team to spend their time on more productive pursuits than weeding Hammock Grove. Our new sheep employees have arrived at the perfect time, and we welcome their contributions to help protect the natural landscapes of Governors Island.”

“Using animals for vegetation management has many benefits -- not only does it help reduce the vitality and spread of the plants, but it reduces the need for harmful herbicides. The sheep also help return nutrients and carbon back into the soil, creating a healthier ecosystem for both native flora and fauna and park-goers. We are thrilled to expand our grazing efforts to Governors Island and welcome visitors to meet the rest of the flock and community which will

continue managing vegetation in Tivoli Lake Preserve and hosting environmental education activities all summer long," said **Kim Tateo, Executive Director and Farm Manager, Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm.**

Mugwort, phragmites and other invasive plant species have a competitive nature and crowd other plantings within the park, essentially creating a monoculture. The sheep eating these herbaceous plants helps to break down and weaken them, preventing them from flowering and the seeds spreading.

Recruiting a herd of sheep is extremely beneficial to the Trust for Governors Island's efforts to care for the park, as it reduces the time spent on invasive species removal to less than 30 percent of the gardening staff time. Having the sheep deal with the invasive plants allows the horticulture team to focus more on the well-being of the trees and soil and ensure that the forest in Hammock Grove thrives on Governors Island. Previously the horticulture team was spending a tremendous amount of time weeding, and the sheep represent a cost effective and eco-friendly solution that allows the team to be more productive and efficient.

Sheep are also uniquely suited to the work on Governors Island, more so than goats or other animals, since their culinary tastes do not include tree bark. The sheep will eat around the young trees in Hammock Grove and focus on phragmites and other delicacies, while goats would devour virtually any plant life they could get their hooves on, invasive or not.

As a gesture of gratitude to their new home city, the sheep provided visitors to their welcome party with a lunch of invasive plants and grasses to all media in attendance.

About The Trust for Governors Island

The Trust for Governors Island is the non-profit corporation created by the City of New York that is responsible for the redevelopment and operation of 150 acres of Governors Island. The Trust's mission is to realize the full potential of Governors Island for the inspiration and enjoyment of all New Yorkers, demonstrating a bold vision for public space.

For more information, visit www.govisland.org.