

## **Kudzu Gets Knoxville's Goats**

Keep Knoxville Beautiful, in partnership with the City of Knoxville, is pleased to announce that goats are coming to Knoxville to help eradicate the kudzu. Like many areas in the Southeastern United States, Knoxville struggles with the invasive plant Kudzu. This ivy-like, parasitic plant was introduced to the area in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by farmers seeking to manage soil erosion and quickly became an invasive species that has effectively suffocated the life out of many populations of native species. Keep Knoxville Beautiful received a grant from Keep America Beautiful and the UPS Foundation to fund a pilot program to effectively manage kudzu growth using goats—a method that is clean, green, and will showcase innovative, green problem solving in the Knoxville Community.

Controlled goat-grazing is a creative method of kudzu eradication that is effective, environmentally- and public health-friendly and offers a valuable opportunity to teach the community about the invasive species and the complex natural interactions between different species of plants and animals. The program will begin following approval from City Council and a successful bid process. Using the expertise garnered from Chattanooga who has had a similar program, the ideal time to use the goats is in the spring when the kudzu is “in bloom.” It is expected that the goats will be here in late April or early May. The goats, over a course of several weeks, eat the kudzu, thereby providing the comprehensive and repeated removal of kudzu sprouts necessary for long term eradication. Chattanooga has stated that 60 goats in 3-5 acres result in no kudzu in 1-2 weeks. Through this goat-grazing method, Keep Knoxville Beautiful can help restore the health of green space and make key Knoxville natural areas more attractive and usable for the citizens of Knoxville.

Keep Knoxville Beautiful, a Keep America Beautiful affiliate, was formed in 1978 by Knox County, the City of Knoxville, and the Chamber of Commerce as the Greater Knoxville Beautification Board. Originally formed to help “clean up” prior to the 1982 World’s Fair, KKB plunged into community efforts to clean and beautify the community through its many programs. Adopt-A-Spot, Orchids and Onions, and School Pride programs paved the way for the organization to grow and the community to work together to accomplish the great idea of individual responsibility. For more information on Keep Knoxville Beautiful, visit [www.keepknoxvillebeautiful.org](http://www.keepknoxvillebeautiful.org).

For questions regarding this program, call Keep Knoxville Beautiful at (865) 521-6957.

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