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PRESS RELEASE

Goat and Sheep Use Suspended Due to Unintentional Poisonings

Sumner, WA—The City of Sumner Public Works Department has temporarily removed all sheep and goats in the City's retention ponds. Animals have recently taken ill and even died likely due to well-meaning passersby that fed them. The City will reevaluate the program and hopes to try again after an education campaign to stop any further incidents.

Sumner began using sheep and goats to clean the retention ponds for their multiple benefits. Sheep clear away grass while goats remove brush. The animals are rented from private owners and reduce the staff time and labor by 75%. This saves the citizens money and reduces the City's use of gas-powered weed-eaters. It frees up Public Works crews to more quickly respond to other issues, and citizens enjoy seeing the animals in their neighborhood.

However, the City has recently experienced problems with well-meaning but misplaced interference by members of the public with the animals. Despite numerous signs asking the public not to trespass into the ponds or feed or touch the animals, some of the animals seem to have been fed items that are not part of their common diet including plants that can be poisonous to them. The City thoroughly inspects all pond areas for plants known to cause problems for the animals in order to protect them from any harmful effects. Thus, it is believed the harmful and lethal plants are being provided by members of the public.

The City would like to resume this popular program due to its multiple environmental and financial benefits. Sumner is asking all residents and visitors to please enjoy the animals when they return but abide by the rules of not touching, harassing or even feeding the animals anything. They are doing their work and are quite well cared-for and fed by their owners and the City. Even such common items as carrots can disrupt the animals' digestive systems. In addition, members of the public are asked to help educate others that they spot harassing or feeding the animals. With everyone's help, this popular program can once again be successful.

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