

## FORT WADSWORTH, GATEWAY NRA: HOW GOATS HELP PRESERVE FORT WADSWORTH

**Dave Taft:** These goats are one of the best allies the Park Service could possibly have in preserving and protecting historic and cultural structures here at Fort Wadsworth.

**Barry Sullivan:** It's a very positive message to the public that comes by and sees goats. They're very interested. It's wildlife that they're not used to seeing in New York City.

**Dave Taft:** This is not new, this goat solution is an ancient solution, one that's been around for thousands of years, we're just reinventing it for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Our modern way of doing this would be to remove the vegetation by cutting with chainsaws, mowing with tractors. What we've found though is that goats are a much better tool. They're lighter than trucks so they're easier to use on historic structures, not as damaging. It's very difficult to drive a tractor up a 45° course, and get an even cut. They're much more able to get up the slope that some of these structures form.

They're also much more economical, particularly, when gas prices are going at four, five dollars a gallon now. A goat eats about 20% of his weight daily, in vegetation. They don't mind poison ivy, they're actually very happy to be feeding on mugwort, bittersweet and some of the worst offenders here.

Goats are a very green solution to the problems of removing vegetation from historic structures because they don't require gas, whatever they leave behind is completely compostable. In fact, it makes a wonderful substrate for grasses and other plants that we are anxious to establish on top of these structures.

**Barry Sullivan:** The use of natural herbivores to control vegetation is something that we will expand here at Gateway National Recreation Area. And I think we will see based on the success of this program an expansion of that into other national parks.