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‘Goats R Us’ at Laguna Honda

September 15, 2008, San Francisco, CA – The goats returned to Laguna Honda this week. A popular annual tradition on the 62-acre hospital campus, 700 Spanish Angora and Alpine goats from Orinda-based Goats R Us began grazing September 14 on the steep hillsides adjacent to the hospital.

“We love having them here,” said Executive Administrator John Kanaley. “Our neighbors always come over to check them out, and they’re fun to watch. For Laguna Honda, they’re like the buffalo in Golden Gate Park. They have become a signature of our campus.”

This is the fourth year that the goats have helped the city to clear undergrowth on the heavily wooded hospital site west of Twin Peaks. The animals will graze across 22 acres of brush and vines, providing an ecologically sustainable service to clear out heavy undergrowth and help reduce the fire risk that comes with drier weather.

“It’s been a dry year, even though it might not look like it out in the San Francisco fog belt,” where Laguna Honda is located, says Terri Egon, owner of Goats R Us, which specializes in providing goats for challenging terrain. “Goats are a great natural way to rehabilitate an overgrown landscape.”

Egon says the goats are pickier eaters than one might expect. “They like the leaves,” she says, “But they leave the sticks behind.”

The arrival of the goats is timed every year to coincide with the end of the bird nesting season so that fledglings will have a chance to test their wings before the ground is cleared from underneath them.

The Laguna Honda site is not only a bird watching venue, its forested terrain is home to families of red foxes, feral cats, raccoons, skunks, and possums.

The goats will be at Laguna Honda for the remainder of the month. Interested goat-watchers can contact the Laguna Honda Community Affairs Office at 759-4597.

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