

## **Staff Report: Poison Oak and Non-Native Blackberries in Kensington Park**

### **Poison Oak**

There is a large area of poison oak mixed with wild hemlock and native blackberry of approximately one acre that runs roughly from behind the Annex towards the fire road leading to Highland. Any removal poison oak, wild hemlock, and native blackberry will not eradicate these plants and continued effort to remove new growth will be needed until there are no more seeds or roots that will continue to re-sput new growth. The best time to remove new growth is late spring or early summer.

**City Grazing.** We contacted City Grazing, a non-profit organization in San Francisco that rents goats to clear hillsides. We understand that City Grazing will install an electronic fence around the entire area of poison oak and bring in approximately 50 goats which will happily munch away the poison oak that is mixed with blackberry bushes in about two weeks. The munching will not eliminate the poison oak completely; thus, we may need to hire goats annually for the next few years. Because the poison oak is going dormant now and because City Grazing is fully booked, we cannot begin this work until next July-October.

The bid is \$6,800 with an estimate of 7-10 days to reduce the poison oak. There is an additional charge of \$150 per day (\$1,050 to \$1,500 for 7-10 days) for City Grazing to provide daily visits to fill water and monitor public interaction with the goats.

Prior to having the goats graze the poison oak, we need to pull up the wild hemlock which is poisonous to the goats.

One concern will be preventing dogs that are off leash from going near the grazing area.

**Oakland Hills Brush Clearing.** The estimate from Oakland Hills to remove both the wild hemlock and poison oak is \$6,400.

### **Non-Native Blackberry**

There is a section of non-native blackberry bushes in the park near Windsor.

**City Grazing.** The bid is \$895 with an estimate of 7-10 days to reduce the non-native blackberry. Although not stated in the bid, City Grazing may charge an additional fee of \$150 per day (\$1,050 to \$1,500 for 7-10 days) for City Grazing to provide daily visits to fill water and monitor public interaction with the goats.

**Oakland Hills Brush Clearing.** Oakland Hills estimates \$400-600 to remove these blackberry bushes.

Attachments:

1. Photo of poison oak area and non-native blackberry area
2. City Grazing proposal to address poison oak

3. City Grazing proposal to address non-native blackberry