House the Herd: Student Design Challenge – Megan Perry, 2nd Year BLA

“I think that having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anyone could ever want.” –Andy Warhol

“Nature is pleased with simplicity. And nature is no dummy.” –Isaac Newton

This image shows goats in a fenced test plot eating invasive Phragmites australis marsh grass.

Photo: Jennifer Brundage, Duke University

Webster’s dictionary defines being sustainable as “methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources.” In American society, there has been a new push for more sustainable practices of living and finding a sense of place within a natural setting. In order to accommodate the new flight to the outdoors, there must first be an area that is accessible to the public. Such a place exists on the south end of UGA’s campus in Driftmier Woods. Driftmier Woods is a large piece of undeveloped land that contains many native tree species that take hundreds of years to grow; there is also a ravine with a small stream. Although this location is great place to enjoy a natural forest, it has become overgrown with many invasive species. Luckily, the Chew Crew is on the job! A group of friendly goats is slated to arrive in Spring 2015 to help out by chewing back the unwanted vegetation in a process called prescribed grazing. This method is an ancient sustainable way to control weeds and unwanted species.

However, the goats have nowhere to live on this piece of land! That is where you come in. Through funding from the 2014 Ford College Community Challenge, there is now a student-organized design challenge to design a shelter for the new goats. House the Herd: Student Design Challenge is a competition in which a group of three to six University of Georgia Students from at least two different colleges can use their interdisciplinary skills to design a portable home for our four-legged friends. The structure must be mobile, house twelve goats, and store equipment. The structures will be judged on practicality, innovation, environmental impact, and presentation by an interdisciplinary panel with professions ranging from an architect to a goat farming. The first place winners get a cash prize of $1000!!! The first
informational meeting will take place Wednesday October 15, 2014 from 6:30-8:00 in Tate room 137 and the second meeting is on Thursday October 23, 2014 from 6:30-8:00 in Tate room 137! For more information visit http://housetheherd.com/.

This competition is a great way to support sustainability on campus and connect with people outside the college. There is also an opportunity to become familiar with the Material Reuse Program while designing a creative shelter for the goats. I strongly encourage everyone to test out their creativity and try out this competition.