



The University of Georgia

College of Environment and Design

April 23, 2014

STARS Innovation Credit 2: Chew Crew

Dear AASHE STARS Committee:

I, Eric MacDonald, verify that the following description of the Chew Crew prescribed grazing program at UGA is accurate to the best of my knowledge:

The Chew Crew, a program of the UGA College of Environment and Design and the UGA Office of Sustainability, works to improve UGA's natural landscapes through using prescribed grazing to combat invasive species. The project began as a student-initiated effort with funding through the UGA Campus Sustainability Grants program and has grown into an ongoing, interdisciplinary living laboratory for research and education at UGA.

Restoration of Tanyard Creek and its associated riparian forest through prescribed grazing accomplishes goals in UGA's 2020 Strategic Plan, Strategic Direction VII: Improving Stewardship of Natural Resources and Improving Campus Sustainability, to "use natural resources as efficiently as possible," "demonstrate and promote leadership in sustainable living and learning – contextualizing the local as a part of the global in sustainability," "provide examples to other organizations and communities of how to integrate sustainability into new and existing operations," and "integrate sustainability into the student experience through curricular and co-curricular means, both in the classroom and beyond." The Tanyard Creek Chew Crew project allows a high volume of students to visualize the benefits of prescribed grazing; engage in conversations about ecological restoration, water quality and urban watershed management; and pursue meaningful academic and research opportunities. To date, the Chew Crew has facilitated partnerships with Athens Clarke County Stormwater and Planning Departments, UGA College of Arts and Sciences Department of English and Lamar Dodd School of Art, College of Public Health, College of Engineering, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Odum School of Ecology, UGA School of Law, and others. Numerous volunteer and intern opportunities allow students and faculty to engage and interact with the project; overall, almost 500 volunteers have logged nearly 1000 volunteer hours on the Chew Crew site. This innovative project has gained the attention of many groups on and off-campus and throughout the country; plans for expansion to other locations are underway, including current efforts to change local legislation to specifically allow prescribed grazing in urban areas in Athens-Clarke County, as well as emerging partnerships with low-income residents in the Athens community.

Current activities of the Chew Crew can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/TanyardCreekChewCrew>

Please feel free to contact me at eamacdon@uga.edu for any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric MacDonald', with a stylized, flowing script.

Eric MacDonald
Associate Professor, College of Environment + Design
University of Georgia