



GOAT Brush Clearing

Targeted Grazing Solutions for Vegetation Management

Targeted Grazing for Invasive Vegetation Control, Wildfire Fuel Reduction & Sustainable Land Management

A Capability & Information Document



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1. About GOAT Brush Clearing

GOAT Brush Clearing is a professional targeted grazing service based in Langley, British Columbia, operating throughout the Fraser Valley and Greater Vancouver region. We provide land managers, municipalities, First Nations, crown corporations, and property owners with a proven, chemical-free, and environmentally responsible method of controlling invasive vegetation, managing overgrown land, and reducing wildfire fuel loads.

We deploy a managed herd of over 50 goats to client sites, where the animals systematically graze invasive and unwanted vegetation under the continuous supervision of our experienced operator. Every job is professionally managed from site assessment through to completion, with daily monitoring, temporary fencing, and a clear service agreement in place before work begins.

2. What Is Targeted Grazing?

Targeted grazing is the intentional and managed use of livestock to achieve specific land management objectives. In our case, the control of invasive plants, reduction of overgrown vegetation, and management of wildfire fuel loads.

Unlike conventional grazing, targeted grazing is a precision service. Animals are confined to defined areas using temporary fencing, grazing is directed at specific plant species, and the duration and intensity of grazing is carefully managed. The result is a controlled, repeatable, and measurable vegetation management outcome.

Targeted grazing is formally recognized as an effective vegetation management tool by the BC Ministry of Forests, Metro Vancouver, and numerous municipal and regional governments across North America. It is increasingly recommended as a preferred method for invasive species control in ecologically sensitive areas where herbicides and machinery are inappropriate or prohibited.



Goats have been used for land management for thousands of years. In modern targeted grazing operations, that instinct is channelled into a precise, professional, and measurable service.

3. About Our Goats

If you have never encountered a managed goat herd before, you likely have questions. This section addresses everything you need to know about the animals themselves. Their behaviour, their needs, their safety, and their impact on a site.

What kind of goats do you use?

Our herd consists of over 50 mixed-breed goats. They are hardy, healthy animals bred for foraging and outdoor work. They are almost all female (does), which is significant for several practical reasons outlined below. The herd is experienced, well-socialized, and accustomed to working in a variety of environments including urban corridors, park spaces, slopes, and enclosed areas.

Are goats intelligent animals?

Yes. Goats are highly intelligent, curious, and social animals. They are natural browsers meaning they prefer to eat shrubs, brush, leaves, and woody vegetation rather than grass. This is one of the key reasons they are so effective against invasive species like Himalayan blackberry and Scotch broom, which other livestock largely ignore. Their intelligence also means they respond well to routine and are calm and predictable when managed by an experienced handler.

How much do they eat?

Goats consume 3-4% of their body weight in dry matter each day. In moisture variable forage this translates to 9-33% of their body weight. For a herd of 50 with an average weight of 30kg, this equates to between 129-500kg of invasive species or wildfire fuels consumed each day.

Are they noisy?

Our herd is remarkably quiet. Goats generally emit only soft bleats when interacting with each other or greeting their handler during daily visits. They do not bleat, bark, or produce sustained noise. The herd will become more vocal if disturbed by dogs or approached aggressively by members of the public. This is one of the reasons we use signage and fencing to maintain a clear buffer between the animals and site visitors. In normal operating conditions on a typical job site, passers-by often report being unaware the goats are present until they see them.

Do they smell?

Our herd produces no significant odour. The strong smell commonly associated with goats comes exclusively from intact male goats (bucks), which we do not use in our operation. Almost all animals in our working herd are female along with a few wethers (castrated males) which do not emit the same odor as bucks. Visitors to our sites consistently report no noticeable smell, even in close proximity to the animals.

What about manure?

Goat manure is small, dry, and pellet-like. Similar in size and appearance to rabbit or deer droppings. It does not produce a significant odour, does not pool or run off, and is distributed naturally across the grazing area as the animals move. Goat manure is an excellent natural fertilizer, rich in nitrogen and organic matter, and begins decomposing rapidly. No manure removal or site cleanup is required or performed after a job. The material left behind actively benefits the soil.

Is the manure a health or contamination risk?

No. Goat manure does not carry pathogens harmful to humans under normal conditions and poses no greater risk than the manure of deer or other wildlife already present in most park and corridor environments. It does not contaminate waterways when distributed at the natural densities produced by a grazing herd. Our goats receive regular veterinary care including deworming and mineral supplementation, which supports both their health and the cleanliness of what they produce.

Do they damage the land?

Goats do not dig, root, or cause significant soil disturbance. Unlike machinery, they do not compact soil, damage root systems, or create ruts or bare patches. Their hooves are small and their weight is distributed across four contact points, meaning their ground impact is minimal, comparable to that of deer. In fact, the light hoof action of a grazing herd has been shown to gently aerate the soil surface, which can benefit native plant regeneration.



Do they eat native plants?

Goats are naturally selective browsers. They strongly prefer invasive and non-native species, particularly thorny, dense, or bitter plants like Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom, and thistle over native vegetation. While they will sample a wide variety of plants, the aggressive and dense nature of invasive stands typically keeps them fully occupied throughout the grazing period. In our experience, native plants in and around the target area remain largely undisturbed.

Native Sword Fern untouched by the goats.

4. How It Works: Our Process From Start to Finish

Step 1: Site Assessment

Before any work begins, our operator visits the site to assess the vegetation type and density, terrain and slope, access points for the herd and daily visits, water availability, and any site-specific sensitivities such as proximity to waterways, public paths, infrastructure, or wildlife habitat. This assessment forms the basis of our formal written quote and service agreement.

Step 2: Formal Quote and Agreement

We provide a clear, fixed-price written quote that outlines the scope of work, estimated duration, service inclusions, and terms and conditions. For municipal, First Nations, and crown corporation clients, our documentation is structured to support internal procurement and approval processes and includes proof of insurance and WorkSafeBC registration upon request.



Step 3: Fencing Installation

Prior to the herd arriving on site, our operator installs a temporary electric net fencing system around the target grazing area. This fencing is purpose-built for livestock containment and is a critical component of every job.

The fencing system consists of a 1-metre high electrified net that delivers a short, sharp, harmless pulse to deter the animals from testing or pushing against it. The system is powered by either a solar energizer or a plug-in energizer depending on site conditions and power availability. The fencing is entirely self-contained and leaves no permanent marks or damage to the site.

Where existing site fencing is already in place such as chain-link perimeter fencing, rail corridor fencing, or park boundary fencing, our temporary electric net can be installed inside and parallel to the existing fence, providing a dual-layer containment system. This is a particularly effective configuration for urban and infrastructure sites where public access is a consideration.

Step 4: Herd Delivery and Deployment

The herd is transported to site in a purpose-built livestock trailer. Animals are unloaded calmly and professionally into the fenced grazing area. The herd settles quickly and begins grazing immediately. No acclimation period is required, experienced grazing animals naturally begin working as soon as they have access to forage.

Step 5: Daily Monitoring and Management

Our operator visits every active job site twice daily, typically in the morning and again in the evening. Each visit includes a full inspection of the fencing for integrity and proper charge, a health check of every animal in the herd, assessment of grazing progress, repositioning of the fence to open new sections of vegetation as cleared areas are exhausted, and replenishment of water and mineral supplements as needed.

In addition to physical visits, a camera is installed on site for remote monitoring. This allows our operator to check on the herd at any time of day or night without requiring a physical visit, ensuring any unusual behaviour or site issue is identified and responded to promptly.

The herd remains on site overnight and on weekends. This 24-hour grazing capability is one of the significant practical advantages of targeted grazing over methods that are limited to staffed working hours.

Step 6: Fence Moving and Area Progression

As the herd clears each section of the target area, the fencing is repositioned to open the next section. This systematic progression ensures that the entire target area receives thorough and even grazing coverage. The operator determines the timing of fence moves based on observed grazing progress during daily visits.

Step 7: Site Completion and Herd Removal

Upon completion of the grazing program, the herd is loaded and transported from the site. All temporary fencing and equipment is removed. The site is left clean, no debris, no fencing materials, and no equipment. The only trace of the operation is the cleared vegetation and the natural fertilizer distributed by the herd during the grazing period.

5. Containment, Safety, and Public Interaction

We understand that deploying livestock in a public or semi-public environment raises legitimate questions about containment, public safety, and site management. We take these concerns seriously and have developed our operational approach specifically to address them.

Can the goats escape?

Our fencing system is designed to be highly effective at containing healthy, well-managed animals. In over five years of operation, our herd has not experienced an uncontrolled escape from a properly installed and maintained fence. The electric pulse delivered by the net fencing is an effective and humane deterrent. Animals learn quickly to respect the fence boundary and do not repeatedly challenge it.

The primary risk of escape is not animal behaviour but external interference. Most commonly, domestic dogs that charge the fencing or members of the public who interact with the animals in a way that disturbs the fence. This is why we use signage, and where appropriate, physical barriers to prevent public contact with the fencing system. Where existing perimeter fencing is in place, our electric net inside it provides a secondary layer of containment that significantly reduces this risk.



What signage is used on site?

Every job site is marked with clear, professional signage at all public-facing access points and along the fencing perimeter. Standard signage includes electric fence warning notices, livestock on site notices, and contact information for our operator. On sites adjacent to public paths, parks, or urban infrastructure, we use additional spacing and fencing configurations to ensure a clear buffer between the public and the animals.

The herd working on a detention pond for the Township of Langley.

Are the goats safe around people?

Our herd is accustomed to the presence of people and will not display aggressive behaviour. They are curious animals and will approach the fence to investigate visitors, which most people find enjoyable. However, our operating protocol asks that members of the public do not feed, pet, or interact directly with the animals, both for animal welfare reasons and to avoid disturbing the fencing system. This is communicated clearly through our on-site signage.

What is the public response?

In our experience, the presence of a goat herd in a public or semi-public space generates strong positive community responses. Residents, park users, and commuters consistently respond with curiosity, delight, and support. The visibility of a natural, animal-based land management method in an urban or suburban context creates meaningful public engagement and positive media attention, something no mechanical or chemical alternative can replicate. Multiple clients have reported positive feedback from community members during and after our projects.

What about dogs?

Dogs are the most common source of site disruption. Unleashed or poorly controlled dogs can charge the fencing, distress the herd, and in rare cases damage the fencing integrity. Our operator addresses this through signage, and we work with site managers to ensure that any dog-related risks are identified and managed during the site assessment phase. On sites with significant dog traffic, we recommend additional fencing configurations and may adjust the perimeter buffer accordingly.

6. Vegetation We Treat

Our herd is most effective on dense, brushy, and thorny invasive vegetation. The following are the primary species we target and the results our clients can expect:

Vegetation Type	Effectiveness & Notes
Himalayan Blackberry	Excellent. Our most treated species. Goats consume leaves, new canes, and tips aggressively and systematically. This is the species goats are most naturally drawn to. Repeated grazing across seasons progressively weakens the root system, reducing regrowth significantly over time.
Scotch Broom	Very good. Goats consume the green stems and foliage readily. Effective at suppressing growth and reducing seed production when grazed at the right stage of growth.
Thistle (various)	Excellent. Goats readily consume thistle, including species that other livestock and machinery struggle to remove. Highly effective at reducing thistle density rapidly.
Alder and Mixed Brush	Good. Goats browse alder leaves and tender growth readily. Effective at managing young alder regrowth and mixed brush understory.
Overgrown Grass and Annuals	Moderate. Goats will graze tall grass and annual vegetation but are less enthusiastic than they are about brush. Effective as part of a broader vegetation management program.
Established Woody Canes (old blackberry)	Moderate. Goats consume the leaves and tips of mature canes but cannot remove the thick woody cane structure itself. Successive grazing seasons progressively weaken the plant at the root.

Targeted grazing is most effective as part of a multi-year vegetation management program. Each successive season of grazing reduces the seed bank, weakens root systems, and progressively lowers the cost and effort required to maintain the site.

7. Benefits Over Alternative Methods

The following table compares targeted grazing with the most common alternative vegetation management methods on the criteria most relevant to municipal, First Nations, and crown corporation clients.

Criteria	Targeted Grazing	Herbicide	Mechanical Clearing	Manual Labour
Chemical use	None	High	None	None
Soil disturbance	Minimal	None	High	Low
Noise level	Very low	Low	Very high	Moderate
Safe near waterways	Yes	No	Limited	Yes
Works overnight	Yes	No	No	No
Reduces fire fuel load	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes
Adds natural fertilizer	Yes	No	No	No
Reduces seed viability	Yes*	No	No	No
Community reception	Strongly positive	Neutral/negative	Neutral/negative	Neutral
Disruption to public	Minimal	Moderate	High	Moderate
Multi-year cost trend	Decreasing	Stable	Stable	Stable
Environmental approvals	Typically not required	Often required	Often required	Not required

* A significant proportion of seeds consumed by goats are destroyed during digestion, reducing the viable seed bank in the soil over successive grazing seasons. This is a meaningful long-term benefit in invasive species management programs.

8. Targeted Grazing and Wildfire Fuel Reduction

Wildfire risk reduction is one of the fastest-growing applications of targeted grazing across western Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Fine fuels, dry grass, annual vegetation, and the leaves and tips of invasive brush are the primary carriers of ground fire and the ignition pathway for much larger fire events. Reducing fine fuel loads in high-risk areas is one of the most cost-effective wildfire mitigation strategies available to land managers.

Targeted grazing directly reduces fine fuel loads by removing the dry, combustible vegetation that accumulates between mechanical treatments. The goats consume the material rather than cutting it, meaning there is no debris or slash left on the ground to dry out and increase fire risk, a significant limitation of mechanical clearing methods.

Our service is particularly well-suited to the ongoing maintenance of fire fuel breaks established by initial mechanical treatment. Once a corridor or buffer zone is established, regular grazing keeps it clear at a fraction of the cost of repeated mechanical intervention. The goats work on slopes, in confined corridors, and in areas inaccessible to machinery. The same areas that most frequently accumulate fuel loads and are hardest to manage by other means.

Targeted grazing is increasingly recognized by BC FireSmart and regional fire management programs as a complementary and cost-effective tool for ongoing fine fuel load management in the urban-wildland interface.

9. Environmental Benefits

Targeted grazing offers a range of environmental benefits that alternative methods cannot replicate. These benefits are increasingly valued by municipal, First Nations, and government clients managing ecologically sensitive land.

No Chemical Contamination

Zero herbicides or pesticides are used at any stage of our operation. There is no risk of chemical runoff into waterways, groundwater, or adjacent native vegetation. Our service is fully safe for use in riparian zones, park spaces, and areas with sensitive ecosystems.

Natural Fertilization

Goat manure is a nutrient-rich natural fertilizer. As it decomposes into the soil it increases organic matter, improves soil structure, and supports the return of native vegetation. This is the opposite effect of mechanical clearing, which removes organic matter and compacts the soil surface.

No Soil Disturbance or Erosion

Goats do not dig, root, or cause soil disturbance. On sloped sites where mechanical equipment causes significant erosion risk. Goats graze effectively without disturbing the soil structure. Their light hoof action gently aerates the surface without compacting or damaging the root zone.

Reduced Seed Viability

A significant portion of invasive plant seeds consumed by goats are destroyed during digestion. Over successive grazing seasons this progressively reduces the viable seed bank in the soil, meaning the invasive plants return less vigorously each year. This is a long-term benefit not available from any cutting or chemical method.

Native Plant Recovery

Because goats preferentially target invasive species over native plants, targeted grazing actively supports the return of native vegetation. As invasives are suppressed, native species that were outcompeted have the opportunity to re-establish. This ecological recovery benefit is recognized in BC government invasive species management literature.

Carbon Neutral Operation

Our operation produces no exhaust emissions and requires significantly less fuel than mechanical alternatives. The only vehicle use is transport to and from the site. The animals themselves are a zero-emission workforce.

10. Frequently Asked Questions

How long does a typical job take?

Duration depends on the size and density of the area being treated. As a general guide, our herd of 50 goats clears approximately 250-500 square metres of dense blackberry per day. A small urban site of 500-1,000 m² may take 3-7 days. A larger corridor or park site of several thousand square metres may take 3-6 weeks. We provide a timeline estimate in every formal quote based on a site assessment.

Do you work on weekends and holidays?

The goats graze 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They do not take days off. Our operator conducts daily monitoring visits every day of the job including weekends. This continuous grazing capability is one of the advantages of our service over staffed methods.

What happens if it rains?

Goats are naturally hardy and continue to graze in light to moderate rain. In heavy or prolonged rain we monitor site conditions closely. The goats are provided with access to shelter where available and weather delays are addressed in our service agreement.

Can you work in winter?

Our primary operating season runs April through October when vegetation growth is active and grazing conditions are optimal. We will assess off-season work on a case-by-case basis, depending on site conditions and client requirements.

Is there a minimum or maximum site size?

There is no strict minimum or maximum. We have successfully completed jobs ranging from small residential lots of a few hundred square metres to large multi-hectare sites. For very large areas we phase the work in sections to ensure systematic and thorough coverage.

What if the goats don't eat the target vegetation?

In our experience, a properly conditioned and managed herd of goats will consistently graze on the invasive and brushy species we target, particularly blackberry and Scotch broom, which are among their preferred forages. We assess the vegetation type during the site visit to confirm suitability before committing to a quote.

Can we watch the goats working?

Yes. Many of our clients, their staff, and the surrounding community enjoy visiting and observing the herd at work. We ask that visitors remain outside the fencing perimeter, do not feed the animals, and respect the signage on site. Public interaction with a working goat herd is overwhelmingly positive and has generated excellent community goodwill for every client we have worked with.

Do you carry liability insurance?

Yes. GOAT Brush Clearing carries \$3,000,000 in commercial general liability insurance. A certificate of insurance is available upon request. We are also registered with WorkSafeBC and a clearance letter is available for all clients who require it.

Are the animals treated humanely?

The welfare of our herd is our top priority, both ethically and practically. Well-fed, healthy, and content animals work more effectively. Our goats receive regular veterinary care including hoof trimming, deworming, and mineral supplementation. They have continuous access to fresh water and forage on every job, and our twice-daily monitoring visits ensure any health concern is identified and addressed immediately.

11. Our Credentials and Clients

Credentials

- \$3,000,000 Commercial General Liability Insurance
- WorkSafeBC Registered
- 5+ Years Experience in Grounds and Vegetation Management
- Formal Livestock Management Experience
- Daily Animal Health Monitoring Protocol
- Professional Service Agreement for All Jobs

Current & Recent Clients

- Township of Langley
- Real Estate Developers
- Residential and Rural Clients across Fraser Valley

12. Get in Touch

We welcome enquiries from municipalities, regional districts, First Nations, crown corporations, utilities, general contractors, and land managers of all kinds. Whether you have a specific site in mind, a general question about our service, or would like to arrange a site visit and informal assessment, we are happy to talk.

We understand that municipal and government procurement processes have specific requirements. We are experienced working within these frameworks and can provide all necessary documentation including certificates of insurance, WorkSafeBC clearance letters, and formal written proposals formatted to your procurement requirements.

GOAT Brush Clearing

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