

GOAT FAQ

- What is happening in this park?
 - The City of Madison Parks Division is conducting prescribed grazing trials to manage invasive species and promote the establishment of native vegetation. This prescribed grazing will include the use of goats, confined to specific targeted areas, to manage and suppress invasive vegetation. Grazing is an important management tool for natural areas, and an important component of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. Advantages to grazing include reducing the need for chemical control methods, minimizing erosion risks, and improved access to difficult terrain.
- Why goats?
 - Using goats instead of conventional management strategies reduces the need for chemicals, minimizes erosion risks, and makes it easier to access difficult terrain. Goats are being used because they will eat the specific invasive species being targeted.
- Which invasive species are being targeted?
 - Chiefly honeysuckle, buckthorn, and garlic mustard.
- Where did the goats come from?
 - These goats belong to a local farmer who hires them out for land management purposes. They return to the farm when they are not being deployed for land management, for example during the winter.
- How many goats will be used?
 - Approximately 40 goats will be used, including adults and some adolescents.
- How much do they weigh?
 - The adult goats weigh from 80-100 lbs. The adolescents weigh about 20-30 lbs.
- How are the goats confined?
 - They are confined through the use of electric fencing.
- What happens if a person touches the electric fence?
 - The person will receive a shock of electricity, which will be uncomfortable but not dangerous.
- What do the goats eat?
 - They eat a variety of plant material, including our targeted invasive species. They are also provided with fresh water and minerals. They eat an average of 8 lbs of vegetation per day, grazing for 12-16 hours every day!
- Won't the goats just eat the seeds of the invasive species and contribute to the spread through their feces?
 - Studies have shown that the viability of seeds, after passed through the digestive tract of a goat, is dramatically reduced. According to a study by Lacey et al. in 1992, when goats were fed leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), only 18% of seeds were recovered from their feces and those that were recovered had reduced germination and viability.
 - Lacey, J. R., R. Wallander, and K. Olson-Rutz. 1992. Recovery, germinability and viability of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) seeds ingested by sheep and goats. *Weed Technol.* 6:566-602.
- Who is watching the goats?
 - Parks staff are checking on the goats multiple times per day to ensure their comfort and safety. Parks will contact the farmer should any issues arise.