



Prescribed Grazing for Habitat Enhancement

Stephanie Larson, PhD
UC Cooperative Extension
Livestock & Range Management Advisor
Sonoma & Marin Counties, California
slarson@ucanr.edu

What's in a name?

Sorting through the terminology

- Rx or Prescribed Grazing
 - Usually done with vegetation objectives in mind but often also optimizes livestock nutrition
- Conservation Grazing
 - Grazing is centered around habitat or other ecological objectives
 - Tends to be less management intensive
- Targeted Grazing
 - Grazing is matched to a very specific goal

Generally less
management intensive



Generally more
management intensive

What's in a name?

History of Targeted Grazing

Targeted grazing is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals.

Frost and Launchbaugh, 2003

Targeted grazing differs from traditional grazing management in that the goal of targeted grazing is to apply defoliation or trampling to achieve specific vegetation management objectives.

Bailey, et al, 2019

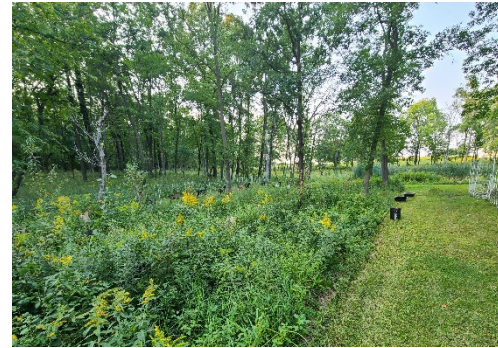
Common Targeted Grazing Purposes



Grazing brush, woody plants and forest understory



Vegetation management in solar developments



Weed management in parks and pastures



Grazing fire breaks and fuel reduction

Landowner/Manager Goals



- Fuel-load reduction
- Weed management
- Ecological restoration
- Aesthetic values
- Avoidance of herbicide use
- Others?

Grazer Goals



- Income
- Enterprise diversification
- Animal well-being
- Reproductive efficiency
- Labor efficiency and effectiveness
- Others?

Communicating & Agreeing on Goals

Long- &
Short-
Term
Goals





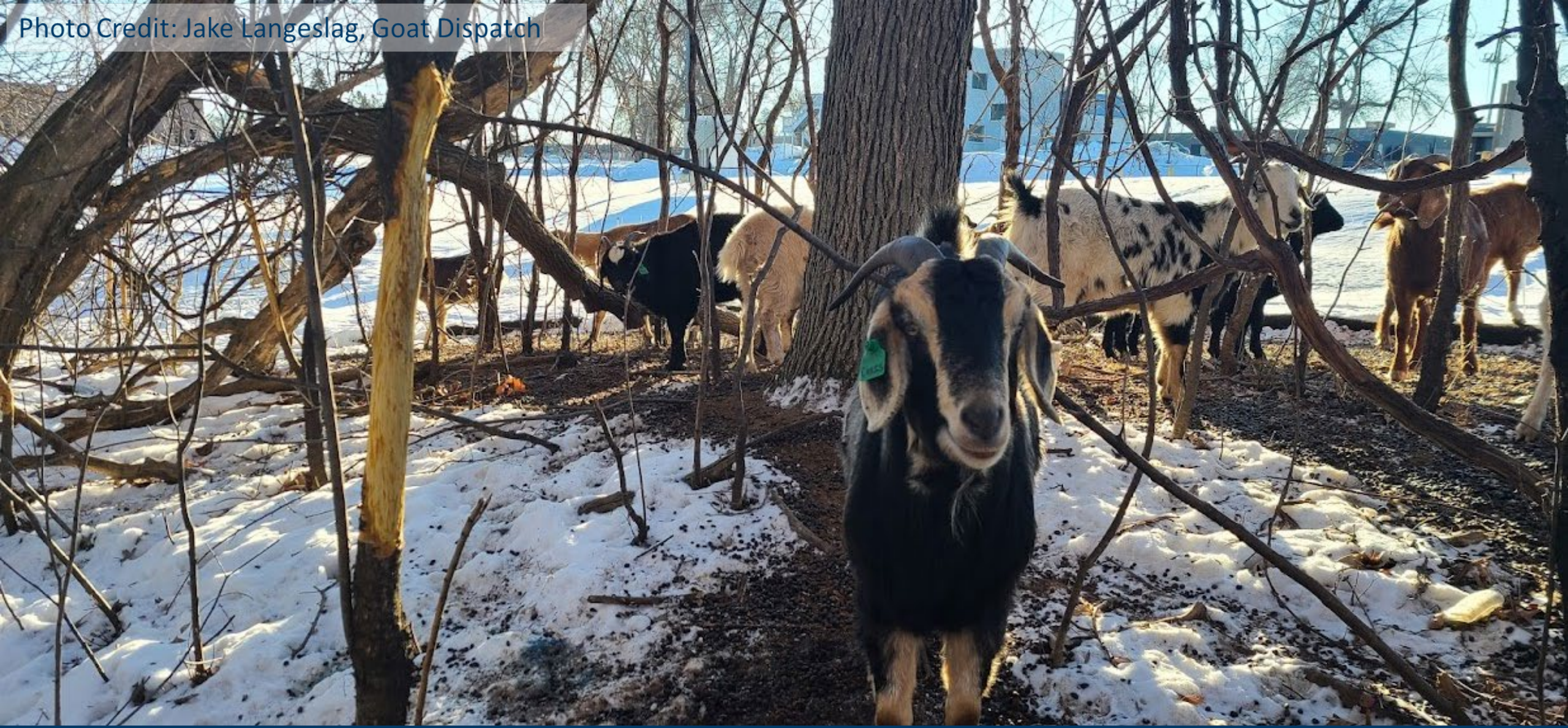
Goats working alongside mechanical vegetation control

Photo Credit: Jake Langeslag, Goat Dispatch



Grazing where mechanical removal is difficult or unsafe

Photo Credit: Jake Langeslag, Goat Dispatch



Grazing in winter to enhance vegetation removal activities

Costs and expectations

Photo Credit: Jake Langeslag, Goat Dispatch




- Usually more management intensive than conservation grazing
- Typically requires 3-5 years of follow-up
- Consider targeted grazing:
 - high-priority areas
 - Dangerous or inaccessible terrain
 - In support of additional tools
 - It's a chisel, not a backhoe!

Resources

- <https://tacticalplan-mnag.hub.arcgis.com/>
- <https://rangelands.org/committees/targeted-grazing-committee/>
- <https://www.sfa-mn.org/ecological-service-livestock-network/>
- www.hiregoats.com
- [Targeted Grazing Handbook](#)
- [Bailey, et al. 2019 Synthesis Paper](#)

"The natural power of herbivory and the knowledge of how grazing influences vegetation communities can be skillfully combined to convert livestock grazing into a powerful tool for vegetation management." (Targeted Grazing Handbook).



The grass is greener on the other side!

Stephanie Larson, PhD
UC Cooperative Extension
Livestock & Range Management Advisor
Certified Rangeland Manager #73
Sonoma & Marin Counties
slarson@ucanr.edu
707-481-4403

