

Washoe Tribe



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washoe Tribal Council Brings Goats to Stewart Ranch to Manage Invasive Weeds

(Gardnerville, NV, September 21, 2017) For the second year, the Washoe Tribe has brought a 450 head of goats to its tribal land to manage weeds on its rangeland at the Stewart Ranch.

The program, led by the Washoe Tribal Environmental Protection Department (WEPD), is being conducted with the Washington, DC-based organization Beyond Pesticides and Goat Green LLC., a goat grazing company based in Wyoming. *“We are goal oriented and want to heal all components of this living system including diversity in desired plants, recycling of all nutrients, water retention in the soil to prevent erosion and decrease runoff to the river. The goat herd is a living tool and we work with deep respect for the land, water, animals and culture of the Washoe people,”* says Lani Malmberg, co-owner of Goat Green, LLC.

The program is being launched as a pilot, an alternative to using herbicides for managing invasive weeds, including Perennial Pepperweed, Hoary Cress, Canada Thistle, Russian Knapweed and others. Goat grazing has been demonstrated to be an effective tool because the herd eats unwanted vegetation then cycles nutrients back into the soil, thus fertilizing. Goats get a drink and deliver water to dry sites one pint at a time, thus irrigating and with 1,800 hooves are aerating, mulching and tilling soils. Malmberg elaborates, *“Unique enzymes and bacteria in their guts coupled with small and narrow triangular mouth shape aids goats in destroying over 99% of ingested weed seeds thus preventing weed spread.”*

Other benefits beside weed management are fire mitigation, seedbed preparation, covering bare sites and filling niches with desired vegetation which builds stability and resilience in the ecosystem. All efforts prevent future problems from both natural stresses such as drought, flood, fire, wildlife trails and bedding grounds, etc. or man-made stresses, such as over-grazing, misuse of chemical treatment, road maintenance, as well as people and pets introducing new weed seeds.

“We are thrilled to be a part of this project,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. *“With this project, the Washoe Tribal Council and Washoe Department of Environmental Protection promote a progressive approach to weed management which respects Mother Nature,”* Mr. Feldman said.

“We are pleased to bring this project to the reservation, which aligns with the Tribe’s commitment for enhancing weed treatment on the land and ecosystem without the use of herbicides,” said Norm Harry, Director of the Washoe Environmental Protection Department.

Reporters are invited to see the goats do their work. Please call Norm Harry at 775-265-8682 or Susan Jamerson at 775-265-8689 to arrange a visit.

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