

Goats and Land Management Information Report

**Committee on Parks and Culture
January 12, 2023**



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Overview

- Background
- Review of 2022 pilot program
- Next steps



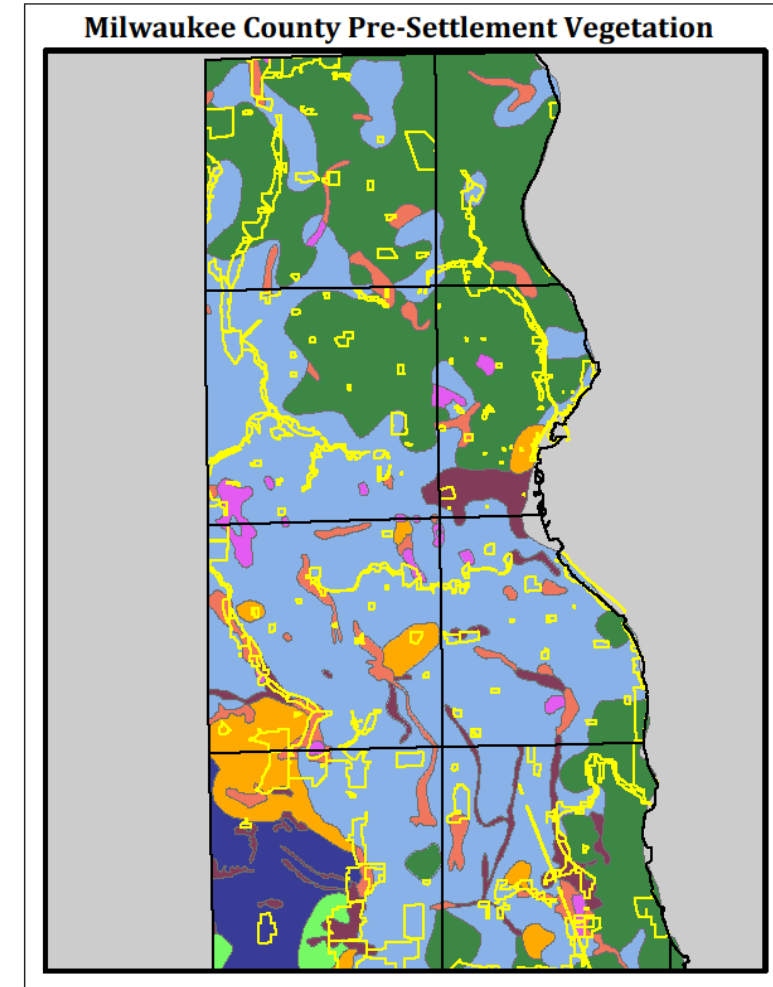
Overview

- In 2021, Milwaukee County Parks was directed to conduct a pilot program to determine the effectiveness of using goats for land management



Overview

- Natural Areas team at Milwaukee County Parks manages over 9,000 acres
- 7% of the Entire County
- 3 State Natural Areas
- 2 “Wetland Gems”
- 11 Miles of Lake Michigan shoreline
- 85 miles of waterways
- Major Migration Corridor
- WI Ecological Tension Zone



Overview

- Parks Natural Areas staff, volunteers, and partner organizations have made great strides removing over 40 different invasive species from natural areas in the past decade
- However, areas of degraded habitat for wildlife and natural resources still negatively impact Milwaukee County
- Using goats was an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of a potentially new management technique to compact invasive species



Dretzka Golf Course

- Parks hired Kettle Moraine Grazing, LLC to assist with control of invasive brush at Dretzka Golf Course
- Prior to goat application, Parks team members mowed the target vegetation to ground level to bring it within goat browsing height



Dretzka Golf Course

Timeline

- August 2 and 9, 2022 – Park staff mowed lanes for fences
- August 15 – Goats arrived for first browsing event
- August 29 – First browse complete; goats moved off site
- September – Rest period
- October 21 – Second browsing event begins
- October 30 – Second browse complete; goats moved off site



Milwaukee County Parks



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Pilot Review

- During the first browsing event, a herd of 30 goats took 14 days to defoliate the project area of brush/woody invasive species
- During the second browsing event, a herd of 30 goats took seven days to defoliate the same area



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Next Steps

- Parks recommends that in the future seasonal staff be used for buckthorn removal vs funding additional goat grazing activities
- Using seasonals would allow for more invasive species removal to occur than with goats
- For a similar amount of funding, seasonals could:
 - Remove approximately two acres of a mature stand of buckthorn through chainsaw work; or
 - Remove approximately four acres of second growth buckthorn (as the goats were doing at Dretzka Golf Course); or
 - Remove approximately six acres of foliar spraying for long-term buckthorn removal



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