



Preparing our students for tomorrow, today

Schools on the Path to Sustainability

Catlin Gabel School Goat Patrol

What: Invasive plants and other unwanted plants controlled naturally by goats

Where: Catlin Gabel School, Portland

How: Catlin Gabel School sits on a lush, wooded, 54-acre campus that demands constant management by its facilities employees. These staff members have been actively involved in the sustainability movement, and they put into place an ingenious method to reduce the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides to control invasive plants.

In the summer of 2005, the staff borrowed a herd of six goats from a local farmer. They trucked them to a wooded area of campus that was suffering from an overabundance of invasive plants such as blackberries, English ivy, and holly. The goats soon became comfortable on campus in their fenced enclosure and began devouring the plants that had been such a problem.

Catlin Gabel has been using additional sustainable practices in management of the goat patrol. The goats' enclosure is made of movable fence panels that are continually moved and re-used. Their hay manger was constructed using a recycled sand box. The goats' droppings will be used as organic fertilizer, after the droppings naturally compost, to replant the area that the goats are clearing. The facilities staff modified an old trailer into a mobile home that could be easily moved with the goats' supplies, and used recycled tin roofing for another small lean-to shelter.

Benefits: In a little over six months, the goats have eaten approximately half an acre of invasive plants. With help from their hearty appetites, Catlin Gabel has avoided the use of more than one gallon of concentrated herbicides.

Catlin Gabel is always looking to involve students in all activities, and the goat project proved to stir interest among students in several grades of this school that educates children from preschool through 12th grade. So far, students have spent more than 120 hours working with the goats, working on tasks such as moving fences, and clearing and hauling plant materials that the goats did not consume completely to be chipped for further use as mulch. A Middle School science class will be examining the skeleton of a yearling goat that died this fall. Students have enjoyed the addition of the goats to campus, and people who use the track, near the goat enclosure, report that they like hearing the sounds of the goats bleating as they exercise or play team sports.

You can do it too: For more information about this project, call:
Catlin Gabel grounds supervisor Mike Wilson, 503-297-1894 ext. 244
Catlin Gabel groundskeeper Elysia Lindfield, 503-297-1894 ext. 595



The Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative is a project of the Zero Waste Alliance
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