

“Kids” Wrap Up Intensive Goat Grazing Project

Late this June the Wendell’s goats from Brewster, NE, will make their last trip to Dawes and Box Butte counties to feast on noxious and invasive weeds during the final grazing in the NRCS Grazing Lands Conservation Innovation Grant. This project was for 3 years, with 3 spring and 3 fall grazings to complete it.

In addition to the well managed intense grazing, biological control insects were added to the sites, and desirable grass seed was planted early this spring to hopefully out-compete the noxious and invasive weeds. The spring’s abundant moisture will be a big factor when we do the range analysis, as this project began in the middle of a drought period, the weeds were very dominant. The conditions this spring will tell us how successful the project has been. We have seen a drastic increase in the grass and ---- population, and a good decrease in the noxious weeds that the goats munched on, and deposited fertilizer along the way.

Weed control is a never ending job, since we have a long lasting supply of weed seeds stored in the ground and any time we disturb the soil more seeds are lurking in the depths, waiting for their chance to emerge. Some weed seeds can lay in the soil, and remain viable for up to 20 years, and they will take advantage of an opportunity, which any disturbance to an area can create.

As the hero of our habitats, we must keep in mind that there are many ways to attack and win the war on weeds...grazing is one tool that if managed properly can do a very good job.