



Tim Brick <tim@arroyoseco.org>

Arroyo Seco Goat Program

Hawkesworth, Matthew <mhawkesworth@cityofpasadena.net>
To: Tim Brick <tim@arroyoseco.org>

Mon, Apr 27, 2026 at 8:27 AM

Good morning,

I can understand how my CM Newsletter section may have come across as lighthearted regarding the work being done by the goats; however, I can state that the City and the One Arroyo Foundation are taking this program seriously with great concern for the long-term health of the Arroyo.

The City of Pasadena, in partnership with the One Arroyo Foundation, is utilizing a goat grazing pilot program in the Arroyo Seco to reduce wildfire risk and manage invasive vegetation.

The Arroyo Seco was identified as a strong candidate for this operation due to its steep, weedy slopes, where traditional mechanical clearing would be more difficult and potentially more disruptive.

Grazing areas were carefully managed to protect sensitive resources, with boundaries maintained away from the stream channel and active waterways to prevent sediment runoff and protect water quality. In addition, active restoration sites, where young native plants are being established, are excluded from the grazing footprint to ensure their continued growth.

Reducing fuel loads in the Arroyo is a critical public safety priority. While vegetation is currently green from winter rains, it will dry in the coming months, increasing fire risk. Targeted grazing removes fine fuels and "ladder fuels," helping prevent fires from spreading rapidly into tree canopies.

When properly managed, goat grazing is one of the least invasive vegetation management tools available. It avoids soil compaction from heavy equipment, eliminates the need for herbicides, and allows for treatment of steep terrain without road construction. Goats are particularly effective at reducing fast-growing invasive species such as mustard, thistle, and annual grasses that compete with native plants.

While recently grazed areas may appear stark, these effects are temporary and part of a broader, multi-year strategy. Many native plants are resilient and capable of recovery, and reducing invasive competition supports healthier long-term habitat conditions.

City staff are actively monitoring the site throughout the pilot program, which includes daily site visits and meeting with goat herding team, to ensure grazing remains within established thresholds and to adjust as needed. We are certainly not sitting back and waiting for two months to see how it goes.

The City remains committed to balancing wildfire risk reduction with environmental stewardship and will continue to evaluate and refine this approach as part of its long-term management of the Arroyo Seco.

Respectfully,
Matt Hawkesworth

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Acting City Manager

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Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 12:41 PM

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