



Greetings Fletcher Hills Community!

We are a group of young nomadic shepherds, the Good Shepherds, an unincorporated regenerative land management group. We serve for ecological fire abatement and land regeneration. Two of the founders, Matthew and Angelica, were reared in this neighborhood, played in the canyons, went to Fletcher Hills, Parkway and Grossmont High, and still have family and friends in the neighborhood—we genuinely care about the land and the neighborhood. We are shepherding 300 goats and sheep who eat the flashy fire fuels in the open space for the Fletcher Hills Highlands Association. The herd is protected by livestock guardian dogs, shepherded by border collies, and guided by a team of dedicated shepherds servicing the land. Prescribed Herbivory, what we do, is one of five wildfire risk reduction vegetation management practices recognized by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, as critical to addressing the wildfire crisis in the Wild Urban Interface, where you live. When done right, this practice can improve the soil, reduce erosion events and enhance the native ecology while minimizing flashy fuels.

On our first treatment in the open space in 2021-22, we spent nearly 8-months treating the canyon, and were able to bring an estimated 90,000 tons of would be fire fuel and cycle it back to the soil. We cut down potential fire ladders that were as high as 18 feet leaning up into 70 foot eucalyptus trees. We brought down an estimated 60 years of piled up fire fuel in 4.5 acre section which could have been easily ignited, and instead now forms part of the soil and a parklike setting. Our second season August 2022 we saw a regrowth of the native populations that are healthier and less filled with dry dead matter, and were able to complete the graze over 5-weeks with double the animals and the previous year's focus. The hillsides have become gently terraced from the herd moving around, which helped the rainfall slow and sink into the soil and help prevent erosion that can compromise the hillsides.

This year things grew back thick from the rains. We expect to be grazing for 3-6 weeks.

There are many elements that go into this, including a team of dedicated shepherds who are dedicating their lives to living on-site and available 24/7 to tend the live beings and their various needs. Therefore we have become neighbors, we love community and hope to maintain good relations. To be viable and successful in covering the acreage and protecting property we ask for your cooperation.



- Please make sure your fence lines are secure, gaps and gates are closed or blocked off sufficiently.
- If the herd is eating unwanted plants, have gotten into your yard or there is an emergency concern, please call us. You can also shew them away by clapping loudly and making some noise.
- Please call us if you see animals outside of the electric netting or if the fence is down.
- Please do not touch or tamper with the electric netting. The amperage is low, so it's not dangerous, but the voltage produces a memorable experience. This is to keep our herd in the right places and help deter would be predators.
- Please stay a distance back if you have a pacemaker, electronic implants, riding an e-bike or with any electronics to keep you and property safe.
- There are places where the fence must cross through trails on the property. Please do not attempt to go over the fence by foot or bike. If you cannot pass, please turn around and take another route.
- Please do not feed any of the animals. Changes to the ruminants' diets can affect their ability to digest the food and can consequently make them ill. It can also cause them to break through the fence and cause many issues.
- Please avoid bringing your K-9 pets close to the paddocks. Our working dogs keep predators away. Domestic dogs are seen as predators, even small ones, if they get agitated please simply turn around and refrain from coming close during the duration of our service.
- Our three livestock guardian dogs are Bear and Diamond, who are big, white Great Pyrenees siblings, and Darling, a white and tan, mixed Anatolian shepherd. They may occasionally find their way out of designated paddocks. If you discover one of the dogs outside their area they are generally nice to humans and can be leashed or contained until we are able to retrieve them.
- Please refrain from feeding the dogs treats or giving them water, as this encourages them to adventure out. They are well feed and have plenty of access to water in their paddocks.

Additional Notes:

- Please respect the efforts and the space of the shepherds. Due to the 24/7 needs that arise from tending to the herd we are camped out nearby on approved sites for the duration of the project. We are doing our best to attend to matters while staying healthy with the elemental exposure and exertion we face every day.

- Please consider the value of having grazing as a critical fire abatement service, we sincerely apologize for any negative impacts you may experience from our presence, and aim to bring more joy and leave the land and community better off.
- We are here in hopes that fire crews won't have to be in the future, and that if they do, they will have a lower flame height to be of less risk to fire fighting crews and a better chance at saving property and lives. We do our best to mitigate any minor issues while striving to reduce loss of property and life from wildfire.

About Prescribed Grazing

- Around California this abatement technique is being cited as an effort to have homeowner insurance premiums lowered, consider writing to your insurance providers about the prevention methods. Last year the FHHA had the El Cajon Fire Marshall write a letter to be used by residents.
- We are one of the two outfits servicing San Diego County given it's harsh terrain and slow adoption of preventive ecosystem services.
- CalFire, the Board of Forestry, as well as many other relevant organizations have seen the research and implementation of prescribed grazing. California's government and local leaders have begun to promote it as a way to effectively ecologically manage high severity fire zones.
- You'll see our herd will leave matter and avoid certain plants that aren't palatable certain times of the year. Our natural environment needs the vegetation to have a healthy ecosystem, that in turn can hold more water in the soil, preventing erosion and fostering heather fire resistant plants, while providing healthy habitat for animals. What does happen is that most of the vegetation is thinned out and trampled to a point that it won't have enough contiguous plant matter to keep a hot fire going. The goats browse, sometimes you may see them climbing, and the sheep mow. Without herd ruminants, or mechanical removal, fire will eventually come to cycle the plant matter back into the soil. In place of having intense wild fires we can manage the brush and grasses with careful management of our flierd (flock and herd).
- Nature's recyclers: Sheep and goats have 4 stomach chambers in which they can take plant matter and turn it into pelletized compost that can go directly back to feeding the soil. If you cut and remove plants it disrupts the natural cycle, and will start to produce drier and more brittle harsh plants as it turns from lush, to fire tinder leading to desertification. As part of our big picture ecological regeneration goals, seek to have succession from desert to forest. Sheep and goats close the loop. Their action

removes hazards and recycle them and puts a natural pressure on the land, while adding to habitat health.

Rough Grazing Plan for Paddock and Circuit Combination Grazing

- We will start on Windmill Drive going east above Ventana and below Hacienda.
- We will then follow around toward Valley Lake and the open space between Lakeridge, Woodglenn, and Hacienda. Then towards Windmill View.

Note: To non-HOA homeowners and renters. We have offered a pay for to include your homes along Hacienda, Woodglenn, and Lakeridge in the past. Some neighbors have participated and other chose not to. We are again offering to do so. Please get in touch.



In the case of an emergency please call us at 858-522-0402.

All other inquiries can be made by e-mail: connect@goodshepherds.earth

For more information visit www.goodshepherds.earth and for a more candid lens into our work and lifestyle, feel free to follow us on Instagram:

@wearegoodshepherds

We are happy and honored to be here serving the land and community in these ways. We look forward to a smooth and successful grazing!

All the best,

Your Good Shepherds

