



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

GOATS “CLEAN-UP” OUR LAND

Goats have many uses on the farm and homestead from milk to fiber. Did you know they can also be used for land management by clearing unwanted vegetation.

Goats are natural browsers and have specific enzymes in their stomachs that allow them to eat plants that are poisonous to other animals and people. Some of the things goats can eat that people avoid are poison ivy, poison oak, and thistle. This makes them a good choice for clearing land.



Billings Farm’s Alpine goat Rory.

Different breeds have different characteristics that make them good land clearers. Alpine goats, like Rory at Billings Farm, are good at clearing land with taller plants and weeds because they can reach higher than other breeds. Boer goats who are primarily meat goats are the fastest at clearing land and are considered the best breed for land management. Pigmy goats, one of the smallest breeds, are also good land clearers in places where weeds are low to the ground or under things. These goats can get into smaller and lower places than larger breeds like Alpines.



Goats clear vines from a fence.

Goats are used for all different kinds of land management. Some farmers use goats to clear the weeds from the edges of their fields. Goats can clear low vegetation from forests to be logged and they can “mow” steep hills that are challenging to cut with a lawnmower. Goats also eat most of the seeds produced by weeds which means that land will have less weeds growing on it later. When machinery is used to cut or remove weeds, the seeds can fall off and grow again the next year.

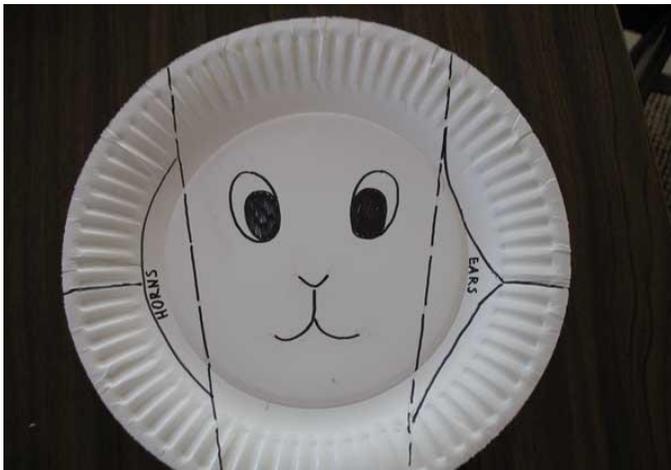
CRAFT: MAKE A PAPER PLATE GOAT

Materials:

- White paper plate
- Scotch tape
- Scissors
- Black sharpie or marker

Steps:

1. Draw the template with the marker on the paper plate.
2. Cut out the shapes and arrange them.
3. Draw on the goat's face.
4. Use the scissors to cut the goats beard.
5. Tape the horns and ears to the back of the goat's face.



Paper plate goat template.

