

## **City of Dubuque Controlled Livestock Grazing Program**

The City of Dubuque's Controlled Livestock Grazing Program governs the use of goats and sheep for a limited duration to clear vegetation from land. This targeted grazing is becoming increasingly useful as an environmentally-sensitive alternative to chemical herbicides and mechanical methods of clearing land, especially in areas with difficult geography, or where invasive species have become an issue.

The City of Dubuque Code of Ordinances prohibits owning or keeping livestock within the City of Dubuque. The Controlled Livestock Grazing Program is a limited exception that allows sheep and goats to remain in the City on a temporary basis on designated properties for the sole purpose of clearing vegetation on land, provided that the contractor obtains the proper permitting and other requirements of the Controlled Livestock Grazing Program.

### **How does controlled livestock grazing work?**

Controlled livestock grazing is allowed within the City of Dubuque on designated areas of a property to manage appropriate areas of natural vegetation. Controlled livestock grazing must comply with City of Dubuque Code of Ordinances section 7-6A-2 and any other applicable local, state or federal laws and the rules of the program as stated in this document.

Goats and sheep eat undesirable and desirable vegetation. Generally, goat or sheep grazing is recommended on sites where the entire area being served is dominated by invasive species, or where the geography of the property makes other means of vegetative management prohibitive. However, grazing is permitted on sites where the entire area being served is dominated by native species or grass. The property owner and Contractor (owner of the animals) must ensure that the animals do not eat protected vegetation and are properly confined and cared for at all times.

### **Is a permit required?**

Yes. A Controlled Livestock Grazing permit must be obtained from the City Clerk's Office prior to introducing livestock to a property to complete a controlled grazing program. The permit application must be submitted by the Contractor. The cost of the permit, which is valid for one calendar year, is \$300. The permit authorizes the Contractor to conduct a controlled grazing program within city limits for the duration of the permit timeframe.

After the permit is granted, the Contractor must notify the City Clerk's Office each time they intend to service a property within city limits. The notice must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to beginning work at that property and include the following:

1. Property address.
2. Property owner name and contact information.
3. Estimated timeframe that the livestock will be servicing the property and the temporary structures will be present on the property.
4. A map which notes where the livestock will be working.
5. The type of temporary fence that will be used at the site (non-electric, electric, or virtual).

The City Clerk's Office will inform the Contractor if the proposed site location is approved, denied, or requires amendment.

If the contractor needs to extend the timeframe that the livestock and temporary fencing or other structures will remain at a property, then they must notify the City Clerk's Office as soon as possible and receive approval to extend the timeframe.

### **How often can controlled livestock grazing be utilized on a property?**

City staff approve specific grazing timeframes at each location. Livestock are not allowed to remain on any site indefinitely. Livestock may graze in a designated area of a property, then rotate to another section of the property, as long as the Contractor follows proper notification procedures. Livestock may return to a site at various times throughout the year. The city will determine any restrictions on site returns and rotations.

### **What animals can be used for controlled grazing within the City?**

Only goats and sheep may be used for controlled grazing within city limits. Only females and castrated males may be used. The appropriate number of animals should be determined by the Contractor based on the area being serviced.

### **What property may this program be used on?**

Controlled livestock grazing may be used to manage vegetation on specific public or private property in city limits when a permit is obtained by the contractor. All applicable sections of the City of Dubuque Code of Ordinances and the Controlled Livestock Grazing Program must be complied with at all times when the animals are located on the property.

### **What insurance and bond requirements must be met for controlled livestock grazing?**

Insurance requirements for Controlled Livestock Grazing will be negotiated and determined by the Contractor and the owner of the property on which the livestock will graze. The City will not obtain, require, or provide insurance on behalf of any Controlled Livestock Grazing Contractors or owners of property upon which controlled livestock grazing occurs.

However, if the livestock will graze areas within the public right of way, defined as streets, sidewalks, alleys, and spaces that host public utilities, the Contractor must obtain from

the City a Right-of-Way permit to work within the public right of way and comply with all requirements, including insurance requirements contained in that permit application.

The Contractor must file a Surety Bond in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) with the City Clerk in order to provide service within city limits.

### **How do I properly care for the animals while they are grazing?**

All controlled grazing must be carried out in accordance with best animal husbandry practices and all state and local laws related to animal care. All animals must be healthy, well-nourished, properly hydrated, and managed to minimize internal and external parasites.

The Contractor or other qualified individual must visit the animals at least once every 24 hours to ensure the animals are appropriately confined, hydrated, fed, sheltered, and completing the desired task.

### **How should the animals be contained while on my property?**

City of Dubuque Code of Ordinances sets forth fencing regulations within City limits. Temporary exemptions exist for permit holders of the Controlled Livestock Grazing Program. Contractors have three options for fences:

#### 1. Temporary Non-Electric Fence

These fences must be at least 3 feet in height and should be checked regularly. Gaps in fences must be small enough so that animals may not escape the property or become stuck.

#### 2. Temporary Electric Fence

These fences must be at least 3 feet in height and should be checked regularly. Gaps in fences must be small enough so that animals may not escape the property or become stuck.

#### 3. Virtual Fence

The contractor must have access to either a non-electric or electric fence as a backup and is required to install it promptly in the event of an outage.

Signage is required for all fence types. Signage must list the Contractor business name and phone number. Signage for electric fences must clearly indicate the presence of an electric fence. Other signage requirements will vary based on the specific grazing site and will be determined by the City upon notification of an upcoming service location.

Temporary fencing must be removed when animals are not present on the property.

### **Are there noise regulations?**

Yes. It is important to remember to be a respectful neighbor if you choose to host controlled grazing on your property. Noise, nuisance and other City ordinances apply to controlled grazing livestock operations and may be enforced, even during permitted grazing periods.

To avoid noise and other disturbances, please remember that goats and sheep will generally remain quiet if they are content and well cared for. However, they will vocalize loudly in certain situations, such as when they are hungry, thirsty, injured, sick, or feel threatened. Proper care for animals can minimize noise disturbances

**How are city staff involved?**

City staff reserve the right to inspect the property at any time during the period the livestock is present to ensure compliance with program regulations. Verified complaints regarding noise, nuisance, or other code or program violations may result in the revocation of your Controlled Livestock Grazing permit, denial of future permit applications, municipal infractions, or other consequences.

**Is neighbor notification required?**

Notification of neighbors prior to controlled grazing is not required, but is encouraged.

**How do I obtain a controlled grazing permit?**

Grazing Contractors should complete the controlled grazing permit application found at [www.cityofdubuque.org/cityclerk](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/cityclerk). The permit application must be completed at least seven days prior to the desired start date of controlled grazing. The permit is valid for one year. For questions, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 563-589-4100.

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