

Baah-bye: Rundle Park goats to depart as pilot project wraps up

[Skip to Content](#)

1. [Local News](#)

September 12, 2019 • 2 minute read



Shepherd Jeanette Hall calls her goats at Rundle Park in Edmonton on Thursday September 12, 2019. The City of Edmonton hired noxious-weed-eating goats as part of a three-year pilot to target noxious weeds in the city. Larry Wong / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Edmonton is waving goodbye to its bleating, four-legged visitors, as the three-year GoatWorks pilot project, which saw hundreds of goats munch on noxious weeds at Rundle Park, comes to an end next week.

On Thursday morning, a herd of around 470 goats set off on what could be their final shift in their city.

We apologize, but this video has failed to load.

Baah-bye: Rundle Park goats to depart as pilot project wraps up [Back to video](#)

Whether the goats come back in future years depends on the results of a report from a research group at Olds College, expected by the end of the year. The report will examine how well the goats did and whether it makes sense to keep them around.

"Part of the pilot is to measure whether the goats were effective in managing noxious weeds," said GoatsWorks project co-ordinator Joy Lakhan.

"Once we receive the research piece and work with Olds College on that, we'll have a better understanding of whether the goat program will continue in Edmonton."



Two goats relax in the sunshine at Rundle Park in Edmonton on Thursday September 12, 2019. Edmonton's hired noxious-weed-eating goats were in action at Rundle Park for the final time as part of a three-year pilot to target noxious weeds in the city. Larry Wong/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

'Reduced carbon footprint'

The pilot project was conducted in Rundle Park to test a more environmentally conscious method of weed control. In other parts of town, the city hires workers to hand-trim or mow weeds or applies herbicide to deal with the pesky plants.

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

"If it's done on a large-enough scale and (at sites close enough together), you can have a reduced carbon footprint," said goat shepherd Jeannette Hall, owner of Baah'd Plant Management and Reclamation.

"We're really trying to time it to be really effective on the weeds, and we work really, really hard to make sure we're just impacting weeds and we aren't hurting the native species."

Among the weeds the goats target are leafy spurge, Canadian thistle, toadflax and burdock.

Rundle Park was specifically chosen as the location for the pilot due to its varied terrain over its 10-hectare footprint, which Lakhan said the goats have been successful in navigating.

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

The three-year pilot also offered a wide variety of weather, as an especially rainy summer this year made for lush conditions.

"Last year was a little bit drier, so we did see a lot more result with the leafy spurge. We were all surprised a little bit at how much leafy spurge came back this year, as opposed to last year when we didn't see much regrowth in the spring," Hall said. "We definitely see the effects of climate."

Similar projects have also taken off elsewhere in the province. In Calgary, [a 2016 pilot](#) has expanded to multiple parks and about 1,000 furry gardeners.

jherring@postmedia.com

twitter.com/jasonfherring