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Students meet new four-legged neighbors

Staff Report

Twelve Bridges Elementary School students have some new four-legged neighbors who moved in across the street.

The Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a local nonprofit land conservancy, and Sun City Lincoln Hills Community Association, in collaboration with Restoration Resources, began grazing 90-plus acres of open-space three weeks ago with 650 goats and sheep. Wildlife Heritage Foundation, which holds the Sun City preserve's conservation easement, chose grazing as the most effective and environmentally sound method of invasive weed control and fire prevention.

This week, the flock of sheep and goats were moved by their owner, Lee Hazeltine, to the open-space area across the street from Twelve Bridges Elementary School.

Hazeltine, Intergrazers owner and operator, tends a flock of 4,000 goats and sheep on a Yolo County ranch.

Twelve Bridges Elementary Vice-Principal John Kovach, the Wildlife Heritage Foundation's education program coordinator Kelly Velasco and Hazeltine, worked together to provide students with an invaluable lesson.

"Why not take the opportunity to offer the students a close look at the sheep and goats while they are right across the street? We can use this rich experience to offer the kids a hands-on science experience while having a lot of fun," Velasco said.

Over the past three weeks, 13 babies have been born on the open range.

Last Thursday morning, students held, groomed and fed some of the brand new baby goats and sheep. Later that day, fifth graders learned about the positive effects of grazing and listened to information about the livestock guardian dogs, Luna and Jack Jack. Afterward, the fifth graders watched a herding demonstration.

This educational program is a free service provided by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving California's heritage of open spaces, agricultural land, and wildlife. The foundation's Outdoor Environmental Education Program is dedicated to providing the Placer County community with opportunities to engage in hands-on ecological experiences and is available to all schools in the area.

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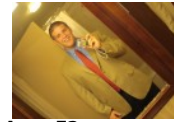
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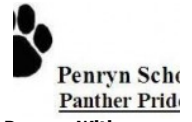
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