

Additional File 1: Details for evaluating changes in ground cover due to goat grazing.

Methods

To characterize ground cover and fuels, a one-square meter quadrat was used at five locations (5, 10, 15, 20, 25 meters) along the transect line. Within each quadrat, fuel height was measured at five points as the distance from the soil surface to the top of the tallest unrooted dead vegetation, and the ground cover (bare ground, litter, wood above 6.35 mm diameter, live vegetation, and goat feces) was visually estimated. Ground cover and fuel height were pooled from the five quadrats to obtain a plot-level average.

Paired *t*-tests were used to evaluate the effects of goat grazing on ground cover by comparing pre-grazing (N=16) to post-grazing plots (N=16). Prior to analysis, data were checked for normality and homogeneity of variances. All ground cover variables (bare ground, litter, and wood) were square-root transformed to meet the assumptions of the *t*-test.

Results

Grazing induced changes in vegetation structure across the landscape by changing ground cover. A paired *t*-test showed a significant increase in bare ground cover ($p < 0.001$) due to grazing but exhibited no change in wood or litter cover.