

Ongoing Damage by Mountain Goats to the Mount Peale Research Natural Area

*By Marc Coles-Ritchie, Grand Canyon Trust
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Mountain goat scat (in bare area), sheared vegetation (left edge of bare area), soil disturbance and the La Sal daisy (yellow flowers at lower edge of bare area) which is a “species of conservation concern” (Manti-La Sal National Forest 2017) in the Mount Peale Research Natural Area.

“Research Natural Areas will be retained in a virgin or unmodified condition except where measures are required to maintain a plant community which the area is intended to represent” (36 CFR 251.23 - Experimental areas and research natural areas).

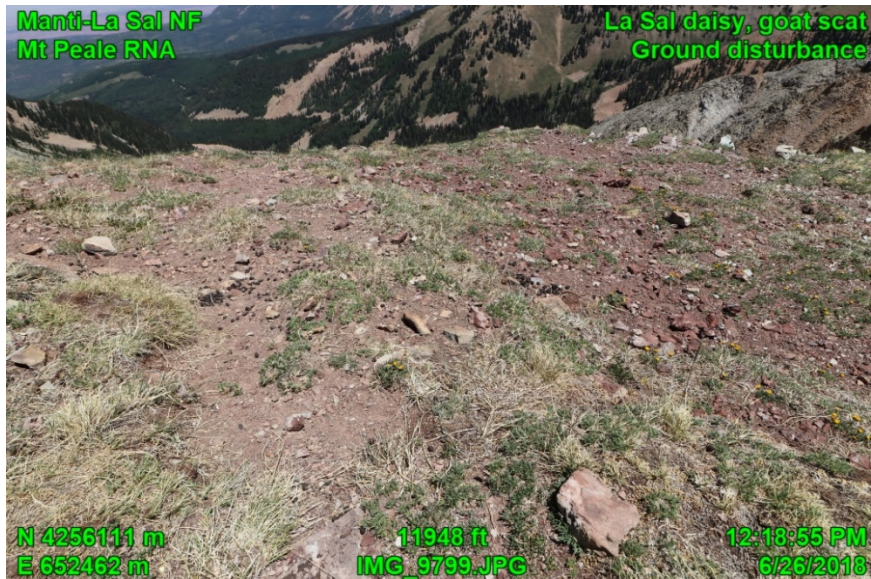
All photos in this report were taken in the Mount Peale Research Natural Area of the La Sal Mountains, by Marc Coles-Ritchie of the Grand Canyon Trust on June 26, 2018. Some of the images include the La Sal daisy (*Erigeron mancus*), a “species of conservation concern” (Manti-La Sal National Forest 2017) that is endemic to La Sal Mountains. The images show impacts from mountain goats, including scat, fur, trampling, grazed vegetation, sheared turf, wallows and general ground disturbance. The impacts in June of 2018 look more significant and pervasive than was observed the previous year (2017) when the author spent 14 days in the La Sal Mountains assessing the impacts of mountain goats (see *Modified by Mountain Goats* [Coles-Ritchie 2017]).



Mountain goat scat (clump in center of photo) and ground disturbance around the La Sal daisy (yellow flowers).



Mountain goat scat (pellets below the lens cap), goat fur (white clump to right of lens cap), and ground disturbance near the La Sal daisy (lower right).



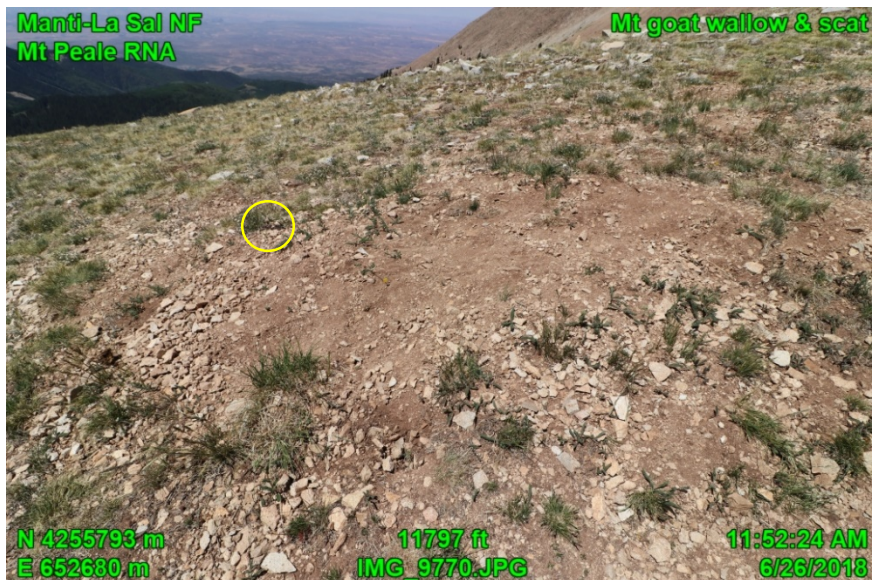
Mountain goat scat (throughout middle of photo) and soil disturbance around the La Sal daisy (throughout photo).



Uprooted plants (center of photo) and soil disturbance near the La Sal daisy (yellow flowers visible in lower right).



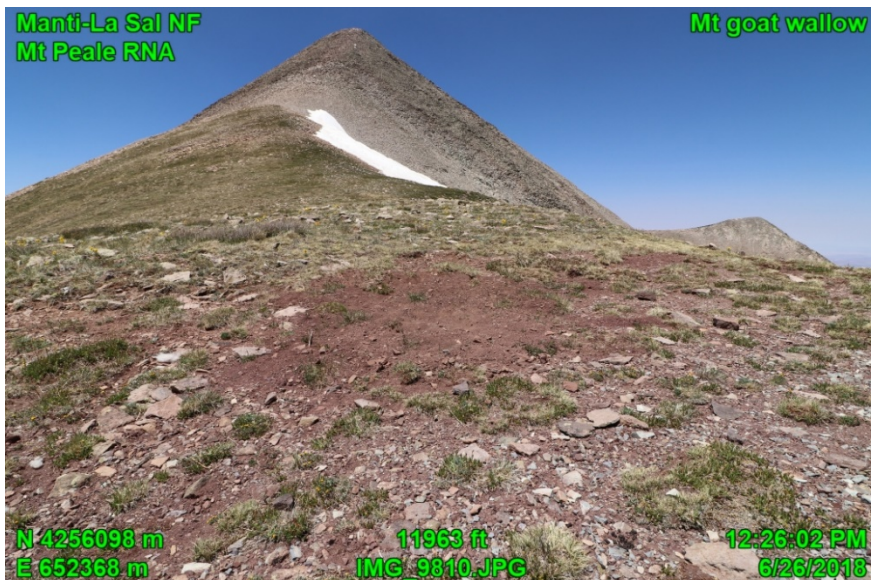
Mountain goat wallow, where goats have removed plants and dug into the soil.



Mountain goat wallow with goat scat (in yellow circle).



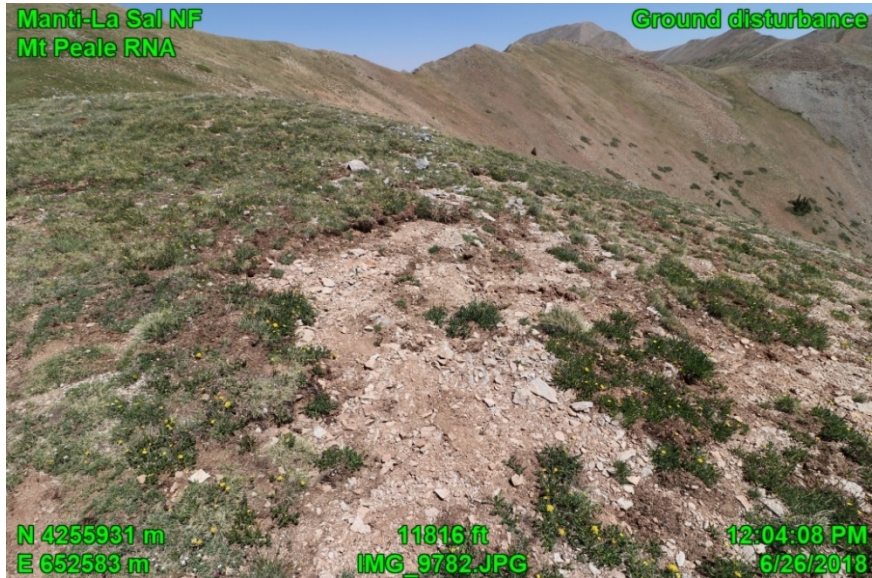
Mountain goat scat (large pile of dark pellets on the left) and soil disturbance.



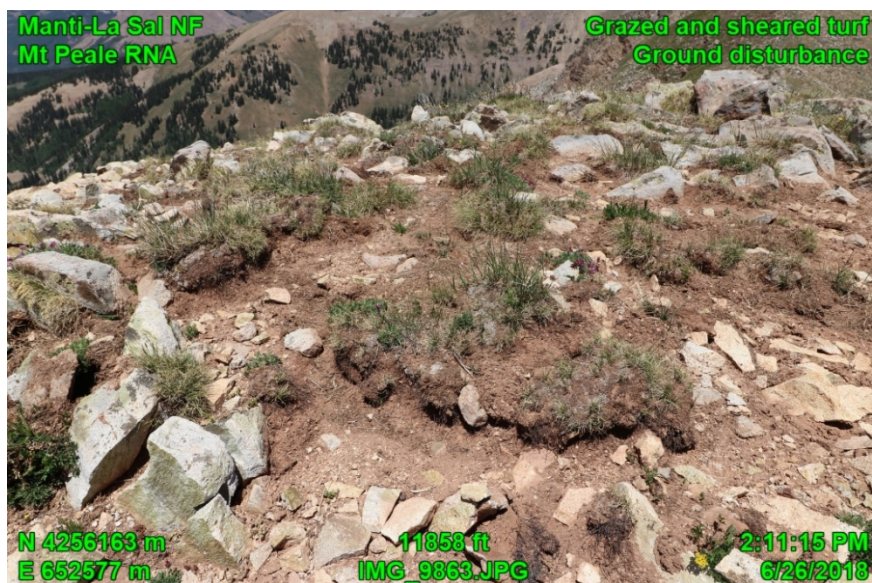
Mountain goat wallow (where vegetation has been removed and soil dug by mountain goats) with Mount Tukuhiwatz in background.



Mountain goat scat (above lens cap), grazed plants and ground disturbance.



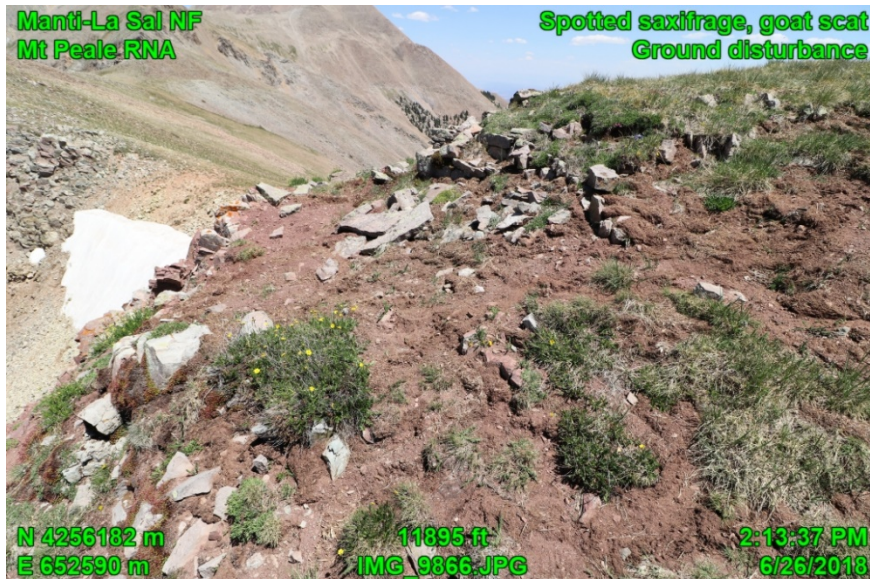
Sheared turf and ground disturbance.



Grazed and sheared turf and ground disturbance.



Ground disturbance.



Grazed vegetation and ground disturbance around spotted saxifrage (*Saxifraga bronchialis* ssp. *austromontana*), a conservation “watch list” species of Utah Native Plant Society (2016). The next photo shows a close-up of the rock area in the upper part of this photo.



Spotted saxifrage growing between the rocks, surrounded by mountain goat scat, grazed vegetation and ground disturbance. This is a close-up of the previous photo.



Rock jasmine (*Androsace chamaejasme*; just right of the lens cap), a species of conservation concern (Manti-La Sal National Forest 2017); grazed vegetation; and ground disturbance.

The photos in this report (and others) can be seen at this [Flickr site](https://flic.kr/s/aHsmiJBAT1):
<https://flic.kr/s/aHsmiJBAT1>.

References

- [CFR] Code of Federal Regulations 36 § 251.23. Experimental areas and research natural areas. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/36/251.23> (accessed January 18, 2018).
- Coles-Ritchie, M., 2017. Modified by Mountain Goats: Mountain goat impacts (2015-2017) in the Mount Peale Research Natural Area of the La Sal Mountains, Utah. Unpublished report by the Grand Canyon Trust.
<https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/modified-mountain-goats>
- Manti-La Sal National Forest, 2017. Identification of the Manti-La Sal National Forest Plant Species of Conservation Concern. Memo from Nora B. Rasure (Regional Forester) dated September 8, 2017, File Code: 1920; 2600.
- Utah Native Plant Society, 2016. Utah Native Plant Society Rare Plant List: Version 2. *Calochortiana* Number 3.
<http://www.unps.org/Calochortiana/CalochortianaMay2016Num3.pdf>