
R-21-108
Meeting 21-20
October 28, 2021

AGENDA ITEM #4

To: Board of Directors
Open Space Authority

From: Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

SUBJECT

Authorize the General Manager or an Assistant General Manager to Enter Into a Grazing and Farming Lease on the 60-acre Tilton Ranch Complex (APN: 764-07-002, 764-07-011)

REVENUE/COST

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) will receive \$1,600 as rent for the term of the lease, which expires November 30, 2022.

BACKGROUND

The Authority purchased the 60-acre Tilton Ranch Complex (APNs 764-07-002, 764-07-011) in August 2021. Prior to the Authority's ownership, the Ranch Complex was once part of the larger 2,500-acre Baird/Tilton Ranch and was the base of operations for the Ranch. The 604-acre Baird Reserve acquired by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency in 2019 and the 1861-acre Tilton Ranch acquired by VHA in October 2020. The Ranch Complex, Baird Reserve, and Tilton Ranch were once under a single grazing operator, but the Ranch Complex was separated out when the landowners decided to list the property. The Ranch Complex consists of five pastures that were dry farmed for hay, corrals, and a dozen structures, including the historic ranch house and four barns. Approximately 5.5 acres of the Ranch Complex is developed and about 54.5 acres of the Ranch Complex can be grazed and/or farmed.

DISCUSSION

AgCo Hay, LLC is the current tenant on both the Baird Reserve and Tilton Ranch and previously used the Ranch Complex before it was listed for sale. The Authority would like to enter into a lease with AgCo Hay, LLC (Tenant) through November 30, 2022 (Exhibit F) for a rent of \$1,600. Continuing to grow hay and graze the pastures at the Ranch Complex helps to maintain the fields and prevent invasive vegetation from taking hold while the Authority plans near- and long-term uses for this newly acquired property. The lease will allow the 35 cattle currently grazing the adjoining Baird Ranch to move onto the Ranch Complex and flash graze through November 30, 2021 or until it is time to plant hay, whichever occurs earlier. The Tenant will then plant hay comprised of a seed mix approved by Authority staff, which will be harvested in late spring. The cattle would then return to graze and calve until the end of the lease. During calving season, the cattle's feed may be supplemented with the hay grown at the Ranch Complex or in Coyote Valley.

There is currently no rest period from grazing on the Baird Reserve because there was no where to move the cattle and it lacks the infrastructure for cattle processing. By allowing the cattle onto the Ranch Complex, the serpentine habitat can recover after a period of grazing, which improves the health

of the habitat. This lease would help our partners at the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency better manage the rare serpentine habitat in addition to providing short-term vegetation management on the Ranch Complex itself.

The Tenant would be allowed access to the corrals in December and January for branding cattle, June for shipping cattle, and on an as-needed basis for tending to sick or injured cattle with prior notification to Authority staff. The Tenant would also be allowed to store fencing material for emergency repairs and one ATV under the western overhang of the large green barn. The tenant has several other leases on properties in Coyote Valley, including the properties that comprise the North Coyote Valley Conservation Area, which are managed by the Authority. The hay barn would be used for storage of hay grown on the Ranch Complex or in Coyote Valley. No access to any other structures will be allowed.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing the General Manager or an Assistant General Manager to finalize and execute a lease with AgCo Hay, LLC on the 60-acre Tilton Ranch Complex.

Prepared by:
Derek Neumann, Field Operations Manager

Attachment(s): Resolution 21-71 -- A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority Authorizing the General Manager or an Assistant General Manager to Execute a Grazing and Farming Lease with AgCo Hay, LLC for the 60+/- Acre Tilton Ranch Complex in the Coyote Valley Conservation Focus Area (APN: 764-07-002, 764-07-011)

Exhibit F – Grazing and Farming Lease with AgCo Hay, LLC