



DATE: February 26, 2020
TO: Waste Management Authority Board
FROM: Wendy Sommer, Executive Director
BY: Kelly Schoonmaker, Program Manager
SUBJECT: Altamont Property Overview and Update

SUMMARY

The WMA owns 1,600 acres of rangeland in the Altamont Hills in unincorporated Alameda County. At the February 26 WMA meeting, staff will present an overview of the property and provide an update on current activities taking place there.

DISCUSSION

In 1993-94, the WMA purchased several parcels of land through voluntary agreements with property owners, using funds from the San Francisco Mitigation Fee account for the purpose of reserve landfill capacity. Current uses and tenants on the property include cattle grazing, transmission and communications towers, a residential rental of a historic farmhouse, and wind power generation.

In 2015, Golden Hills Wind, LLC, the operator of the wind farm conducted a “re-powering” project, both to increase energy production and reduce bird and bat mortality. The project replaced 400+ older style small wind turbines on the property with 20 modern, large turbines. To mitigate the habitat loss caused by the re-powering project, Golden Hills offered to purchase a conservation easement on the property. In September, 2018, the WMA Board authorized the execution of an agreement establishing a conservation easement on a portion of the property. In 2019, Golden Hills installed a system to identify golden eagles and shut down any turbines that pose a collision threat.

In December 2019, the WMA began implementation of a carbon farming plan developed by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD). Funded by multiple state grants, compost was applied over 12.5 acres. ACRCD and UC Merced will collect and analyze data on soil carbon sequestration, soil greenhouse gas fluxes, and water quality.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.