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Cattle do their part to keep the town safe during fire season

By Vera Kochan



Mulholland Ridge Open Space Preserve Photo
Lamo archives

The 260-acre Mulholland Ridge Open Space Preserve area has seen cattle grazing on it since the late 1970s. John Hoover's cattle have used the property for buffets even after the town acquired the land in 1999, through a right of entry agreement between the town of Moraga and Hoover, which originated in 2006.

The original lease agreement was for three years and was extended, in 2009, for an additional five. In 2014, another five-year agreement was executed.

In this age of rampant wildfire threats, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has requested residents to voluntarily trim their yards free of any flammable grass, weeds and trees that could ignite during the upcoming fire season. The cattle are doing their part in the abatement effort by reducing fire fuel, thereby increasing hazard mitigation to the town-owned property and nearby residents.

Over the past five years, Moraga has collected \$13,155.28 through the lease agreement. During the Sept. 11 town council meeting, the members voted unanimously to extend the agreement for another five years into 2024, when the town will have collected nearly \$14,000 based on the Annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

During the town council meeting, Vice Mayor Kymberleigh Korpus asked Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt if the town was getting a good rate on the lease agreement. Brandt replied, "It's a good situation in that it's a win-win for the tenant and the town. The cattle grazing obviously does a lot of good on the land. We've had recent conversations as we've explored cattle grazing on the Orinda side."

Brandt added, "We've talked to Orinda over the past month or two and they're exploring similar terms on their portion of Mulholland, and similarly John Muir Land Trust has been looking into it. So, we've been talking more about cattle grazing over the last few months than we have probably in years past and the amount seems appropriate."

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