



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

P.O. Box 842 • Sonoita, Arizona 85637-0842 • (888) 364-2829

www.empireranchfoundation.org

New Summer Camp for Youngsters Premier

Wild About the Grasslands! Summer Camp 2010 premiered a new outdoor education program for younger children, ages 9 to 11 years old. Enthusiastic campers spent three, fun-filled days at Empire Ranch Headquarters learning about the Cienega Creek and the Cienega Watershed as a precious resource.

Five WATG! alumni returned to assist the adult instructors in mentoring the new "Grasslanders." Together they set out on new adventures to discover the wildlife, habitats, and the people who depend on the Cienega Creek.

On daily guided hikes through grasslands, mesquite bosques, and cottonwood willow areas the campers learned to use binoculars and field guides to identify birds, such as the Summer Tanager, Cassin's Kingbird, and an awesome pair of Gray Hawks. At the Empire Gulch they viewed aquatic insects and plants up close. What a thrill it was to net "toe biters" and see the eyes of a Chiricahua Leopard Frog, an endangered species, peer out at them from under the murky water. They even detected the fresh tracks of White-tailed Deer, a raccoon, and a mountain lion!

Each afternoon, the kids had fun getting wet and muddy building their very own model of the Cienega Watershed to take with them on the last day of camp. By observing how water moves across the landscape, they discovered the connections that plants, animals, and people have to water and learned about the hydrologic cycle. Adobe brick making, letterboxing,



geocaching, eating native plants, and riding in a horse drawn wagon rounded out the program.

(continued on p. 2)

Our Members Are the Absolute Best!

A heartfelt *thank you* to everyone who renewed their annual membership. Approximately 300 members have responded as of July 31, raising nearly \$30,000. And, more than 70 new members have joined since last April. Please share with your friends your passion for preserving the historic Empire Ranch and for our western heritage education programs.

We are currently working on a number of projects, most notably a plan to stabilize the Adobe Haybarn, and the interpretation of two rooms in the Victorian Addition (see p.2). Whether a large project or day-to-day operations, we are making the most of every contributed dollar. It is only through your generous contributions and volunteer hours, that we are able to continue our work and qualify for grant funds from nonprofit and government sources.

If you have not already done so, please use the membership form on page 4, or visit www.empireranchfoundation.org, to renew your membership today. Thank you!

Carla Kerekes Martin, President

Join Us!

**For Our 10th Annual
Roundup & Open House**

"Celebration of the Cowboy"
at Empire Ranch Headquarters,
Las Cienegas NCA, Sonoita, AZ

Saturday, October 23, 2010

See enclosed flyer, or visit
www.empireranchfoundation.org

New Summer Camp *(cont'd from p. 1)*

Each camper received their own copy of *My Discovery Journal: A Personal Record of Experiencing the World Around Me*, a publication funded by the Patagonia Regional Community Foundation. By keeping a record of what they saw, heard, felt, and experienced each day, these young naturalists developed observation skills and connected personally to the natural and cultural landscapes of the Las Cienegas NCA. Their remarkable summer camp experience at the Empire Ranch is now preserved in their keepsake journal. In the words of one camper, "The things I will remember most about *Wild About the Grasslands!* are all the friends I made here and all the fun I had. I can't wait to come back next year!"

A grant from the Fred W. Stang Foundation helped fund a second year of the "Teen Leadership" component of *WATG!*, and to retain two adult field instructors.

Thanks to the continued generosity of the Anne C. Stradling Foundation and other donors, half of the campers received scholarships. We also appreciate the camp equipment donated by Ed Grose and Patty Wands.

The continuation of *WATG!* Outdoor Education Program is funded in part by grants from the Fred W. Stang Foundation, the Patagonia Regional Community Foundation, and our partner the BLM. The Empire Ranch is a member site of the Hands on the Land National Network of Field Classrooms.



WATG! 2010 class portrait, with ranch house porch and living room in rear (All Photos: N. Steklis)

Master Bedroom Interpretation

An interpretation plan for six rooms of the Empire Ranch House Victorian Addition was recently approved by the ERF, BLM, and the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office. The plan will improve the general appearance of the rooms, and increase the amount of interpretive information available to visitors. Signage will include information on the history of the room, restoration/preservation efforts undertaken to date, and future restoration/preservation plans.

Work has begun on interpretive enhancements to the Master Bedroom, built between 1878 and 1880, and to the Master Bath, added between 1890 and 1900. Five Empire Ranch couples used these rooms between 1881 and 1976: John and Alice Harvey, Walter and Margaret Vail, Banning and Laura Vail, Frank and Mary Boice, and Steve and Annie Boice.

The walls and ceilings will be patched and painted by ERF volunteers. Light fixtures and curtains reflective of the Vail period will be installed. The walls will display text, photos, and other visual materials, such as letters and family trees, that will tell the story of the rooms and those who lived there.

The bookcase on the north wall of the bedroom will be secured by the installation of a clear panel, allowing for the display of vintage bedroom items such as shaving mugs, dresser sets, buttons, sewing kits, belt buckles, and small framed photographs.

At this time security concerns do not allow for the display of unsecured items, such as furniture, but we plan to have a "kit" of items that will be used to decorate the rooms for special events.

We welcome donations of vintage bedroom items for the secure bookcase or for the special events kit. If you have items you wish to donate, please contact Christine Auerbach, ERF administrator, admin@empireranchfoundation.org, 888-364-2829



Departed Friend Dick Theibert

We are deeply saddened by the recent death of ERF Board member, Dick Theibert. After retiring in 1984 from a long and distinguished career in higher education, and as a leader in resource development with the Ford Foundation, Dick was able to devote more time to his family, and to a second distinguished career as an artist. His watercolors have been featured in galleries in Kansas City, Durango and Tucson.

Dick's passion for the Empire Ranch was newfound but resolute, and during his time on the board, he enjoyed participating in volunteer days, educational outreach, and had just begun to serve on development and finance committees. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Peggy, and to the entire Theibert family. Donations in Dick's memory can be made to the Empire Ranch Foundation and/or Casas de los Ninos in Tucson.

Oral History Grant

Capturing the past through acquiring oral histories has long been a primary focus of the Empire Ranch Foundation. To date, ERF has more than 35 oral histories in its archives. (A full list is available on our website.) This spring, ERF joined with several other area non-profit organizations, and participated in an Oral History Work Group, hosted by the Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP).

As a result of this coordinated effort, CWP has been awarded an \$11,000 grant from the BLM to further oral history training and development. The grant will fund educational sessions in best practices for conducting oral history interviews; use of modern technologies for oral history applications; inventorying, transcription, conversion of interview tapes from analog to digital format; and formatting interviews for web presentation and/or interactive exhibits. The net result of these efforts will be increased accessibility of existing and future oral history interviews for educational and research purposes.

The Cienega Watershed Partnership is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the long-term goal of sustaining the Cienega watershed and its resources.

Tortillas, Reatas, Roping, and More

Fifty middle school students arrived for Legacy Day at the Empire Ranch on May 5th, eager and ready to experience a taste of ranch life. Throughout the day they learned some essential ranching skills from a faculty of local experts.

Joel Eliot, Joe Quiroga, and Steve Schmitt provided the roping instruction; the family team of Dick Schorr and his granddaughters Caitlyn and Annika Coleman taught rawhide braiding. Steve Boice and Teresa Warrell introduced the equipment and techniques of horse harnessing, using Steve's handsome Percheron horses. And the ever popular opportunity to "play in the mud" while making adobe bricks was led by BLM's Chris Schrager.

Tortilla making proved to be a fun and new experience for most students. Using dough donated by El Triunfo Bakery, Steve Boice demonstrated how to turn a sphere into a flat tortilla, and how to cook it on a grill without burning your fingers (see 4th photo on right). The competition for making the thinnest tortilla was fierce, but the best part, of course, was getting to eat the results.

That snack only served to whet everyone's appetite for the hearty cowboy lunch of shredded beef, beans, more tortillas, and brownies provided by ERF volunteers Alison Bunting, Ron Martin, Cissy Messick, Donna Swindel, Peggy Theibert, and Judith Williams.

After lunch, everyone enjoyed Gerald Korte's tales of cowboy life on the Empire Ranch. Enormous thanks are due to Dick Schorr and Ron Martin who organized Legacy Day at the Empire Ranch, and to the instructors and volunteers who made it such a success.



(Legacy Day photos: A. Bunting and C. Rogos)



Volunteer Power!

Progress on preservation efforts at the Empire Ranch continued this summer with help from our enthusiastic volunteers. The June 19th Volunteer Day, focused on annual maintenance tasks that are critical to surviving our summer challenges: monsoon and fire season. Sonoita Boy Scout Troop 528 volunteers spent the morning weed-whacking the dry grass and shrub around the buildings, creating an important Firewise barrier to protect the structures. Other volunteers pruned dead limbs, which also can provide fire with a pathway to nearby buildings, and cleaned out the gutters and checked that rainwater runoff will be carried away from foundations.

New wood used in repairs to the corral fences has now been treated, producing two benefits: it seals and protects the wood, and lessens the visual impact of the new wood contrasted with the historic elements that we've been able to preserve. The passage door between the Cowboy's Kitchen and Dining room was removed and the wood work restored, after confirmation that the door was a modern modification. Of course, a thorough cleaning of the Ranch House was undertaken, which included a complete reorganization of two rooms used by the Foundation for storage.

Historic woodworker John Weiss took inventory of the doors in rooms along the Zagan and in the Master Bedroom and Bath. Having done superb work in restoring and reconstructing several other doors at the Ranch, John is preparing a work plan to return all the remaining doors to their original look, right down to the surface-mounted lock hardware and ceramic door handles.

Finally, work has begun to repair and stabilize the wood and plaster on the interior of the Master Bedroom and Bath in the Victorian Addition (see article, p. 2). Much of this work requires painstaking effort and attention to detail, and we've been fortunate to have the ongoing services of volunteer Rick Dirks of Hereford, who has been working with Chris Schrager, BLM's historic preservationist, to get the interiors ready for paint. The painting will be one of the priority tasks for the August 21 and October 16 Volunteer Days—plan to join us!

May We Introduce...

Mrs. John Harvey

Historical accounts speculate that John Harvey, one of the three founders of the Empire Ranch, built the first three rooms of the Victorian Addition for his wife. Recent research has finally revealed exactly who Mrs. Harvey was, and when she came to live on the Empire.

John Harvey, an Englishman born in Bermuda about 1852, arrived with his family in Philadelphia in 1854 and lived there until 1870. By 1871 he was living with his widowed father and siblings in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. In October 1876 he became a partner of Walter L. Vail and Herbert Hislop, bringing capital for purchasing land and livestock.

In 1881, age 28, Harvey traveled to England and on April 6, 1881 married 26 year old Alice Maud Annand. The newlyweds arrived by ship in New York on May 12, 1881, and probably arrived in Arizona by train. Apparently ranch life did not agree with Mrs. Harvey, and by August 1881 the Harveys sold their Empire Ranch interests to Walter Vail.

....you will be surprised to hear that I have bought both Uncle N & Harvey's interest in the Empire Ranch and all its belongings....I think Mrs. H. has been feeling a good deal as I expected she would and I am very much afraid she will not be happy in any place. I think both Harvey and she were both glad to see me as he was and looked more homesick than I ever saw him. [Letter from Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall Vail, August 5, 1881]

We know little at this point about the Harvey family after leaving the Empire. The 1891 England Census lists Alice Harvey as living in England with her mother and two children, Cockburn, born in New York in 1882, and Grace, born in England in 1885. By the 1901 England Census, Alice is listed as a widow living with her sister and three children: Cockburn, Gladys, and Guy, born in England in 1887.

Gifts in Remembrance

The Empire Ranch Foundation deeply appreciates recent donations received *In Memory of:*

Les Armour
Grover & Beatrice Conrad
Earl F. Glenn, Jr.
Joan Hedcock
Gene & Alvessa Hummel
Carey Ingram
Laura "Dusty" Vail Ingram
Fern Kemp Lewis
Lucy O. Ross
Julia S. Ruch
Bill Schulmeyer
Anne Stefan
Dick Theibert
Al Vail
Edward Newhall Vail
Laura Perry Vail
Russ Vail
Margaret Vail Woolley

Working Calendar

[Location: Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted. To volunteer, or for more information, call (888) 364-2829]

August

21 Volunteer Day, 8am to Noon
Call 888-364-2829 to volunteer

September

18 ERF Board Meeting, 9am to Noon

October

16 Volunteer Day, 8am to Noon
Call 888-364-2829 to volunteer

23 2010 Empire Ranch Roundup & Open House, "A Celebration of the Cowboy at the Historic Empire Ranch," 10am to 4pm

November

20 ERF Board Meeting, 9am to Noon

December

3 Artists entries due for 2011 "Empire 100" Western Art Show & Sale

January

10-12 Preview, "Empire 100" Western Art Show & Sale, 9am to 4pm, Northern Trust, 3540 East Sunrise Drive, Tucson, AZ (Show runs through March 12)

13 Members & Friends Reception, "Empire 100" Western Art Show & Sale, 4pm to 7:30pm, Northern Trust, 3540 East Sunrise Drive, Tucson, AZ (Show runs through March 12)

15 ERF Board Meeting, 9am to Noon

March

12 Closing Day, "Empire 100" Western Art Show & Sale, Northern Trust, 3540 East Sunrise Drive, Tucson, AZ

2010/2011 Membership Reply

Yes, I want to help save the Empire Ranch for future generations!

Name: _____
(Please enter name(s) in your preferred format for acknowledgments.)

Street/P.O. Address: _____

City, State, ZIP : _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Check enclosed Charge to: MC Visa Discover This is a new address

_____ / _____
Credit Card Number Exp.Date. Signature

This donation is also in __memory/ __appreciation of _____

This is a gift membership from: _____

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION



- \$35 Homesteader
- \$50 Total Wreck Miner
- \$100 Wrangler
- \$250 Vaquero
- \$500 Jefe
- \$1,000 Patron
- \$2,500 Majordomo
- \$5,000 Cattle Baron
- \$10,000 Territorial Governor
- \$_____ Other

Please Mail To: Empire Ranch Foundation, P.O. Box 842, Sonoita, AZ 85637

The Empire Ranch Foundation has an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit classification; donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.