



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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

www.empireranchfoundation.org

Your Membership is More Important Than Ever!

Message from the President

Included with this issue of the Empire Ranch Foundation News is our annual membership appeal letter. We've accomplished so much this past year with your help, and we seek your support for the 2008-2009 membership year.

As you know, protecting, preserving and interpreting the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape is a collaborative effort with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). We are grateful for the honor bestowed by our BLM colleagues when the Foundation was selected to receive the 2008 BLM Excellence in Public Lands Partnership Award (see article p. 3).

Working together we stabilized the West Gable and walls of the Victorian Ad-
(continued on p. 2)



Volunteers pitching in on February 16 volunteer work day. (photo: C.Auerbach)

Wild About The Grasslands! 2008

Registration is now open for the second year of the Empire Ranch Foundation's unique, *Wild About The Grasslands! (WATG!)* Outdoor Education Program. Scheduled for June 16th-20th, *WATG!* is designed to foster environmental literacy by bringing kids who have completed Grades 5-8 to the Empire Ranch Headquarters for a week-long summer day camp, 9am-3pm. Empire Ranch is an official site of the Hands on the Land Program, a national network of field classrooms designed to connect students, teachers, and parents to their public lands and waterways.

This year, young "Grasslanders" will learn key concepts of environmental processes and systems, including ecology and cultural influences, by engaging in hands-on, minds-on inquiry of the endangered habitats of the semi-desert grasslands. They will tour the Empire Ranch, hike nature trails, navigate the outdoors using Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and take part in outdoor adventure games, and other learning and recreational activities. Artists will engage students in creating works of art inspired by nature and cowboy culture.

Attendees will enjoy playing the role of "naturalists" as they work together with master teachers, scientists, and land managers to monitor the water, vegetation, and wildlife unique to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. They will explore the value of the historical buildings and landscapes. Local ranchers will share the legendary history and stories of cattle ranching at the Ranch. Historical preservation-



Grasslanders researching Cienega Creek, June 2007. (photo: G. Corkhill)

ists will teach students adobe brick making and rebuilding. They'll learn about stewardship and the sustainability of the local ecology. Naturalists will inspire them to become outdoor enthusiasts who come to appreciate the wonders and beauty of the local natural and cultural world that exists right in "their own backyards".

Registration cost is \$125 per person. Fee includes expert instruction, silkscreened T-shirt, embroidered cap, and a journal to record their nature experiences. Limited scholarships are available. Register by May 19th, by calling (888) 364-2829; empireranchfoundation@yahoo.com may be used for email inquiries.

Echoing the words of many, one 12 year old described her time at camp: "Awesome activities and great fun! The GPS was cool. I loved the art activities, the nature journal, orienteering, the herbarium, vinca monitoring. It was all so much fun. I really enjoyed and appreciated this learning. The whole thing was awesome..."

Published by the Empire Ranch Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management. The purpose of the Foundation is to protect, restore, and sustain the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape as an outstanding western heritage and education center. Donations to the Foundation may be sent to: P.O. Box 842, Sonoita, AZ 85637-0842.

Membership (cont'd from p.1)

dition, removed old carpet, asbestos tile and linoleum in the Victorian Addition, and reinstalled a roof that blew off the Mechanic's Shop. The BLM has installed a new water system and public restrooms, and the first phase of the Heritage Discovery Trail now leads visitors through a beautiful and scenic walk to the riparian areas of the Empire Gulch.

You responded to our call for volunteers and together we patched, painted and repaired interior walls and exterior window frames, cleaned rooms of debris, helped maintain the Heritage Discovery Trail, and installed descriptive signage throughout the Ranch House.

An information kiosk in the Victorian Addition now welcomes guests with maps and informative materials. Volunteers are working with BLM to restore the Ranch House corrals, and will receive training in adobe restoration.

We're especially proud of our new outdoor education program *Wild About the Grasslands!*, launched in June 2007 with seed funding provided by BLM's Hands on the Land program. Your membership support coupled with grant funding from BLM, the Patagonia Regional Community Foundation, and others will help fund the program this June. A new cadre of students will benefit from learning about ecology and conservation stewardship (see article p.1.)

A new structural and seismic assessment study of the Empire Ranch House, Hired Man's House, Adobe Haybarn, and Grove House will provide a blueprint for preservation work to come. This study, funded by BLM, identifies the most critical preservation needs and will help to prioritize future projects, such as the permanent repair of the zagan lintel.

Even with our progress, the challenges that face us are daunting and your membership contribution is more important than ever! Please reply as generously as you can. Thank you!

*Alison Bunting, President
Empire Ranch Foundation*

We welcome gifts of securities. If you are interested in making a donation of stock, please call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

Thank You, Marion!

What adjectives best describe ERF volunteer extraordinaire, Marion Hyland? A brief survey of those who've worked with her yields the following: organized, dedicated, imaginative, warm, vivacious, charming, enthusiastic, inspirational. Marion was elected to the ERF Board of Directors during its founding year in 1997, and served as vice president (1999, 2001-2002), and president (2002-2003).

She assisted in the development of the Roundup to introduce the ranch to the public, and in 2000 suggested holding a western art show at the Roundup to raise funds and attract those interested in western heritage to the work of the Foundation. Not everyone on the Board thought it was a good idea. One member commented: "Marion, this is not a blanketyblank art gallery. It's a RANCH!" Marion was not deterred—perseverance is another descriptor that applies.

In 2000 the art shows began at the Roundup; in 2001 the first Tucson based art show was held at Northern Trust and the Empire 100 was born. Photo shoots for artists were sponsored for several years and have resulted in artistic renderings of the Empire's buildings, people, animals, and landscapes. Marion provided leadership and countless hours of hard work. She is quick to credit the help she's received over the years from western artists and art lovers such as Dick and Dee Bryers, Tom Dorr, Fred and Deborah Fellows, Jack and Aline Goodman, and Keri Jelks

Over the years the shows have grown in stature and quality, and the net benefit



to ERF is outstanding. All told, the Empire 100 and Roundup art shows have generated over \$125,000 in donations for the Foundation to date.

We pay tribute to Marion at this time because she has announced her "retirement" as chair of the Empire 100. Characteristically, she has ensured that the event will continue as a premiere art event by recruiting Ginger Hambly to take the helm as chair. Ginger is a community and civic leader and wife of famed artist, Fred Hambly. "It is the correct step forward," Marion says. "With Ginger's interest in the broader western art world and her Tucson contacts and beyond, she will continue to nurture the show toward the vision that was first conceived."

We can't thank you enough, Marion, for your vision, determination, and dedication to the Empire Ranch Foundation. You are truly an ERF "western treasure"!

Restated ERF Bylaws Adopted

Restated Bylaws for the Empire Ranch Foundation were adopted unanimously by vote at a meeting of the Active Members of the Foundation on March 15, 2008. The Original Bylaws were adopted in 1997 as part of the incorporation of the Empire Ranch Foundation as a not-for-profit Arizona corporation. Over the past three years a concerted effort was mounted to revise the Bylaws to address concerns expressed by the BLM and Board members as well as omissions, typos and changed circumstances. Credit for completing the process goes to ERF Vice President Fred Baker who brought the interested parties together at the Mountain Oyster Club and wouldn't let them leave until a draft was agreed upon. Thanks are also due to Gerald Korte who provided continuity and history by serving on all Bylaws committees over the years, and who insisted on absolute accuracy. Baker also arranged for a legal review of the final document by attorney Steven Phillips who donated his time for the review. To Mr. Phillips, Fred Baker, and all the Board members over the years who participated in this effort, thank you!



Best of the Empire award winner "Empire Ranch House" by Michael Ewing

2008 "Empire 100" Art Show a Standout Success

The 2008 *Empire 100* Art Show and Sale at Northern Trust was an unqualified success with 42 pieces of artwork sold with total value of more than \$60,000. Attesting to the increasingly competitive juried process, there were a record number of entries from artists from coast to coast and Canada. The final tally filled the Empire coffers with a net of \$10,800.

Congratulations to Deborah Fellows, winner of the People's Choice Award for her sentimental bronze "Rule No. 1: Never Touch a Cowboy's Hat." A new category of artwork award, "Best of the Empire," featured 28 pieces inspired by the Empire Ranch and filled an entire hall. That award went to Michael Ewing for his painting "Empire Ranch House."

After eight years of devoted support, the Empire Ranch Foundation again thanks Northern Trust for their outstanding contributions on our behalf. The enthusiastic people at Northern Trust each deserve individual recognition for their excitement and extended efforts to serve the Foundation. We are also thankful to participating artists and to the corps of volunteers from Northern Trust and the Foundation who helped make the art show a success. Planning for the 2009 *Empire 100* Art Show and Sale is now underway. Information will be available on our website after August 1, 2008.



People's Choice award winning bronze by Deborah Fellows.

ERF Recognized by National Award

The Empire Ranch Foundation, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) partner organization, was recently awarded the Public Lands Partnership Excellence Award for 2008 by the national Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL). This APPL award is granted annually to recognize contributions made by not-for-profit partners ensuring that millions of visitors have memorable and educational interactions with public lands.

The award was accepted by ERF board member Sara Miller, at the 2008 APPL convention held in Denver, Colorado, in February. Sarah praised the meeting as providing an "extraordinary opportunity for shared learning and networking."

The Foundation was nominated for the award by BLM's Tucson Field Office through the efforts of Catie Fenn, BLM outdoor recreation manager and Chris Schragger, BLM historic preservationist. For more information, visit the APPL website at www.appl.org.



ERF president Alison Bunting and Sarah Miller, at the Empire with APPL award plaque. (photo: T. McDonald)



Guests listening and relaxing in shade of Stone Corral after tour. (photo: K.Keller)

ERF Hosts National Media Tour

On February 29, ERF hosted 20 guests in a tour organized by the Sonoran Institute to inform the media about the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). Administratively established within the BLM in 2000, the NLCS includes over 27 million acres of BLM public lands that are recognized as nationally significant for their cultural, ecological and scientific values for the American public. Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and the Empire Ranch Headquarters are a designated part of the NLCS. The U.S. House of Representatives' Natural Resources Committee is currently considering a bill to provide statutory basis for the NCLS.

After a tour of Las Cienegas and the historic Empire Ranch House those attending enjoyed a traditional cowboy lunch with background music by Bruce Andre. The event provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the close collaboration between ERF and BLM to protect and preserve a unique historical property..

Save the Date!

COWBOY LIFE ON THE EMPIRE RANCH

2008 Empire Ranch Roundup Open House
Empire Ranch Headquarters
Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Sonoita
Saturday, November 1, 2008

In the good ol' days, the cowboy was the glue that held the West together. The 2008 Roundup at the Empire Ranch will pay homage to the icon of the West with the theme, "Cowboy Life on the Empire Ranch". We'll showcase past and present cowboy (and cowgirl) traditions, with arena events featuring roping and riding and skill demonstrations from horseshoeing, saddle-making and mule packing to blacksmithing, spurs & bits and silver making. Experience the authentic West with wagons, kid's corral, entertainment and bar-becue, auctions and raffles.

The Empire Ranch Roundup—where the cowboy spirit lives on 3

2008 Preservation Plans

The coming year will see a number of new preservation tasks undertaken. In addition to hands-on stabilization and rehabilitation efforts, we are moving the planning and interpretation process forward.

Toward that end, in early May Statistical Research, Inc. (SRI) will present the preliminary findings of a report commissioned by the Foundation and funded by BLM. The report is a structural evaluation of the Empire Ranch House, the Adobe Hay Barn, the Grove House, and the Hired Man's House. Its scope includes determining the structural condition of each building, identifying problem areas and deficiencies, and providing guidance on strengthening and retrofit measures. This report will be a critical tool in long-term planning for the historic adobe structures at the Empire. SRI's team includes restoration contractor Eric Means, historic architect Bob Vint, and Dr. Mel Green, a structural engineer nationally known for his expertise with earthen architecture.

Planning will also move ahead for interpretation of the rooms in the Ranch House, beginning with the Victorian Addition, and for developing a landscaping plan that is compatible with the Ranch's history and environment. Please contact the Foundation if you have an interest in helping out with either of these important tasks.

Hands-on work will begin with repairs to the corral fences. A group led by former ranch cowboy Gerald Korte will work to repair (and where necessary, replace) deteriorated posts and rails, while keeping as much of the existing material as possible.

The project gets underway at the April 19 Volunteer Work Day; we hope to have a good crew on hand, and welcome volunteers. If you would like to volunteer to help, please call (888) 364-2829.

Several other preservation projects are tentatively scheduled for the future. These include rebuilding the roof on the small shed just west of the Mechanic's Shop; repairs to the sides and foundation of the Tack Room; and a new roof for the Victorian addition. We'll be updating our progress in future newsletters—or better still, come out to the Empire and see the progress for yourself!

New BLM Tucson Field Office Manager Named

Effective March 31, Brian Bellew, from the the BLM's Socorro Field Office in New Mexico, has been appointed the new Tucson Field Office Manager overseeing Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and the Empire Ranch. We welcome Brian to Arizona and the Empire!

We send our thanks and good wishes to former TFO Manager Patrick Madigan, who has been appointed Field Manager in Rawlins, Wyoming, and to Scott Berkenfield, former National Landscape Conservation System Manager for Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and the Ironwood Forest National Monument, who has transferred to a resource specialist position for the Shoshone National Forest in Lander, Wyoming.

Binoculars Wanted

If you have any spare binoculars or field guides, the *Wild About The Grasslands!* Equipment Loan Program could use them! This program makes Nature Expedition Daypacks' tools of a "naturalist" available to summer camp participants and local area schools, youth programs, and families to encourage students and adults to get outdoors and visit the Empire Ranch.

All donations are welcome and tax deductible. For more information, please call (888) 362-2829.

Working Calendar

[Location: Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted.]

May

7 "Legacy Day" student education day

17 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

June

16-20 "Wild About the Grasslands!" summer camp for middle school students

21 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-Noon

July

17 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

August

21 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-Noon

September

20 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

October

18 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-Noon

November

1 2008 Roundup Open House: "Cowboy Life on the Empire Ranch"

15 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

2008/2009 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 MasterCard Visa Card This is a new address

_____ / _____
Card Number Exp.Date. Signature

This donation is also in __memory/___appreciation of _____

Please add me to your listing to receive email updates and e-newsletters

This is a gift membership from: _____

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION



- \$35 Homesteader
- \$50 Total Wreck Miner
- \$100 Wrangler
- \$250 Vaquero
- \$500 Jefe
- \$1,000 Patrón
- \$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.

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