



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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

www.empireranchfoundation.org

You Make a Difference!

Each spring we launch our membership campaign. Thanks so much for your support! We urge you to continue your membership in 2009/2010 by returning the enclosed renewal form.

Because of your support and that of our partner, the BLM, we have accomplished so much! The structural and seismic assessment study of the ranch's adobe buildings completed in August 2008 provides a prioritized blueprint for preservation work to come. Statistical Research, Inc. (SRI) has finalized the work plan for restoring the lintel at the south end of the zaguan, and we look forward to project completion in 2009. Background research to expand the National Register listing to additional historic structures is complete and the report is in preparation.



Volunteers set posts (photo: C. Martin)

Our corps of volunteers continues to grow, and we are so thankful for everyone's assistance! Our most ambitious volunteer project is the repair of the Ranch House corrals (see photo above). Other projects included removal and replacement
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ERF's Western Shindig Honors Northern Trust and Marion Hyland

It was an event to remember as more than 120 guests "saddled up" to attend ERF's Western Shindig on March 7 at the Mountain Oyster Club in Tucson.

It didn't take long before guests crowded the dance floor, two-steppin' to lively western serenades by cowboy musician and artist Bruce Andre, while others enjoyed the quick draw artistry demonstrated by Roger Alderman and Paul Miller.

The event honored Northern Trust for their longtime support of the Empire 100 Western Art Show & Sale and Marion Hyland, for her vision in founding the art show nine years ago. Alison Bunting, ERF
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Now Recruiting — WATG! Summer Camp 2009

Wild about the Grasslands! is back for its third year at Empire Ranch Headquarters. The summer day camp is the Foundation's ranching heritage and ecology program for middle-school age children. The program connects kids to the outdoors, the history of Empire Ranch, and the rare habitats of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

For one fun-filled week, youngsters discover the wonder of nature, develop an appreciation for historic sites and the people who created them, and be inspired to become good stewards of the environment. Young "grasslanders" engage in hands-on, minds-on activities such as hiking, geocaching, adobe brick making, journaling, macro-invertebrate identification, and creating nature-inspired art.

Register your child, grandchild, niece or nephew today!

Who: Kids entering Grades 6 - 8 in the Fall of 2009

What: A week-long, Summer Day Camp

When: June 8 - June 12, 2009

Where: Empire Ranch Headquarters, Las Cienegas NCA

How Much: \$125. Limited scholarships are available

Questions: (888) 364-2829, or email info@empireranchfoundation.org

The Empire Ranch is an official site of Hands on the Land National Network of Field Classrooms. Learn more at www.empireranchfoundation.org/WATG.htm



Marion & Bob Hyland enjoy two-steppin'.

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.

You Make a Difference

(cont'd from p. 1)

of damaged corrugated metal on the sides of the Mechanic's Shop; trimming and removing weeds and overgrowth; recontouring the soil between the Heritage Trail and the Hired Man's House for water drainage; and general clean-up including preparing the Headquarters buildings for the monsoons. It's fun and rewarding work, so please join us!

The reputation of our education programs is outstanding, and this year we received grants from three non-profit foundations (Fred W. Stang Foundation, Patagonia Regional Community Foundation, and Sulphur Springs Valley Electrical Cooperative Foundation) and the BLM. *Wild About the Grasslands! 2009* will expose a new group of students to ecology and ranching. Student projects will include development of a nature heritage field journal for kids with companion guide for educators, and several interpretive wayside signs for Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

Working together we can continue to make progress on the challenges we face as we work to preserve the Empire Ranch for generations to come. Your membership is more important than ever! Please contribute as generously as you can. Thanks so much!

Alison Bunting, President

Empire Ranch Foundation



Landmark NLCS Legislation Signed

On March 30, President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. The act includes provisions that establish under law the 26 million acre National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) within the BLM, thus providing permanent protection to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, home of the Empire Ranch Headquarters. The NLCS was established administratively by BLM in 2000, but did not receive permanent status until this landmark bipartisan bill was enacted.

Shindig Fun (cont'd from p. 1)



Francie Merriman of Northern Trust receives award and applauds hot auction action (photos: C. Auerbach)

president, made the inaugural presentation of the Top Hand Awards—signifying extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Empire Ranch—to Francie Merriman of Northern Trust and Marion Hyland.

Following delectable grub, amidst last minute sales for the 50/50 raffle, veteran auctioneer Paul Ramirez, assisted by his wife, Tina, began his trade-mark rapid-fire dialect, creating spirited bidding for live auction items including western paintings (featuring two by our quick draw artists), and a week's vacation in San Carlos. The top item was Empire 100 featured artist Tom Dorr's painting entitled, "Partners", which was won by Clark and Karen Bright of Tucson. A spontaneous screech of delight followed Sarah Miller's winning of the 50/50 raffle.

Guests left with memories in hand—complimentary western portraits taken by photographer Jorga Riggenbach. The portraits were taken alongside the historic saddle of the late Malcom "Sparky" Watt, brought by his wife, Annalyn Watt, for appreciative viewing and used in the staging of photographs.

Many thanks to Ron Martin, chair of the event, auctioneer Paul Ramirez (ucanbid.com) and auction donors, Roger Alderman, Gwen Dean, Tom Dorr, Jef Matthews and Paul Miller.



Gerald Korte (l) leading tour group (photo: T. Rogos)

Tours Mark Arizona Archeology Month

On Saturday, March 14, the Foundation hosted tours of the Empire Ranch historic buildings on the occasion of Arizona Archaeology month. Gerald Korte, a founder and first president of ERF, regaled participants with stories of his experiences as an Empire Ranch cowboy during the late 1940s.

Empire 100 Western Art Show Concludes

The Ninth Annual Empire 100 Western Art Show & Sale at Northern Trust in Tucson was exceptional from the opening night reception's record attendance of more than 450 guests on January 15 to the last painting sold on March 16, the final day of the show.

This year's special Miniature Wall was a big hit with buyers, accounting for 18 of the 29 total paintings sold.

Northern Trust extended this year's show to two months, which allowed for several additional special events, including simulcast of the Northern Trust Open in Pacific Palisades, California, and a viewing of art by the St. Luke's Board of Visitors. Northern Trust staff cordially handled sales and visitors throughout the extended show. The Foundation is again enormously grateful for their very generous sponsorship of this event.

The Foundation also greatly appreciates the support of the many fine artists who participated in the show. From a record 400 entries, the jury selected 130 paintings and 11 bronzes, representing a wide range of artists from across the United States and Canada, and the public clearly welcomed this extraordinary showing of western art.

Preservation Update

The Foundation's preservation contractor, SRI, has submitted a revised work plan to repair the lintel across the south opening to the zaguan (breezeway) in the oldest part of the Ranch House (see photo at right). Although a plan was drawn up several years ago, implementation was delayed due to lack of funds. Further deterioration over the years since then now necessitates a different approach to the repair. Although more intrusive, it will accomplish a long-term fix that also addresses other repairs called for in last year's structural and seismic assessment, and allow removal of the metal shoring braces that currently support the lintel. This project, to be completed in 2009, is funded by the generous response to last year's appeal, and other ERF and BLM funds.

Volunteers, including Foundation members, scouting, church, and community groups, continue to make progress on repairs to the corral fences. Using rough-sawn lumber that matches the size and finish of historical wood elements, the first section of fence at the north end was completed in February; plans call for the replacement of the power pole on the east side of the entry gate with a peeled juniper log post during April's volunteer day.

In February, volunteers also took measurements and photographs to plan for two repair projects: a small shed west of the Mechanic's Shop whose roof blew off last year, and repairs to wood elements above the foundation of the Tack Shed. These will be written up and included in a summary of near term preservation proposals for the Ranch.

The BLM is moving ahead with plans to complete renovations to the Huachuca House, which will continue to serve as a residence for the on-site Park Ranger. The agency is also drawing up plans for rehabilitation of the Field Station (the brick ranch-style house at the north end of the Headquarters complex) with hopes of using it for meetings, dedicated space for the Foundation, occasional housing for research and study teams, and secured storage space..

Continued active preservation efforts will be critical at the Ranch in the coming months and years. We appreciate your support—financial, hands-on, or any way you choose to be part of this worthy effort. Thanks!



Zaguan south lintel is next on the list for preservation (photo: SRI)



Volunteers test out repaired corral fencing (photo: C. Auerbach)



John Donaldson, 2005

Donaldson Legacy

The Foundation bids a fond farewell to the Donaldson family members as ranchers on the Empire. They discontinued their 34-year ranching operations at the Empire Ranch and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in March 2009.

In 1975, when Anamax Mining Corporation purchased the Empire Ranch, they entered into a lease agreement with John Donaldson to manage ranching operations while Anamax developed plans for the property.

John's son Mac and his wife Billie moved to the Empire to partner with John in 1978 and both Donaldson families lived on the Empire until 1988, when the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired the Empire Ranch Headquarters and surrounding 42,000 acres through a series of land swaps. The Donaldsons continued their grazing lease with the BLM, operating Empire Ranch LLC with modern, environmentally friendly methods.

Throughout their tenure on the Empire the Donaldsons have primarily used the "one herd" grazing system, continually moving the cattle as one herd from differ-

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SAVE THE DATE!
Historic Empire Ranch
Roundup & Open House
Saturday, October 24
10am to 4pm

- **Cowboy Arena Events**
- **Western skills, lore & storytelling**
- **Ranch House tours**
- **Kids Corral**
- **Western Author's Pavilion**
- **Historic Buggies & Wagons**
- **Music, Auction & Raffles**
- **Expanded Western Barbecue**

Open to the Public!

SSVEC Foundation Education Grant Received

The Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative Foundation, which seeks to increase opportunities for youth in the SSVEC service areas, recently awarded a \$3,900 grant to the Empire Ranch Foundation. Thanks to their generosity, our summer *Wild About the Grasslands!* (WATG!) program activities will include new initiatives directly impacting more youth in Patagonia and Sonoita-Elgin.

With this support, WATG! participants this June will develop interpretive text, illustrations, and photographs for two wayside panels to be located near the south entrance of the LCNCA. The theme of the panels will be "Southern Arizona's Grasslands and Wildlife." As part of the learning experience, they'll discover the adventure/sport of geocaching and practice responsible land use ethics. Tech-savvy students in a newly launched Teen Geocaching Club will instruct WATG! youngsters and others in using GPS for geocaching and community service learning projects. Graphics design students from Patagonia High School will create and produce a geocaching club brochure. We'll keep you updated on this exciting new project.

Donaldsons (cont'd from p. 3)

ent areas at different times depending on the climate, season, and water availability. This practice of using pastures for a short length of time allows the grass to rest and recuperate. John began with Brahman cattle which adapted well to the climate and conditions, but evolved to what he terms "chop suey" cows—a mix of different types of cattle that were bred to their Brahman bulls. When Mac and Billie's son Sam and his wife Jennifer joined the partnership they added a horse program to the mix.

Ranching on public lands is challenging. Government agencies, environmental groups, and the general public often have competing priorities. Cooperation, planning, and flexibility are key. The Donaldsons have continually adapted their practices, working closely with biologists and botanist, to help preserve endangered species and enhance riparian areas on the LCNCA. In 2004, John and Mac were among those honored by the Quivara Coalition's Burch Award for their participation in the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership, which works to develop community-oriented solutions to issues affecting public lands in the Sonoita Valley.

The Donaldsons have contributed enormously to the work of the Foundation. John, Mac, and Billie have all served on the Board of Directors. Billie was a board member for six years (2000-2006), holding the offices of Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Roundup Coordinator. All family members have contributed countless hours volunteering and sharing their knowledge for Foundation educational events such as the Roundup, Legacy Day and WATG! summer camp.

John and his wife Barbara will remain in the Sonoita area to enjoy a well deserved retirement. Mac and Billie plan to continue ranching at a location yet to be determined. Sam and Jennifer are now working on the Lone Mountain Ranch, south of the Huachuca Mountains.



Four Donaldson generations—Mac, Sam, Colton & John.



Mac & Billie Donaldson (photos: Donaldson family)

Working Calendar

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

May

- 6 "Legacy Day at the Empire Ranch" - Outreach for middle school students
- 16 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon
- 16 ERF Advisory Committee Annual Meeting, 12:30-3:30pm

June

- 8-12 "Wild About the Grasslands!" - Summer camp for middle school students
- 20 Volunteer Day, 8am-Noon

July

- 18 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

August

- 15 Volunteer Day, 8am-Noon

September

- 19 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-Noon

October

- 17 Volunteer Day, 8am-Noon
- 24 2009 Empire Ranch Roundup & Open House, 10am-4pm. Public invited.

—Wish List—

The Empire Ranch Foundation is occasionally in need of various items for our outreach and educational programs. If you have items to donate, or know of community resources where these items may be available, please let us know.

- Compasses
- Gardening tools
- Gently used pop-up shade tents
- Large ice chests

2009/2010 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.