



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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

www.empireranchfoundation.org

The Spring Trail Ride on April 2, 2016...

was awesome! Our thanks to the more than 90 riders participating on this perfect day for a ride. Steve & Faith Boice provided us a view of the ranch not experienced by many. Such beauty!

Our riders, a great mix of veteran trail riders and new to the ranch horsemen, had a great day on the trails. The first ride of the morning rode west through the vast grasslands. One veteran rider told us he enjoyed that ride because it was a bit more challenging, and there was so much to see. The afternoon riders headed east towards the Cienega Creek and got to experience the creek crossing. Such a wonderful time; many were ready to sign up for next year!

Those not riding enjoyed Ranch House tours by Gerald Korte, storytelling by Bunker deFrance and Heritage Discovery Trail walks led by Gail Corkill. Hamburgers and hot dogs were grilled by Marty Maynard and served by Larry and Dee Winter, while our guests were serenaded by Stewart MacDougall, playing western songs on his piano.

A special "Loyal to the Brand" award was presented at lunchtime to Alison Bunting. Alison was the President of ERF (2007-2009) and is also our Historian/Archivist, docent trainer, keeper of the website, and knower of all things. Thank you, Alison, for your commitment and dedication to the Empire Ranch Foundation - and for being "Loyal to the Brand"!

Many thanks to our outfitters All Around Trail Horses and their wranglers as well as our member volunteers for their help in setting up, registration, and breaking down. See you next year!



Riders gather at ranch house, then roam;
Alison Bunting receives "Loyal to the
Brand" award. (photos: B. Young)

Coming August 10!



Don't miss the showing of our 6th annual summer western movie, Wednesday, August 10th, 6:30pm, at The Loft Cinema in Tucson. This year it's the superb, but unusual, 1951 film *Westward the Women* starring Robert Taylor, Denise Darcel, and John McIntire. It's about a group of 200 single women in the 1850's forming a wagon train led by Taylor going from Chicago to their future husbands in California. Directed by the legendary William Wellman, the film is gritty and ahead of its time, and considered by critics to be one of the most under-rated westerns.

Our program also will feature actor William Wellman, Jr., who wrote *Wild Bill Wellman*, the biography of his dad. We are thrilled to have Mr. Wellman Jr. join us and look forward to some wonderful anecdotes of his dad and Hollywood as it was!

Tickets go on sale June 1, 2016, at Eventbrite.com. \$20 for ERF members; \$25 for non-members; \$30 at the door.

(continued on p. 2)

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.

CWP Wall of Honor

Congratulations to Alison Bunting (ERF) and Jeff Simms (BLM) who were recently honored by the Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP) and listed on the CWP Wall of Honor. The virtual Wall of Honor recognizes those who have made significant contributions in advancing the mission of the CWP and sustaining the Cienega Watershed.

Alison helped to develop programs which now define the CWP's heritage mission. These programs include the CWP oral history program; the Back Then Internship Program; and the Cienega Timeline Project. She is also an active member of the BLM LCNCA's Heritage Technical Team.

Jeff is a fisheries biologist and his dedication and passion are reasons why native fish and other native aquatic



Alison Bunting, Jeff Simms, Doug Duncan, 2016 Wall of Honor honorees. (photo: T. Robertson)

species have successful LCNCA populations. From the time that BLM acquired LCNCA Jeff became immersed in inventorying, monitoring, planning, and improving this landscape. He has been key in major multi-partner efforts to conserve native vertebrates, like the Mexican garter snake and Chiricahua leopard frog.

Volunteer Appreciation

On March 12th the Foundation hosted a lovely volunteer appreciation luncheon at the Elgin Community Club to recognize and thank ERF's most dedicated volunteers! The volunteers were treated to a shredded beef lunch, wine, and music by Benny Young and Skelly Boyd of the Desert Sons. They also had an opportunity to view some Vail photo albums and materials from the ERF archives.

Each volunteer attending received a certificate of appreciation and an ERF lapel pin. Doug and Sally Pyne were presented with a special award for all their dedication and loyalty to ERF. You've probably met them at ERF events where their ready smiles welcome all participants. They developed and coordinate the Empire Ambassadors program—a cadre of volunteers who on weekends open the Visitor Contact Center, greet visitors, promote upcoming events and ERF, and help maintain the buildings and grounds.



Awardees Doug & Sally Pyne, with Pres. Faith Boice (center) (photo: S. Reichardt)

Your Feedback Is Appreciated

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent survey. We received invaluable feedback and a number of constructive comments that will help the Foundation plan for the future. Some interesting results include:

- 78% of all respondents (members and non-members) visited the ranch at least once in the past year. A similar percentage of respondents had also visited the Ranch "electronically" via the website.
- The most important Foundation activities were preservation of the historic ranch buildings, our events, and youth education and outreach.
- 79% felt their gifts of time and money have made a difference in achieving our mission.
- 89% (including all current members) indicated they were likely to renew their memberships.

Congratulations to our drawing winners - Lea R. Ward and Judy Gorman! Each will receive an Empire Ranch book.

Historic Landscape Survey

ERF and BLM collaborated with the University of Arizona Drachman Institute to conduct a Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) for the Empire Ranch. HALS is a federal documentation program in partnership with the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Library of Congress (LC) to create a permanent record of historic and cultural landscapes throughout the U.S.

Twelve University of Arizona students, under the direction of Professor R. Brooks Jeffrey, prepared a preliminary survey document after a review of ERF archival materials and several visits to the ranch. Landscape architects Helen Erickson and Gina Chorover and landscape historian Robin Lothrop Pinto will finalize the HALS report for submission to the NPS by July 2016 and ultimate archiving in the Library of Congress.



Catie Fenn Retires

Catie Fenn, Outdoor Recreation Specialist, retired last March after a 21-year career in the Tucson Field Office.

Catie made significant contributions to the Empire Ranch and LCNCA. She led the effort to create the Heritage Discovery Trail at Empire Ranch Headquarters (ERH), and was instrumental in the creation and installation of many wayside signs at ERH and LCNCA. Catie also worked closely with the Pascua Yaqui community in the Youth in Wilderness (YIW) partnership at LCNCA. Pascua Yaqui Chairman Peter Yucupicio honored Catie at her retirement party noting that YIW has provided valuable opportunities for Pascua Yaqui youth to be outdoors and learn about their cultural heritage and its close ties with nature.

Gifts in Remembrance

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received *In Memory of*:

Eldon Corkill • Earl F. Glenn, Jr.

Noble F. Higginson • Marion Hyland

Dick & Eva Jimenez • John Trudell

Russ, Margie & Al Vail

In Honor of: ERF Volunteers

"Westward" movie (cont'd)

Proceeds support ERF's purpose, *to protect, restore and sustain the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape as an outstanding western heritage and education center*. To learn more, email admin@empireranchfoundation.org. or call Bobbie Young, ERF Administrator, at (888) 364-2829

Empire Adobe Gets TLC

On March 16, 2016 the Empire Ranch was the site of a day long TICRAT workshop, with participants learning to assess and repair damage to historic adobe on the Ranch House and Adobe Haybarn.

TICRAT (in Spanish: Taller Internacional de Conservación y Restauración de Arquitectura de Tierra; in English: International Workshop on the Conservation and Restoration of Earthen Architecture) is an annual week-long international workshop on techniques and strategies for preserving earthen structures. This year's workshop, hosted by several public agencies and the University of Arizona's Drachman Institute, also included activities at four other historic sites in the Tucson area. Over 60 budding preservationists and expert instructors from the U.S. and Mexico, including ERF Board member David Yubeta, participated.

At the Empire Ranch, participants learned how to evaluate historic adobe by removing the cement stucco veneer at the base of the northeast corner of the ranch house. Areas evaluated as needing intervention were repaired; then were covered with a mud plaster to protect the historic adobe masonry. Other groups learned to tuckpoint—filling in the gaps in the adobe bricks and mortar joints—on the recently stabilized Adobe Haybarn.



Results of the adobe assessments will also be used to help the BLM develop the tasks in a stabilization contract for the Ranch House. We are very grateful to the group for its help in caring for these important structures!

ERF volunteers at February and April volunteer work days added to their growing preservation legacy at Empire

Cottonwoods – more than just a backdrop



Views of Empire Gulch cottonwoods today (above), in 1920s (top right), & in 1880s (lower) (photos: C. Auerbach, D. Ingram)



The green, shimmering leaves of Empire Gulch's cottonwood trees provide more than just a scenic setting for the ranch headquarters. Their presence signals the existence of a rich ecosystem and provides a link to one of the Arizona Territory's first leaders.

Cottonwoods are an iconic tree of the American West. Resilient, fast-growing and relatively short-lived, they require a high water table to propagate and survive. Their highly branched structure, along with the cool understory they create, pack a punch in terms of habitat. In some areas of the Southwest, streamside areas (also known as riparian) account for ninety percent of overall bird habitat. Rare species like the Yellow

Billed Cuckoo require cottonwoods and willows through their life cycle.

The tree's limited commercial uses – it makes poor lumber or firewood – may have been its saving grace. Cottonwood forests have more frequently fallen victim of changes to water availability such as dams or groundwater pumping than the axe or chainsaw.

The Fremont Cottonwood's scientific name is *Populus fremontii*, after the famed explorer of the West and one-time Territorial Governor of Arizona, John C. Fremont. Fremont led the Territory from 1878 to 1881, but records indicate he served mostly from the East and in 1881 took the step of retiring to Staten Island, a contrast to the westward momentum of much of his life.

Cottonwoods are relative newcomers to the Gulch, at least in their current abundance. Evidence from the era of Fremont and Walter Vail points to a time when the streamside areas of Empire Gulch, like Cienega Creek and other waterways in the area, lacked the long continuous gallery forests of cottonwood and willow we see today. A combination of factors including lack of fire, grazing and hydrologic patterns have led to the cottonwood's current localized heyday.

Beyond the importance and historical connections, the cottonwoods provide something equally valuable – a sense of place and refuge in a dry landscape.

*By Adam Milnor
Bureau of Land Management*

Ranch Headquarters. They continued work on restoring the house corrals, and undertook a major project to paint the exterior of almost 40 windows and doors. They also applied additional protective mud plaster to the northeast corner of the Ranch House and cleaned the Ranch House and the Visitor Contact Station.

If you like to paint, come out for our next work day on June 25th—we've got 28 windows and doors left to go!



TICRAT participants tuckpointing adobe in haybarn (left); February & April volunteers (above). (photos: B. Young, S. Reichardt)

Working Calendar

Location: Meet at Visitor Contact Station, Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted. To volunteer, or for more information, call (888) 364-2829.

June 2016

- 11&25** *Docent-Led Tours of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 25** **DATE CHANGE** *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. All welcome! RSVP 888-364-2829.

July 2016

- 9&23** *Docent-Led Tours of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 9** *Docent Training*, 9am-2:30pm. Must pre-register by 7/3/16. To register or learn more, call (888) 364-2829
- 16** *ERF Board Meeting*, 9 am to noon. All welcome!
- 23** *National Day of the Cowboy*, non structured event, come at 11am for the tour, bring lunch, and enjoy the ranch's splendor. We'll provide dessert. You never know what might happen. More information to follow.

August 2016

- 10** *Western Movie at The Loft Cinema*, 6:30pm, join us for a screening of ***Westward the Women*** starring Robert Taylor, Denise Darcel and John McIntire; meet actor Willam Wellman, Jr.; tickets at door and at www.eventbrite.com (see article p. 1 for more information).
- 13&27** *Docent-Led Tours of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 20** *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. All welcome! RSVP 888-364-2829.

September 2016

- 10&24** *Docent-Led Tours of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 24** *ERF Board Meeting*, 9 am to noon. All welcome!

October 2016

- 18&22** *Docent-Led Tours of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 15** *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. This will be the startup of the set up for Roundup & Open House. All welcome! RSVP 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

Save the Date November 5, 2016!



Plan to attend the
2016 Empire Ranch Roundup &
Open House
Saturday, November 5th,
10am to 4 pm
Empire Ranch Headquarters

The Roundup is a Western experience for the whole family, featuring Western heritage demonstrations, arena and livestock exhibits, cowboy cooking and entertainment. The 2016 preliminary program will be available in August on the ERF website
www.empireranchfoundation.org