



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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www.empireranchfoundation.org

Hello Folks!

The Empire Ranch is my home and I am so honored that it is part of my heritage. As a 4th generation Boice family member, I feel a special connection every time I come in for a Volunteer Work Day, Board meeting, special event, or just a simple visit! My grandfather and father learned their work ethic at the Empire Ranch and passed it down to me. This ranch is and will continue to be an important part of my and my son's lives!

I am beyond excited to be the Foundation's president this year! I am also extremely proud of everything that has been and will be accomplished in the coming months! All of our events this year have been a great success. They include "1880's to Steampunk" (over 150 guests), the Spring Trail Ride (90 riders), and the Western Movie at the Loft Cinema (125 in attendance).

All of these events, activities and educational offerings are because of YOU! We are ever so grateful for our members and your continued support! If you haven't renewed your membership yet - what's keepin' ya??

Plan to attend the Empire Ranch Roundup and Open House on Saturday, November 5th. The enclosed poster highlights the exciting program planned for this year! Help us by becoming a sponsor or a silent auction donor—use the forms included in this newsletter.

We are forever thankful for all the supporters of the historic Empire Ranch!

Faith Boice,
President, ERF



Guest speaker Bill Wellman, Jr., introduces the feature film; Bill and his wife Flossie, with ERF's Bobbie Young and Emil Franzi; Bill during Empire Ranch tour.
(photos: S. Reichardt, B. Young)

Westward the Women

An audience of 125 Western film lovers enjoyed the August 10 showing of *Westward the Women*, the 2016 featured film in ERF's "Western Movies at The Loft" series. Directed by the legendary William Wellman, Sr., the movie tells the unique story of a group of single women in the 1850's who braved the rigors of a wagon train journey from Chicago to their future husbands in California. One viewer commented, "It was testament to the bravery and resilience of women determined to make a better life for themselves."

The evening began with a donor recognition event where President Faith Boice honored ERF sponsors and donors and unveiled our new portable wooden "donor fence" displaying brass plates recognizing donors who have contributed \$2,500 or more since 2001.

The guest speaker for the evening, William Wellman, Jr., regaled the audience with stories of his dad and Hollywood as it was, from his book, *Wild Bill Wellman: Hollywood Rebel*.

Bill Jr. and his wife Flossie visited the Empire Ranch on August 9th for a special tour. They were most impressed by the beauty of the ranch and by ERF's and BLM's effort to preserve it.

We extend special thanks to our movie sponsors the Green Valley Pecan Company, SIMG, and the Hacienda del Sol. We deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of our movie Chair, Emil Franzi and the ERF volunteers who help to make this annual summer event a success.

A listing of movies filmed at or near the Empire Ranch is available on our website, www.empireranchfoundation.org/empire-ranch/movies/.

Departed Friend:

Jane Collie Woods



Jane Collie Woods, one of ERF's founding members, died on May 22, 2016. Born in Tucson in 1926 Jane spent her early years in Tucson, where her father, Stone Collie ran a riding stable, and in Elgin on her family's Mustang Ranch. A third-generation rancher, Jane was active in the Santa Cruz County Cowbells and the Elgin Community Club.

Jane served on the ERF Board of Directors from 1997-2003. She was especially interested in the Foundation's oral history program and conducted three interviews during her tenure on the Board. In 2014 Jane herself was interviewed. When asked how she came to be involved with ERF, Jane recalled:

"John Donaldson called me one day... and he said, 'They're starting a group over here, and you're an old-timer, you need to be on this thing.' And I said, 'Aw, I don't want to.' But he talked me into it, and that's how I got on there. We were trying to not let the house fall into disrepair any worse. That's another one of those things that just kind of goes from one stage to the next, and all of a sudden you're involved."

ERF and the Empire Ranch benefited richly from Jane's seminal involvement.

Gifts in Remembrance

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

Jimmie Bevill

Bob & Mary Bowman

E. Neil & May Carr

Edward Walter deFrance

Earl F. Glenn, Jr.

Gene & Alvessa Hummel

Marion Hyland • Carey Ingram

Dusty Vail Ingram

Patti Kelly • Tim Means

Christine Vail Shirley

Bud Strom • Jean B. Vail

Jane Woods • Margaret Vail Wooley

In Honor of:

The Gilbert Family

Chris Schrager

YES! 2016

A group of 11 enthusiastic students and two interns participated in the 2016 Youth Engaged Stewardship (YES!) program at Las Cienegas NCA (LCNCA). Past YES! projects have removed invasive species, planted native grasses, and enhanced ponds to increase the health of the watershed and its species. The 2016 participants decided to return to the Gardner Sacaton flats to continue efforts to restore the status of Sacaton grasslands, which are vital to the health of the watershed, and provide protection for wildlife.

Previous projects to mitigate the erosion in the Gardner flats included planting salt tolerant Sacaton, and stabilizing the soil with rocks and downed mesquite. This year students transplanted soil and 150 alkali Sacaton plants. The soil, brought from other areas on the



Soil crust and Sacaton plants readied for transplant. (photo: YES! group)

LCNCA, includes bacteria that form a crust that protects the surface area from blowing. This project will test whether the transplanted soil will expand and stabilize the surface. Controlling erosion is important as it results in saline fine soil that is not supportive of plant life. Wind and disturbances loosen the soil which enters our atmosphere causing local dust storms.

YES! is a partnership of Ironwood Tree Experience, Cienega Watershed Partnership, and Christine In-Albon of Empire High School to engage youth in conservation efforts on public lands.

National Day of the Cowboy

Over thirty enthusiastic participants celebrated National Day of the Cowboy on Saturday, July 23rd at the Empire Ranch. The day started with a guided tour of the Empire Ranch House led by Doc Holliday (a.k.a. ERF docent Van Fowers). At noon everyone grabbed a chair and enjoyed their bag lunch, and ERF-provided desserts. Post lunch presentations by Bill Schock (on local ranching) and Bunker de France (on his experiences as a stunt man) completed the experience.



Empire Ranch House tour began at Visitor Contact Station and was led by Doc Holliday (docent Van Fowers, on left). (photos: Sally Reichardt)

Docent Update

On July 9th six interested volunteers completed the ERF Docent Training Class, taught by Alison Bunting (history of the Empire Ranch), Bill Schock (history of ranching practice in southeastern Arizona), and Chris Schrager (history and preservation of Empire Ranch buildings & structures). The next step in their training is individual tour instruction and observation of tours conducted by experienced docents.

ERF docents provide guided tours of the Empire Ranch House on the second and fourth Saturday of every month at 11am, and upon request for interested groups. Over 300 individuals participate in the tours each year. Plan to come visit the Empire Ranch on a docent tour day in the coming months.

Spring Education Activities for Kids

Forty enthusiastic middle school students from the Elgin School participated in the Legacy Day at the Empire Ranch on May 4, 2016. Throughout the day the students learned about roping from Joel Eliot, reata braiding from Dick Schorr, horses and horse handling from Steve Boice, and range management from the University of Arizona Rangeland Management program staff. Chris Schrager taught the 6th graders to make adobe bricks and the 7th and 8th graders learned to apply adobe to the northeast corner of the ranch house.

Lunch at the Stone Corral included the traditional brisket, beans, and tortillas prepared and served by Alison Bunting, Ron Martin, Gail Corkill, Bunker de France, and Bobbie Young. The day was organized by Dick Schorr, Anna Schorr Coleman, and Bobbie Young. We are grateful for their contributions and those of the instructors and volunteers who keep the history alive through education and outreach!

A week later, on May 12, fifty students and teachers from Cochise Elementary School, Cochise, AZ visited the Empire Ranch for their year-end picnic. Alison Bunting, Bunker deFrance, Cheryl Rogos, Sally Reichardt and Bobbie Young coordinated special educational activities for the day. Kindergartners completed a horse coloring sheet; first and second graders learned about brands and created their own brands; and the third and fourth graders completed a Cowboy Life exhibit activity sheet.

Everyone enjoyed tours of the Empire Ranch House, Bunker de France's stories about his life as a movie stuntman; and old fashioned games of marbles, horseshoes, and hop scotch. The wonderful thank you notes from the students revealed that the day's highlights included the "yummy biscuits" (served as a snack on arrival), the "stunt devil's" talk, and the games.



(Above) Legacy Day participants applying adobe to preserve Empire ranch house walls, and braiding reatas, (photos: B. Young)



Cochise Elementary kids listen to tales of film stunts (left), and try out playing horseshoes & marbles. (photos: S. Reichardt)

Preservation Progress

A number of preservation projects are moving forward at Empire Ranch, from a large-scale structural stabilization of the Empire Ranch House to smaller projects at each volunteer work day.

An additional effort is the ongoing cleaning of the Empire Ranch House, undertaken by the ERF Ambassadors, a dedicated group of ERF volunteers who recognize the importance of having the ranch house—the centerpiece of the site—look great when visitors walk through. New volunteers for ERF Ambassadors are always welcome. Contact Bobbie Young (888-364-2829, or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org).

The BLM is proceeding with plans to issue a contract to design and implement a large-scale effort to stabilize the historic Empire Ranch House. Other projects include rehabilitating the Grove House; installing heating and cooling in the Visitor Contact Station/Huachuca House; and improved ADA access to that building and the public restroom northeast of the ranch house.



Group shot of June Volunteer Day participants; staining fences. (photos: S. Reichardt, B. Young)

At the most recent volunteer work days on June 25th and August 20th volunteers cleaned both the Ranch House and Visitor Contact Station, painted the exterior of several Ranch House windows, attacked the first wave of summer vegetation, relocated a stockpile of historic doors, windows, and screens to the Feed Barn, and began repairs to the covered Feed Trough just east of the Adobe Haybarn. 2016 Roundup and Open House preparations will be the focus of the October 15th Work Day. Plan to join us!

Working Calendar

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

September 2016

10&24 *Docent-Led Tour 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

8&22 *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.

15 *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. This will be the start of set up for the Roundup & Open House. To volunteer, call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

November 2016

3&4 *Roundup Set Up*, 8-4pm. Volunteers welcome! Call 888-364-2829.

5 *16th Annual Empire Ranch Roundup & Open House*, 10am-4pm. Empire Ranch Headquarters, all are welcome!

140th Anniversary of the Empire Ranch Founding

On August 22, 1876, 140 years ago, Walter L. Vail and Herbert R. Hislop purchased a 160-acre homestead from Edward Nye Fish and Simon Silverberg. Fish was a prominent Tucson businessman who invested in land and operated various business ventures, such as a sawmill in the Santa Rita Mountains. Walter Vail was 24 and came from New Jersey; Herbert Hislop was 23 and came from England.

Letters written by Vail and Hislop describe the many adventures, challenges, and hardships they experienced prior to purchasing Fish's Ranch. To celebrate this 140th Anniversary, a chronology telling the story leading to the establishment of



Researched painting "Harvey & Vail, 1876: An Empire Begins" with Fish's ranch house in rear. Oil by Bruce Andre, 2002

the Empire Ranch has been added to the History section of the ERF website empireranchfoundation.org/empire-ranch/history/. We invite you to read the story that began on June 20, 1876.

November 2016, contd.

6 *Roundup Tear Down*, 8-4pm. Volunteers welcome! Call 888-364-2829.

12&26 *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.

19 *ERF Board Meeting*, 9 am to noon. All welcome!

December 2016

10 *Christmas at the Empire Ranch*, 11am-2pm. Be transported back in time with a decorated ranch house, a Docent-Led tour, some sweet Christmas treats, caroling and fellowship. Bring your lunch! Dessert is on us! Free, open to all, no reservations, req.