



# EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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[www.empireranchfoundation.org](http://www.empireranchfoundation.org)

## 2017 Spring Trail Ride

The April 1st ride was filled with old friends and lots of new faces. Welcome to the 26 new members that joined us for the day! Over 60 riders joined the morning ride led by Steve and Faith Boice under sunny skies. The afternoon riders faced a change in the weather, returning in a chilly drizzle but still all smiles.

Docent Karen King toured over a dozen non-riders through the ranch house and they heard what working on the ranch was like from former cowboy, Gerald Korte. Board member and former stuntman Steve “Bunker” de France shared stories of life in the movies. Lunch of BBQ pork sandwiches and sides was accompanied by music from Janice Deardorff. It was capped off with a raffle of Empire Ranch merchandise, and the top prize of a watercolor painted and donated by Doris Rickard.

Long-time volunteer, Sally Pyne, enjoyed “seeing the Ranch being visited by people who have never been before and being a part of that experience.” One wrangler said he “looks forward to spending the day in this setting, seeing riders that return year after year, and helping people enjoy the ride that haven’t been on a horse in a while, or ever.” Five members of the Pima County School Retirees Association, at the ranch for the first time, said they “look forward to working with ERF to spread the word to schools about the Ranch and possible field trips.”

Many thanks to All Around Trail Horses, Chuckwagon Bar and Grill, the ERF board, Steve and Faith, and all of the ERF volunteers that make the day possible.



*Riding out, eating out, or just hanging out, the Trail Ride provided fun for all (photos: T. Perrault & S. Reichardt)*

## Sawmill Fire Scorches Las Cienegas Area

On Sunday, April 23 a wildfire started on the West side of the Santa Rita Mountains. High winds pushed the fire over the Santa Ritas towards Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. A total of 12,000 acres of LCNCA land burned. Fortunately, dedicated fire crews from BLM and other jurisdictions were able to protect all the structures at the Empire Ranch Headquarters.



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*Fire scorch at Heritage Discovery Trail entrance gate. (photo: D. Tuggle)*

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## We Love our Volunteers

On Saturday, March 11, the Foundation hosted a volunteer appreciation luncheon to recognize our special volunteers. Janice Deardoff's music greeted everyone as they arrived at the Elgin Community Club and continued during the wonderful lunch provided by ERF board members and BLM staff.



Jack C. Blevins, Jr. (below, with Faith Boice) was recognized as Volunteer of the Year for his ongoing dedication to the preservation of the Empire Ranch, by rebuilding corral fences, gates, and taking on big projects, such as the repair of the covered feed trough.



Other volunteers (shown below) were recognized by ERF President Faith Boice and BLM LCNCA Manager, Karen Simms and were awarded pins recognizing their years of service.



At the end of the event Bobbie Young was surprised by a farewell collage of photos and certificate of appreciation presented to her at her last official event as ERF Administrator, as she has resigned in order to join her husband in California. During her tenure (2015-2017) Bobbie provided tremendous leadership to ERF and was instrumental in implementing a revised membership program and several new events including the volunteer recognition luncheon, National Day of the Cowboy celebration and Christmas at the Ranch. She built strong relationships with ERF volunteers and partners and expanded the ERF's education and outreach activities.



## Welcome Lahsha

ERF is delighted to welcome Lahsha Brown as our new Administrator! Born and raised in Idaho, Lahsha grew up enjoying life in the great outdoors. She began working for Idaho office of The Wilderness Society in 1995. There she led campaigns to protect Wilderness areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, National Monuments, NCAs, and other special public lands.

Lahsha moved to Tucson in 2006 and has worked for Sky Island Alliance, as Executive Director of the Friends of Ironwood Forest, Executive Director of Friends of Sabino Canyon, and most recently for Native Seeds/SEARCH. Her work in the public lands conservation field has given her experience working with the BLM, National Park Service, and the Forest Service. She has served on the BLM Resource Advisory Council in Idaho, as co-chairman of the Owyhee County Recreation Task Force, and currently serves on the Advisory Board for Friends of Saguaro National Park.



Gene Raymond with CWP Chair Shela McFarlin. (photo: T. Robertson)

## Wall of Honor Award

On April 1, the Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP) awarded to the Empire Ranch Foundation a listing on CWP's Wall of Honor. The Wall of Honor recognizes those who have contributed significantly to advancing the CWP mission of sustaining the Cienega watershed. The service must be extraordinary both in time and diversity and it must be significant and long-term to the watershed.

The award recognizes ERF for providing a lasting and beneficial impact on the Empire Ranch Headquarters and on Las Cienegas National Conservation Area through partnering, developing, funding, and supporting with time and resources, significant programs in 1) site protection, stabilization and restoration; 2) heritage education, exhibits and interpretation; 3) archival work including oral history, photographic, and other documentation; and, 4) public events, communication and opportunities for involvement.

Treasurer Gene Raymond represented ERF at the award ceremony. The full text of the ERF nomination is posted at [www.cienega.org](http://www.cienega.org).

## Gifts in Remembrance

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

- Pancho Boice,
- Blake & Jane Carrington,
- Earl F. Glen, Jr., Marion Hyland,
- Patti Kelly,
- Travis Cody Kerekes-Martin,
- Fern & Kemp Lewis, Joseph Lo Brillo,
- Annie McGee, Hans & Bea Schou,
- Nancy Osgood-West
- Sandy & Virginia Wilkinson

## Preservation News

A whole range of projects at the Empire Ranch, all focused on improving the experience of Ranch visitors and maintaining the historic look and feel of the site and structures are underway.

In March, with funding provided by ERF supporters, the large, rolling door that closes off the south entry to the Adobe Haybarn was restored and rehung. The door had long been propped up against the outside wall. Its return to functionality allows a much wider range of uses for the interior space.



Haybarn door as rehung. (photo: S. Reichardt)

At the public restroom, runoff water from rains was causing gulying in the parking area, and undermining the concrete slab floor of the two restrooms and storage room that make up the building. Because the entire Ranch Headquarters site slopes to the north, it was decided to raise the level of the restroom and parking area to mitigate the erosion. That process is underway; once complete, two ADA-accessible parking spaces will be paved near the front of the building, and a hard-surfaced pathway will lead down to the start of the Heritage Discovery Trail.



Restroom building lifted to allow site elevation to mitigate erosion (photo: J. Tayon)

In April, the BLM installed a split-duct heating and cooling system in the Visitor Contact Station. With three registers, the interior temperature of each room in the house can be separately controlled. Like the other two projects, this will make the building more pleasant, and more useful!

At the February and April volunteer days ERF volunteers, the TFO Historic Preservation Specialist and three BLM interns worked to prepare the historic Ranch House for closure. The BLM is undertaking a substantial stabilization and preservation project that will necessitate fencing the 28-room, adobe and wood structure for up to 10 months.

During the work days, furniture and interpretive displays were moved to locations where they'll be stored safely. Some pieces required meticulous dismantling, carefully labeling each component for reconstruction after the project is complete. Although the Ranch House will be unavailable for a while, plenty of work remains on the outbuildings, corrals, gates and fences. Our next work day is Sat June 10 – join us!



(photos: S. Reichardt)

## Coming August 2nd!!



Plan to attend our 7th annual summer western movie on Wednesday, August 2nd, at The Loft Cinema in Tucson, AZ. Doors open at 6:00pm, program starts at 6:30pm. This year we bring to you *Ride the High Country* starring Joel McCrea and Randolph Scott.

One of Sam Peckinah's first films, *Ride the High Country* gives it all. A haunting soundtrack, phenomenal actors, and beautiful cinematography. You won't want to miss this on the big screen!

Reduced to transporting gold from a distant mine to a small-town bank, retired lawman Steve Judd (Joel McCrea) recruits help from his friend Gil Westrum (Randolph Scott). Unknown to Steve, Gil and a young drifter intend to steal the next gold transport. On the way, the men help Elsa Knudsen (Mariette Hartley) to join her fiancé at the mine, not realizing the consequences that await them all.

Our opening program will feature Wyatt McCrea, Joel McCrea's grandson, and author of *Joel McCrea, A Film History*. We are thrilled to have Mr. McCrea join us and look forward to some wonderful anecdotes about his grandfather!

Purchase tickets starting June 1 at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com): \$15 for ERF members, \$20 for non-members. Proceeds will help to protect, restore and sustain the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape as an outstanding western heritage and education center.

See you at The Loft Cinema, Wednesday August 2nd! For more information contact our ERF Administrator by calling 888-364-2829, or email [admin@empireranchfoundation.org](mailto:admin@empireranchfoundation.org).

## Working Calendar

*Location: Meet at Visitor Contact Station, Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted. To volunteer, or for more information, call (888) 364-2829 or email [admin@empireranchfoundation.org](mailto:admin@empireranchfoundation.org).*

### June 2017

**10&24** *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.

**10** *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. Time to mow, weed, clean & dust! All welcome! RSVP 888-364-2829

### July 2017

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

**15** *ERF Board Meeting*, 9 am to noon, BLM Tucson Field Office. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for directions.

**22** *National Day of the Cowboy*, 11am-2pm. Tour of the ranch, adobe workshop, demonstrations & cowboy stories. Bring your lunch, desserts on us!

## Empire Ranch House Unharmed by Sawmill Fire



*April 23 Sawmill wildfire scorch stops on perimeter of north end, outside original four-room Empire Ranch House. (photo: D Tuggle)*

### August 2017

**2** *Western Movie at The Loft Cinema*, 6:30pm, join us for a screening of ***Ride the High Country***. Tickets at door and at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) (see article p. 3 for more information).

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

*August 2017, cont.*

**19** *Volunteer Work Day*, 8am-noon. All welcome! RSVP 888-364-2829.

### September 2017

**9&23** *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch*, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.

**16** *ERF Board Meeting*, 9 am to noon. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.