

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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www.empireranchfoundation.org

Walter Vail Recognized

On April 14, 2018 Walter L. Vail will be inducted into the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's Hall of Great Westerners. This high honor is bestowed by the Museum "on exceptional individuals who have made an indelible impact upon the history of the great West."

Walter Vail (1852-1906) was a visionary cattleman who recognized the ranching potential of Southeastern Arizona in 1875 when he wrote: "I feel positive from all I hear that there is as fine grass land in this territory as there is in the world." Starting with two partners and a 160 acre homestead in 1876 he built the Empire Ranch into one of the largest and most successful ranching operations in Arizona. His initial partners sold out and in 1883 the Empire Land & Cattle Company (ELCC) was formed, with Walter Vail as its leader.

As his ranching operations grew, Vail began to look for property outside of Arizona to add land and feed capacity. In 1888 he and a partner, Carroll W. Gates, leased a 26,700 acre ranch in San Diego County. By the early 1890s the Empire Ranch became primarily breeder operation, with the cattle moved as yearlings

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Ride the High Country Pleases a Big Audience

The 7th annual Empire Ranch Western Movies at The Loft Cinema, held August 2 in Tucson, featured "Ride the High Country" starring Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea. Our special guest was Wyatt McCrea, the grandson of Joel, who engaged the appreciative audience with stories of his grandfather, his films, and movie locations.

Prior to the movie, Wyatt and ERF board members were given a tour of the Empire Ranch by Alison Bunting and Steve Boice. Also on the tour was Pima County Supervisor Steve Christy. The ranch is in Christy's district. Wyatt noted that the Empire Ranch and his grandfather's ranch in Thousand Oaks, California, have a lot in common. The McCrea Ranch has been established as a non-profit and run by a foundation dedicated to preserving the ranch buildings and the land. The two ranches and foundations should consider working together to meet common goals, McCrea said.

A special tribute was paid by the Foundation to the late Emil Franzi, who started the Empire Ranch Western Movies at the Loft Cinema series. A slide presentation was shown, produced by Christine Auerbach, Sally Reichardt, David Steele and John Komrada

Nearly 175 seats were filled at the Loft Theatre in Tucson for the August 2nd event, earning the ERF more than \$3,000. We are grateful for the support of the event sponsors: The Green Valley Pecan Company, Hacienda del Sol Guest Ranch Resort, and Strategic Issues Management Group, and the dedicated volunteers who insured the event's success.



Movie goes mingled prior to the showing of 'Ride the High Country'; ERF Board Member Harry Alexander talks with Watt McCrea before the showing (photos: C. Rogos)



Wyatt McCrea and his wife Lisa along with Pima County Supervisor Steve Christy and Steve Boice listen to Alison Bunting during their tour of the ranch on Aug 2, 2017. (photo: H. Alexander)

Published by the Empire Ranch Foundation, a non-profit 501c3 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.

Vail Recognition (cont'd.)

to California, Texas and Oklahoma to fatten. In 1896 he moved his family and his headquarters to Los Angeles, and purchased land holdings in California thus establishing the ELCC as a multi-state ranching operation. He died after a streetcar accident in Los Angeles in 1906, leaving a ranching legacy that was continued by his descendants well into the 21st century.

Walter Vail joins Frank Seymour Boice (1894-1956), who operated and owned the Empire Ranch from 1928-1956, and more than 200 other individuals who contributed to the advancement of western heritage.

(photo: Walter Vail, 1879, courtesy AZ Hist Soc, AHS #1705)



Departed Friend: **Emil Franzi**

ERF Board Member Emil Franzi died on June 7th after a courageous battle with cancer.

A long-time Tucson resident Emil was a political strategist, a writer, columnist, editor-in-chief/publisher of the Southern Arizona News Examiner, and host of the Inside Track and Voices of the West radio shows. A well-read history buff, he especially loved the "Old West" and he liked nothing more than discussing books, music, and movies that depicted the era. Emil was the 2014 recipient of the Western Writers of America Lariat award for Voices of the West --the first broadcaster to be awarded the Lariat.

Emil was drawn to the Empire Ranch because of its rich western history and the beauty of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. He served three terms on the Board (2007-16), and later was appointed to the Advisory Committee. He established and chaired ERF's Western Movies at the Loft event, spending many hours finding relatives of the lead actors in classic westerns to speak about the movie being shown. Emil enthusiastically publicized ERF events through his radio show and publications. He willingly served as announcer for arena events at the annual Roundup & Open House, and recruited authors to participate in the event. We will greatly miss Emil's support and counsel.

YES! 2017



YES! 2017 program participants (above); measuring an abandoned pipeline was a site documentation task. (photos: M. Clark, T. Peters)

Twelve Tucson youth ranging in age from 15 to 19 got their hands dirty this summer by working as a part of the Youth Engaged Stewardship (YES!) Program. The YES! Program is a partnership between Ironwood Tree Experience, Chris In-Albon, Cienega Watershed Partnership and BLM. Over eleven sessions, the students, along with adult leaders, assess site conditions at Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, ultimately selecting an area for developing a conservation project. Students gain knowledge of the importance of the environment and need for conservation in their local area, and also enhance their team working and leadership abilities.

During one of their sessions, the students met with BLM historic preservationist Chris Schrager to survey land within the conservation area for historical artifacts and potential evidence for an apple orchard which existed near the Ranch headquarters in the early 1900s.

The students split into two groups: one obtained tree trunk samples, to be compared with images of apple tree dendrology, while the other helped to reveal and document an older cement trough and water pipeline found near the potential apple orchard. The pipeline and water trough were thoroughly documented with photos, written and drawn observations, and GPS coordinates. After a warm day of collecting data, the students analyzed the evidence and found that the tree samples collected were not fruit trees, and further investigation into the location of the trees would be needed.

ERF Shares in Governors Heritage Preservation Honor Awards

At the 2017 Arizona Historic Preservation Conference the Empire Ranch Foundation was honored as a collaborator on two award winning projects. Both projects received a Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Award as outstanding achievements in preserving Arizona's past.

The Cienega Watershed Timeline Project is a publicly accessible, web-based interactive timeline of important events occurring throughout history in the watershed and its neighboring Arizona communities (www.cienega.org/timeline). Significant events in the history of the Empire Ranch are featured in the Timeline.

The Empire Ranch Historic American Landscapes Survey began as a research project for University of Arizona students as a component of the Heritage Conservation Program. Under the direction of Gina Chorover, Helen Erickson and Robin Pinto, eleven students prepared a survey of the Empire Ranch landscape. The Foundation's photographic and print archives contributed significantly to this effort.

New ERF Board Member

ERF is pleased to announce election in June of new Board member **Ray Patrone** of St. David, who moved to Arizona in 2001 the day after he retired with 35 years of service from the USAF and the Air National Guard in Rhode Island. Ray has always loved the American west and that lifestyle drew him and his wife to Arizona. Ray became involved in the ERF volunteer program and has enjoyed the work and the preservation efforts to keep this American West legacy at the Empire Ranch.

Dedicated Donations

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

Bob & Miriam Boice,

Charles G. Boice,

Bob & Mary Bowman,

Emil Franzi, Bill & Laverne Harrell,
Marion Hyland, Donald Odenweller

In Honor of:

Gene Raymond, Sally Reichardt

Facilities Improvements Back on Track

Although the Sawmill fire in late April interrupted progress on Headquarters projects, work resumed as soon as it was safe to do so. At the Ranch House structural improvements have been made where the roof framework meets the tops of the walls in the Victorian Addition, the Ranch Manager's Quarters, and Pantry. Clay-rich dirt, quarried from a site used for previous material, was cast into replacement adobe bricks which are now curing in the area of the former swimming pool.



Ranch house reconstruction moves forward protected behind a 6-foot wire fence (photo: A. Bunting)

The project to mitigate public restroom and parking area erosion has been completed. We are underway to install two ADA-accessible parking spaces near the building front, and a hard-surfaced pathway leading to the start of the Heritage Discovery Trail. The hand-washing sink and water spigot will also be re-built.

ADA accessibility improvements for the Visitor Contact Station (Huachuca House) will provide a hard-surface parking space and pathway south of the building to a new porch providing barrier-free access to the building.

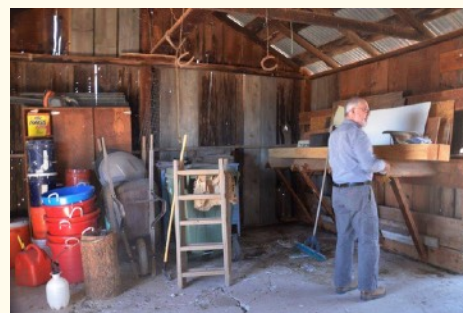
Lots was accomplished at the June 10th volunteer work day, including cleaning, inventorying, and organizing the Visitor Contact Station; checking and repairing the irrigation system for planters and trees around the building; cleaning and organizing of materials in the Tack Shed; cleaning and "system checks" of the utility cart and riding mowers; relocating and repairing the information kiosk from the Ranch House to the Visitor Contact Station porch; in-

Healing Rains



(photo: S. Peterson)

Record summer rains are quickly healing the scorched grasslands on Las Cienegas NCA. BLM crews and contractors are busy trimming the cottonwood grove next to Empire Ranch Headquarters to remove dangerous limbs and some trees. And the grass is green as far as one can see.



Tack Room organizing & irrigation system maintenance were among volunteers' accomplishments (photos: C. Rogos).

specting and tightening the brake on the windmill; and a cleaning of the Cowboy Life exhibit, which is now located in Adobe Haybarn during construction. Work on August 19th focused on mowing and weeding. The record rains this summer provided plenty of tasks for everyone.

We hope you'll join us at our October and November workdays to help us get ready for the Roundup!



Board members Dave McNamara, Bunker deFrance and Ray Patrone in Haybarn with Cowboy Life Exhibit (photo: F. Boice)

Celebrating Cowboys

Blue skies, white clouds and green grass set the scene for ERF's celebration of National Day of the Cowboy on July 22nd. Over 60 enthusiastic visitors enjoyed the day's events including docent-led tours, talks about cowboy life on the Empire Ranch by Gerald Korte, tales of movies filmed on the Empire and cowboy poetry by Bunker de France and Harry Alexander, and a review of the history of and current day ranching in Southern Arizona by Bill and Kathie Shock.

Kent Etchart & Nathan Bronstein of Vera Earl Ranch gave roping demonstrations and opportunities for novices to try roping steer mannequins; and Horse-n-Around Rescue volunteers Ed & Theresa Surowiec demonstrated horsemanship skills with the assistance of two beautiful rescue horses (photos below.)

Seating in the Adobe Haybarn provided a great venue for conversation and sampling the cookies provided by ERF volunteers. Many thanks to all the volunteers and presenters who made this event possible.



(photos: C. Rogos)

Introducing Robert Walter

Robert Walter was recently appointed the Outdoor Recreation Planner for BLM's Tucson Field Office, including recreation operations and special recreation permits for all units, and serving as the TFO Volunteer Coordinator.

Robert has BS and MS degrees in recreation management, and extensive experience in managing recreation programs in the Coronado National Forest.

We welcome his contributions and support in our ongoing successful partnership with the BLM.

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.

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-12pm. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.*

October 2017

14&28 *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch, 11am-12pm, free, open to all, no reservations req.*

28 *Volunteer Work Day, 8am-2pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. This will be the start of the setup for the Roundup & Open House. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.*

November 2017

2&3 *Roundup Set Up - Volunteers Needed! 8am-4pm, to volunteer call 888-364-2829.*

Coming November 4—Don't Miss it!

17th Annual Empire Ranch Roundup & Open House

Saturday, November 4th, 10am to 4pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters
An exciting, educational, and fun family event. Free and open to all!



For more information, please see enclosed Roundup flyer or visit www.empireranchfoundation.org

November 2017, cont.

4 *17th Annual Empire Ranch Roundup & Open House, Empire Ranch Headquarters, 10am-4pm. Free, open to all.*

5 *Roundup Tear Down - Volunteers Needed! 8am-4pm, to volunteer call 888-364-2829.*

11&25 *Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch, 11am-12pm, free, open to all.*

November 2017, cont.

16 *ERF Board Meeting, 9 am-12pm. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.*

December 2017

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