

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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www.empireranchfoundation.org

Reaching for the Stars

Reaching for the stars is the mantra for the prolific Empire Ranch Foundation volunteers. I'm happy to say that this year's volunteer hours exceeded last year's 7,000 by more than 4,000 hours, reaching a total of 11,200 hours; a value of more than \$264,000.

You don't have to look too far to see what these hours really mean to the Empire Ranch, whether it's the outreach efforts by volunteers who set up booths and displays at regional public functions, or the phenomenal strides we've made in our restoration projects, or the work we put in at any of our marquee events that share the Ranch's story with the public.

2020 looks to be even better as we continue our drive to increase our membership and new projects begin to take shape. Planning for the restoration of the New Ranch House is underway and is generating plenty of excitement.

Please take a moment to read the letter enclosed with this newsletter requesting a year-end financial contribution. Thanks in advance for your generosity. You can use the enclosed return envelope to send a check or you can donate quickly and securely on our website (www.empireranchfoundation.org).

The success of our events and projects throughout the year speaks to the commitment, devotion and excellence of our supporters, members and volunteers. I take great personal pride in working with all of you.

Thank you. A shared vision keeps us all reaching for the stars.

Faith Boice,
President

A Memorable Cowboy Festival for All!



(photos: A Bunting, F. Boice, C. Rogos)

The 19th annual Cowboy Festival was a resounding success! Over 1,900 guests spent the day enjoying a wonderful combination of long-standing favorite performances and demonstrations coupled with exciting new appearances. Three first-time attendees described the day as “awesome—the trail ride, the vendors, the scenery and the landscape.” One couple, returning the 4th time, are “proud members and love coming here.”

Arenas featured demonstrations Joel Eliot (cattle handling); Lanny Leach (horsemanship); BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program; and the Spanish Barb Horse Association. The riding expertise of B Troop, 4th U.S. Cavalry (Mem.) military riders; the Charros y Modelos de Tucson; and the Copper State Renegade Drill Team was on full display.

The White Mountain Apache “War Dance Warriors” from Fort Apache captivated all with their music and dancing. Everyone enjoyed the traditional Western music performed by The Cowboy Way and Way Out West. The Tombstone Ghost Riders roamed the Festival grounds staging shoot-outs.

New Cowboy Conversations presentations featured author Alan Day's tales of his life on the Lazy B Ranch; Charles Hancock's history of the Buffalo Soldiers of Fort Huachuca; and Tim Vail's description of the California ranching legacy of the Vail family. Returning speakers included Bunker DeFrance, Marty Freese, & Russell True, who reviewed the history of Western movie making in and near the Empire Ranch and Arizona dude ranches. Views of Empire Ranch

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Cowboy Festival (cont'd)



(photos: F. Boice, C. Rogos)

history were provided by Van Fowers (Walter Vail); Gary Turner (Tom Turner); Faith and Steve Boice (the Boice family); Susan Vail Hoffman (the Vail family); Eddie Gardner (Tomás & Blás López); and Robin Pinto (the development headquarters buildings).

Livestock demonstrations were provided by Horse'n Around Rescue Ranch

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(Theresa Warrell and Steve Boice); the Sahuarita 4-H Club; S & N Ranch miniature horses; and the Spanish Barb Horse Association. Western skills demonstrators included Casey Abbs, James Becker, Ben Claridge, Brad Faulkner, Byrd Moss, Osuna Boot Company, Phil Parks, Bill Schock, and Dick Schorr.

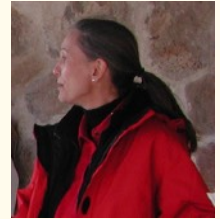
The Tucson Presidio Trust Garrison had living history demonstrations of the Spanish soldados [soldiers] present in southeastern Arizona in the late 18th century. The Southwest Association of Buffalo Soldiers displayed the types of weapons and equipment used throughout its distinguished history. Safe solar viewing was provided by the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association. Thirteen Western authors engaged in lively discussions with interested readers.

Over 450 presenters, demonstrators, authors, and volunteers made the day possible. We especially appreciate our partnership with the BLM and the exceptional efforts of the Sierra Vista Girl Scout Troops 104, 419, 1224, the Copper State Renegades Equestrian Drill Team. Please join us in thanking the sponsors and raffle donors listed below for their generous support.

Departed Friend

Laurel Wilkening

Laurel Wilkening, ERF President 2006-2007, died on June 4, 2019.



Laurel first joined the ERF Board of Directors in 1999 not long after moving to Sonoita upon retiring from 27 years in university teaching, research and administration. She served two terms on the board and also held the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

Raised in New Mexico Laurel lived many glorious years in the Southwest where she developed a passion for the human and natural history of the area. Early in her ERF tenure she pursued her personal avocation for research and writing about Empire Ranch history. In 2002 she and John Woolley published an article "The Empire Ranch and Walter L. Vail," in the Copper State Journal. Susan McDonald, a fellow board member in the early days recalled that "along with Steve Boice, Marion Hyland and Shela McFarlin of the BLM, and with a few other intrepid pioneers Laurel helped set the cornerstone for the Board of Directors and membership that exists today. She really was one of a kind."

During her presidency several important preservation projects were completed including work on the Victorian Addition west gable, the South Barn, and the south lintel of the Zagan. She worked closely with BLM to re-institute volunteer workdays at the Empire Ranch and supported the establishment of the Wild About the Grasslands/Hands on the Land youth education program. Laurel remained an active supporter of ERF as a member of the Advisory Committee. She will be missed.

Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

Bob & Miriam Boice,

Dusty Vail Ingram, Pat Pettis,

Buddy Roosevelt, Laurel Wilkening

In Honor of:

The American Cowboys & Cowgirls

2019 NPLD Accomplishments



On Saturday October 12th, BLM Tucson Field Office celebrated National Public Lands Day at the historic Empire Ranch. The event, which provides opportunities for volunteers to help BLM and other agencies protect and maintain their natural and cultural resources, was supported by long-time partner the Empire Ranch Foundation. Multiple tasks were tackled (see photos above):

Vegetation was cleared from the Heritage Discovery Trail and a deteriorated masonry bench was dismantled.

Salvaged adobes were used for repairs to the eroded material at the base of the Hired Man's House and mud mortar was applied to the exterior where mortar joints had crumbled and fallen out.

The "dead-man" bracing that helps keep the Hired Man's House walls plumb was repaired along with some of the fascia along the rafter tails. Drooping sections of the gutter were re-hung, which will help keep water away from the base of the walls.

The process of dismantling the Frog Refugia below the Hired Man's House was begun. Built to help support the re-introduced leopard frog population, the structure has served its purpose; it was damaged beyond repair by the Sawmill Fire in 2017 and will be removed when demolition is complete.



National Public Lands Day volunteers pitch in (photos: C. Bergmanis, C. Rogos)

Spreading the Word



The Outreach/Education Volunteer Group has been really busy in 2019 with more to come in 2020. We started in January with an outreach booth at "Wings Over Willcox," then gave presentations or set up our outreach booth every month of the year.

We have gone to Willcox, Sierra Vista, St. David, Tucson, and Sonoita. Our presentations have been at organizations' meeting rooms or at the Empire Ranch. We've talked to about 1,200 folks and distributed over 2,220 flyers for ERF events. We also have an outreach table at all ERF events to help spread the word about us. One tangible result of our efforts is that attendance at our events has increased.

If you would like to get involved with this volunteer group, know of a group that would like a presentation, or an event we can go to with our booth contact Marti Conroy by email wrangler4504@gmail.com or phone (520) 247-6097 and please leave a message. I will return your call

OKLAHOMA! OK!

Fade up from black and there's baritone-voiced Gordon MacRae belting out "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" to the delight of the more than 200 who attended the Foundation's presentation of *Oklahoma!*

The Loft Cinema played host to the Sunday, September 15th matinee showing of Rodgers & Hammerstein's 1955 musical film classic as another installment of the Ranch's Western Movies at the Loft Cinema series. Many of the scenes were filmed in and around Sonoita including Empire Ranch, the Green Company Cattle Ranch, Elgin, Canelo, Amado and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.



Moviegoers got a behind-the-scenes view during a panel discussion prior to the showing from movie enthusiasts Marty Freese, Pattie Oliver, and Bunker De France (shown above), and Faith Boice. The surrey used in the film was on exhibit, thanks to the Tucson Rodeo Parade Museum (shown below).

The event generated more than \$1,500 for the Foundation and provided an opportunity to showcase its mission and efforts at the Empire Ranch. Events like these are a great way to increase ERF membership by greeting and mingling with the public one-on-one. ERF volunteer Joe Crews says he feels a great sense of pride when working the outreach table at any event. "It's always fun to be able to share the history of the ranch and see the excitement in people's faces when they learn about what we're doing."

We are so grateful for the sponsorship support from The Loft Cinema and all the volunteer efforts that insured the success of the event.



(photos: F. Boice, C. Rogos)

Working Calendar

Note: Please check our website to confirm event details (empireranchfoundation.org). 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

December 2019

- 7 **Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-2pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 14 **Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 14 **Christmas at the Ranch**, 10am-2pm. Free, open to all.
- 20 **ERF Board Meeting, 9am-11am.** All welcome!

January 2020

- 4 **Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 11&25 **Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.

February 2020

- 1 **Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 8&22 **Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 21 **ERF Board Meeting**, 9am-11am. All welcome!
- 29 **Docent Training Class**, 9am-2:30pm. To register email alisbunting@gmail.com or call 520-490-3605.

March 2020

- 7 **Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 14&28 **Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 21 **ERF Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**, 6pm-9pm, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Save the Date!

**Spring Trail Ride
April 4, 2020**

Christmas at the Ranch

The 2019 Christmas at the Ranch event will be held on Saturday, December 14th, from 10am to 2pm. The Empire Ranch House will be decorated for Christmas, and we have lots of fun activities planned for the day.



Plan to do some Christmas shopping at the Foundation gift shop and local craft vendors. Enjoy the cookies and candies made by ERF Board members and volunteers. And be sure to bring your Christmas wish list to share with Santa.

