

March 2022
Volume 23, Issue 1

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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

Christmas at the Empire Ranch

Paper dolls, adorable yoga goats, and a kissing horse—what could be more fun for kids visiting the Empire on December 11th. Well, Santa and Mrs. Santa and their elves, of course. Over 400 excited visitors turned out to celebrate Christmas at the Empire Ranch. It was a beautiful day, perfect weather for enjoying all the outdoor activities and entertainment.

The Saguaro Strutters provided lively dancing entertainment, and Tucson Desert Harmony Chorus' renditions of favorite carols really set the mood for Christmas. The make and take ornament room was busy all day. Ten vendors provided wonderful opportunities to purchase unique gifts, and the Foundation's gift shop items were quite popular.

Both the trail rides and the chuckwagon lunches sold out, and every last crumb of holiday cookies provided by ERF board members and volunteers was consumed. Special thanks to the volunteers who decorated the Ranch House and provided outstanding support during the event.



(photos: S. Reichardt,
@NicholeDamianPhotography)

The Year Ahead

The Empire Ranch Foundation welcomes 2022 with great hope and deep gratitude for our members, volunteers, and supporters. We look forward to hosting all of our annual events, starting with the Spring Trail Ride on April 2nd (see article on p. 3). On June 4th we will partner with The Loft Cinema's Movies Under the Stars to show "The Last Train from Gun Hill" at Empire Ranch Headquarters.

The Bureau of Land Management is finalizing a contract to repair the ceiling in Room 14 (Pantry) of the Ranch House, repair a section of the Adobe Haybarn roof, and remove hazardous materials from the New Ranch House. As soon as the New Ranch House is safe to enter the Foundation's architect will begin the process of preparing schematic design documents for the conversion of the New Ranch House

into a Western Heritage and Education Center (WHEC).

Special thanks to everyone to responded to our year-end appeal, especially the contributors to the New Ranch House fund. And we are so grateful to all the volunteers who contributed more than 6,100 hours of their time in 2021 to preserve the Empire Ranch Headquarters and support our events and outreach activities.

Faith Boice, President

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.

ERF Officers & Board Members, 2022

Foundation officers for 2021-2022 are: **Faith Boice**, President; **Marti Conroy**, Vice President; **Jean Olmstead**, Secretary, and **Christine Haaksma**, Treasurer.

Faith Boice and Christine Haaksma were elected to additional terms on the Board. Continuing members include Steve Boice, Marti Conroy, William Dobias, Dave McNamara, Jean Olmsted, Nick Olmsted, Raymond Patrone, Kimberly Patterson, and Timothy Vail.

We are most grateful for the contributions of four departing board members:

Don Butler (2018-2021) As a New Ranch House committee member Don is especially interested in its planned restoration and adaptive reuse as a Western Heritage and Education Center. Don also served on the Preservation & Interpretation committee and was an active participant at the volunteer workdays.

Kristin Tomlinson (2017-2021) Kristin served on the Events and Finance & Development committees. She coordinated the Silent Auction at the 2018 Cowboy Festival, and provided the food for ERF volunteers and presenters at the Cowboy Festivals with the financial support of the Vera Earl Ranch, Inc.

Bill Schock (2009-2021) During his 12-years on the ERF Board Bill was especially active in ERF events and educational activities. ERF docents benefitted from his lecture on ranching in SE Arizona, and scores of children and adults enjoyed learning about branding and ranching tools at the Cowboy Festival and other events. He was a member of the Events and Education & Outreach committees.

Joanne Triplett (2018-2021) Joanne was a member of the Events and Preservation committees. She assisted at all ERF events and helped to coordinate the Silent Auction and Authors at the 2019 and 2021 Cowboy Festivals respectively.

Don, Kristin, and Bill all plan to remain active as members of the ERF Advisory Committee.

If you are interested in helping to shape the future of the Foundation please consider serving as an ERF Board member. Each member serves a three-year term, attends board meetings every other month, and volunteers at special outreach and fundraising events. For more information email admin@empireranchfoundation.org or call (888) 364-2829.

Cienega Ranch “The Farm”

When Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop purchased 160 acres in 1876 to establish the Empire Ranch, the partners soon began to expand their land holdings. In 1882 Don Alonso Sanford's Stock Valley Ranch (2,559 acres), located along the Cienega Creek about eight miles north Empire Ranch Headquarters, was purchased. Walter Vail's 1885 Pima County Tax Assessment lists the Cienega Ranch, consisting of sixteen ¼ sections (2,560 acres). This ranch was also part of Sanford family holdings, 4 miles northeast of headquarters. By constructing ditches from the creek Sanford irrigated the land and began raising crops of barley.

During the Vail era the Cienega Ranch was known as “The Farm.” Dusty Vail Ingram, Walter Vail's granddaughter recalled: “That was like a separate enterprise from the ranch proper. That was all agricultural. There was a farmer in charge down there. Because

Ranch, and later Gerald Korte, former Empire Ranch cowboy, to manage the ranch.

In 1969 Sam Bell purchased the Cienega Ranch from Greenway. When Sam first moved to Arizona in the 1940s he worked for the Farm Management Company in the Phoenix area. Prior to purchasing the Cienega Ranch he owned ranches in Willcox and Snowflake and farmed in the Chandler area. Sam ran Hereford and Charolais cattle and was also interested in reinstating agricultural production. He dredged a new channel (known as the Grand Canal) for the Cienega Creek to irrigate approximately 200 acres. In 1977 Sam sold the ranch to Anamax Mining Company, which purchased the Empire Ranch that same year.

Anamax Mining owned the Cienega Ranch until 1988 when it entered into a land exchange agreement with the Bureau of Land Management. The Cienega and Empire ranches became part of the Empire Cienega Resource Conservation Area. BLM identifies the area of “The Farm” as the Agricultural Fields, and in 1998 removed the dikes and levee constructed by Sam Bell and blocked the flow of water into the Grand Canal. This restoration and stabilization project redirected the Cienega

Creek back into its original channel and permits an unfettered flow in the Creek again.

Vail era kids at “The Farm,” 1890s (photo: W. Wilkinson) [above]; Cienega Creek “Grand Canal,” (photo: K. Simms)



they could irrigate down there, they grew alfalfa mostly. They'd bale it every year, you know, and then take it on up and put it in the barn.” [1993 Oral History of Dusty Vail Ingram].

The Boice family purchase of the Empire Ranch in 1928 included “The Farm,” which the Boice family called the Cienega section. The Boices continued farming operations, raising corn for their horses and hay for cattle. In 1950 the Boices sold the Cienega section to Jack Greenway, and the Cienega Ranch was re-established. Greenway built a new house at ranch headquarters but did not live there full-time. He first hired Fred Barnett, former superintendent of the Empire



AZ National Livestock Show Dedicated to Grant Boice



The 2021 Arizona National Livestock Show was dedicated to Grant Boice, the son of Bob and Miriam Boice. Grant was born when Bob and Miriam were

living on the Empire Ranch, and Bob was helping to manage the ranch along with his father, Frank, and his brother, Pancho. In 1956 Bob, Miriam and family moved to Globe, Arizona, to manage the Slash S Ranch.

After graduation from Globe High School Grant pursued a career in agriculture. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from the University of Arizona. He helped to manage the Slash S Ranch and the Empire Cattle Company's feedlot operations in Colorado. He and his wife Kristi returned to Arizona in 1978 where Grant worked for several agriculture related businesses before becoming the Executive Director of the AZ National Livestock Show in 1995. Grant served as Executive Director until his retirement in 2013.

A wonderful tribute to Grant's accomplishments, written by Janice Bryson, is available on the ERF website. She notes: "The Arizona National grew to national prominence under his eighteen years as Director; his leadership led the pathway to the elite event the show is today." Bob and Miriam Boice received the same honor when the 2005 AZ National Livestock Show was dedicated to them.

Ian Tomlinson and Vera Earl Ranch Honored



For the past 13 years Ian Tomlinson of the Vera Earl Ranch, Inc. has continued the ranching operations of the Empire Ranch. It all began in

2009 with a BLM grazing lease on Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

In September 2021, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies awarded Ian and the Vera Earl Ranch its Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Award "... for their proactive conservation and environmental practices and for continuing to exhibit outstanding stewardship of fish and wildlife resources." In January 2022 the Arizona Game and Fish Commission awarded its Wildlife Habitat Steward of the Year to the Vera Earl Ranch, Inc.

The Empire Ranch Foundation congratulates Ian and the Vera Earl Ranch on receiving these well-deserved honors.



Saddle Up for the Spring Trail Ride!

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Join us for an authentic Western experience Saturday, April 2, 2022. Tour beautiful rolling grasslands of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA). Enjoy guided horseback rides—a 3-hour at 9am, a 1.5-hour at 10am, or 45-minute rides in the afternoon. Or, choose a horse-drawn wagon ride. All options include a catered Chuck Wagon lunch. Come on out and enjoy western heritage activities, ranch house tours, music and more.

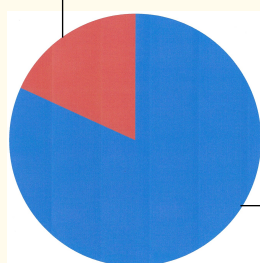
The 3-hour ride is guided by Steve Boice, who was born and raised on the ranch. The 1.5-hour horseback ride is guided by his daughter and ERF Board President Faith Boice. Both know a great deal about the history and landscape and will lead you through some of LCNCA's stunning scenery. You can rent horses through ERF, or bring your own.

Registration is easy on our website at www.empireranchfoundation.org/ranch-events/trail-ride/. Registrations are due no later than March 19, 2022.

Empire Ranch Foundation Financial Summary: January through December 2021

Income by Source of Funds: \$122,194

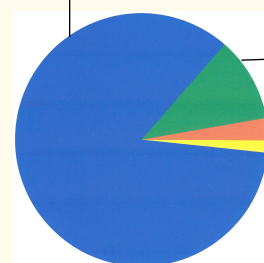
Member Donations
36% (\$43.6K)



Outreach Events
& Other
64% (\$78.6K)

Expenditures, by Use of Funds: \$69,531

Outreach & Education
85% (\$58.9K)



Administration
11% (\$7.5K)

Fundraising
3% - (\$2K)

Preservation &
Adaptive Reuse
2% (\$1.1K)

The COVID19 pandemic continued in 2021. Though it was possible to host two events late in the year the administrator position remained unfilled with volunteers handling critical responsibilities of the position. Income during FY21 totaled \$122,194--36% from member donations and 64% from outreach events and other sources. Expenditures during FY21 totaled \$69,531— 85% for outreach and education programs; 11% for general administration; 3% for fundraising; and 2% for preservation and adaptive reuse projects. Not reflected in these figures is the more than 6,100 hours of labor contributed by ERF volunteers, valued by BLM at \$174,221 for grant matching purposes.

End-of-year assets totaled \$196K, comprising \$33K in BLM grant funds (fully obligated); \$25K in the Vail endowment and \$33K in other ERF restricted funds; \$18K in ERF unrestricted funds obligated for preservation, education, and interpretation; and \$87K in ERF unrestricted unobligated funds.

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

March 2022

5 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

12 & 26 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, reservations required by 5pm the day prior to the tour.

12 Celebration of Gerald Korte's Life, 10am, Empire Ranch Headquarters, all welcome.

April 2022

2 Spring Tail Ride, 8am-5pm, experience the Empire's beautiful grasslands on a guided horseback or wagon & more. Fun event for the whole family.

9 & 23 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5pm the day prior to the tour.

May 2022

7 Volunteer Work Day, 8am to 12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

14 & 28 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5pm the day prior to the tour.

June 2022

4 Volunteer Work Day, 8am to 12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

11 & 25 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5 pm the day prior to the tour.



Kimberly Patterson and Marti Conroy at the Mescal Movie Set. (photo: F. Boice)

Outreach Update

In 2021 the Foundation's Outreach Committee shared the story of the Empire Ranch with almost 1,700 people at eight community events.

If you'd like to assist in getting the word out in 2022 we welcome your participation. Contact Marti Conroy by email at Wrangler4504@gmail.com or phone: (520) 247-6097.

