

Cienega Valley-Empire Ranch Reserve



Clynne Ranch

Fee lands: 880 acres
Development Restrictions: 90 acres
Acquired: October 1, 2009 and January 8, 2010
Cost: \$4,900,000
Fund: 1997 and 2004 Bond Funds
Partner: Arizona Land and Water Trust

Background

The County's acquisition of 5,000 acres of the Sands Ranch, located east of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, in December 2008, created an interconnected corridor of conserved lands spanning from the Santa Rita Mountains to the Whetstone Mountains. With the assistance of the Arizona Land and Water Trust, the County then acquired the Clynne Ranch parcels, located adjacent to the County's Sands Ranch and also east of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, totaling 880 acres. In addition, development restrictions were placed on 90 acres maintained by the seller. The ranch is an integral part of this assemblage of publicly-owned lands and further contributes to this corridor through the Cienega Valley. The Clynne Ranch parcels, like the Sands Ranch, contains high quality native grasslands found in the Sonoita Valley area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

While there are no archaeological or historic sites known within or near the Clynne Ranch parcels, it does not preclude the possibility of potential cultural and archaeological resources being present, especially with the Important Riparian Areas found on the property.

Biological Resources

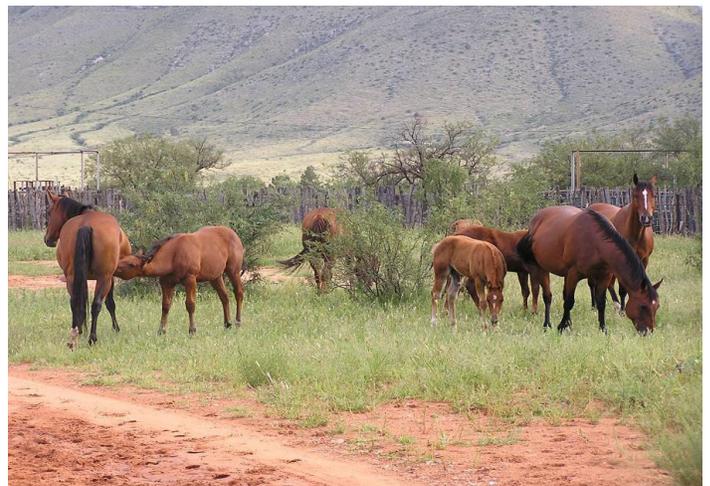
The Clynne Ranch is located on the eastern edge of the Sonoita Basin and includes a mix of rolling plain grasslands that transition up into low agave ridges and oak draws as it moves upward towards the western slope of the Whetstone Mountains. This is dominated by an abundance of native grass species, but exhibits some invasion of Lehmann's lovegrass, a non-native grass species. The property supports habitat for 15 Priority Vulnerable Species, including the Lesser long-nosed bat and Desert box turtle, and falls within the Multiple Use designation of the Conservation Lands System, with ribbons of Important Riparian Areas.

Management

The ranch's adjacency to the County-owned Sands Ranch creates an opportunity to manage the lands as a larger working landscape. The ranch is managed as a working cattle ranch under an agreement with the County. Because the ranch has important native grassland habitats, the conservation and enhancement of that base resource is the primary management goal. Water sources are being evaluated and modified to ensure they provide a year-round source for native wildlife, as well as meeting the need for the ongoing cattle operations.

Recreation

Controlled and monitored access will be provided over most of the ranch property primarily as walk in opportunities. Road access to the general area is available on the adjacent Sands Ranch and a map is included in the appendix, showing the recommended access route. Allowed activities will include hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and outdoor photography.



Horses grazing on Clynne Ranch. Photo by EPG.



Photo by EPG, Inc.

Ongoing Property Improvements

- The property is being evaluated to establish priority management projects.
- Ongoing efforts include site monitoring and establishment of key monitoring study plots.
- Important sources of water are being enhanced for wildlife.
- Fences are being evaluated for modification to improve wildlife movement across the ranch onto the Sands Ranch.



View of the Santa Rita Mountains to the west. Photo by Kerry Baldwin

