

2024 SUMMARY HAGEMANN RANCH REPORT

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Overview

The Livermore Heritage Guild continues to be pleased and honored to be able to provide service to and management of Livermore's culturally important Hagemann Ranch. Our role in connecting to the resident non-profits as well as to our community and visitors is a significant responsibility that we carry with pride and pleasure. That positive perspective is made possible by the enthusiastic response from all of the important stakeholders.

2024 was a productive year with events, projects, outreach, partnerships and chores, and additional progress with the professionals who will help guide restoration of ranch buildings. This year's report is one in a growing annual cadence of preservation and restoration tasks. As always, these now familiar tasks are only accomplished with thousands of volunteer hours, outreach, planning, historic research and coordination. It is a labor for which the Guild has developed an important set of skills and knowledge.

The Guild continues to coordinate chores, requirements, access and ongoing improvements on the site via monthly meetings between the three non-profits operating on the site, as well as many more focused communications for repairs, supplies, and services. The amazing volunteers from the Guild and each of the other programs makes this possible. The team's resourcefulness and dedication continues to make sure the needs of the site are met. This report is a short summary of the Guild's activity for 2024.

Public Outreach and Programs

Sundays At Hagemann

As always, our monthly Sundays At Hagemann open house events attract a broad range of visitors, families often in particular. The free-admission day creates an easy activity choice for a wide range of visitors. Our guests are great-grandparents, packs of teens, strollered tykes, garden groups, history buffs and more, and they come from all over the Bay Area and beyond.



An active, themed open house event can require dozens of volunteers. Besides the Guild's own members and volunteers from the other programs on site, we benefit from the services of The National Charity League, local Scout troops and the Young Men's Service League as well as individual volunteers. Visitors from one open house sometimes reappear as volunteers for another one.

Besides sharing the historic site with our visitors, they also get to meet **4-H** and **Sunflower Hill**, the other non-profits operating on site, and each group has garnered fans, supporters and clients from the events. The benefit is mutual, as our non-profit partners on site

are among the attractions guests enjoy. We also often have a guest public-interest group offering information or activities. These have included **Cantabella Children's Chorus**, **Choose Love Livermore**, **Livermore Library**, **Questers**, **Hispanic Heritage Center**, along with artists, authors, writers and musicians.

In 2024 we had over 2,000 visitors. Our guests come from a wide area around the region. It is common for us to have visitors from San Jose, the Peninsula, much of the East Bay, Tracy and San Francisco as well as travelers from much farther whose trips coincide with our events. This year we had many people bringing their international visitors to see the site, which we take as validation that local residents consider Hagemann Ranch an important regional destination. We get a lot of interest in the specifics of Livermore history and the history of our region as well as more general questions regarding a wide range of topics including gardens, architecture and farm work. One of the recurring monthly activities is our Site Tour featuring history of the site in the context of Livermore area history and we have added specific tours for those with an interest in local pioneer architecture.

Maintaining these as free events, often including free refreshments and snacks, is an important goal (as it is with most Heritage Guild events). It is our goal that everyone feels welcome to attend with their whole family with no

concern about affordability. The success of this goal is evident in the many extended family and friends groups that come to the events. Donations are always gratefully accepted, but we place great importance in being accessible in as many ways as possible. Regarding accessibility we are fortunate that much of the ranch is a single level gently sloping west, and additionally we have a passenger golf cart at the ready for visitors with mobility issues.



Besides the benefit of the open house event itself, we have a ranch work day the week before each event that not only puts many hands on the required chores but creates an excellent opportunity for new volunteers to mingle with experienced ones for team building and skill sharing in a low-pressure, high-accomplishment environment.

This year we modified the monthly event by replacing midwinter and midsummer events with a more casual structure featuring fewer guest organizations. This allowed us to reduce our weather risk during those volatile times while also allowing a bit more freedom for our volunteers. Even without a featured attraction we generally get a few hundred visitors on such days.

This year's featured events and groups throughout the year included:

- Cantabella Children's Chorus
- One-room School Experience
- Charlotte's Web theme day
- Lions chuckwagon serving up food and drink
- Livermore Library
- Plant exchange in partnership with Sunflower Hill
- Lots of live music
- Rancho Day
- Make and fly a kite
- Vintage Cars
- Vintage farm engines
- Woodcarvers
- Safe Cat Foundation
- HistoryMobile
- Magician
- Hispanic Heritage Foundation
- Diwali Celebration
- Square Dancers

These were in addition to our repeating events such as site tours, garden tours, historic chores, historic games, roping lessons, returning artists, and lots of visits with the 4-H animals.

Partner Programs

The Ranch hosts two other non-profits, 4-H and Sunflower Hill, that operate within the Guild's site lease, though mostly autonomously with their own City contract. The Guild provides support to operations, events and projects of these on-site partners. While each group continues to develop and grow, our support responsibilities tend to stay fairly constant: repairs, clean-up, infrastructure and general assistance as well as providing tours and historic information to their guests and clients. We are also able to aid in coordination between the programs, such as providing 4-H manure to the Sunflower Hill and Heritage gardens or using our tractors to haul materials for their projects. Likewise, Sunflower Hill's special needs clients often enjoy interactions with the 4-H animals and make use of areas of the site beyond their garden.



4-H animal programs are a direct tie to the ranching heritage of Livermore. Their client list keeps them very active on the site. Their main focus is activities with the horses, but they also have bees, chickens, ducks, and the occasional bunny or guinea pig. While the animals are there to benefit the scheduled programs, animal care happens every day, so the 4-H coordinator has an active team of volunteers with one or more people on site every day. With more people spending time gardening at home, the 4-H manure supply has become somewhat of a hot commodity. We had an informal program of supplying compost for local gardens, but our ongoing partnership with Alameda County StopWaste allows us to deliver not only better compost but also gardening information to local home gardeners. As part of the composting program, the ranch has supplied manure and compost to community gardens in Sunol, Oakland and Berkeley.



Sunflower Hill continued with their staff and volunteers and special needs clients to produce wholesome food which nourished those in need. Open Heart Kitchen and Culinary Angels are two of the beneficiary programs for food from Sunflower Hill's gardens, while the local special needs community benefits from the Sunflower Hill programs. Because the primary goal of the garden is to provide a nurturing environment for their clients, it is always a delightful space to visit.

Neither partner program is specifically focused on the heritage of the Hagemann site, but both have been excellent partners in preserving the site for our heritage purpose. Both programs supply volunteers to speak with guests at our Open House events and those guests enjoy the opportunities to walk among the SFH gardens and interact with the 4-H animals. Working with these programs continues to be a pleasure and a benefit.

Our residential neighbors have also been excellent partners. Families which border the Hagemann site have tolerated the occasional late night neighing of horses and provide security watch with appreciation for ranch operations. This year, after diligently repairing the fence slats providing a modicum of privacy between the ranch and its neighbors, we saw that a collection of slats would consistently go missing after we had carefully replaced them. Once we saw that the children in the yard were avidly watching the 4-H horses through the gap and even supplying an occasional

surreptitious carrot, the slat disappearance became understood and we have not replaced them. The Guild cultivates and is fortunate to have engaged neighbors on all sides.

Eagle Scout Projects

Local Scout troops continue to contribute to the ranch with volunteer hours and Eagle Scout projects. To achieve Eagle rank, a Scout has to do more than simply complete a project. He or she takes the role of project leader, finding a need, collaborating with the beneficiary organization (Hagemann Ranch in our case) to design a solution, then creating a project plan to make it all happen. These require coordination on our end as well and we typically fund the projects, but the results over the years have been meaningful improvements to the site. This year saw the completion of projects started in 2023, as well as the beginning of projects that will be completed in 2025. We have now been the recipient of a dozen Eagle and Gold Star scout projects.



Horse Feeders

The mix of feeders for the 4-H horses included modern plastic fixtures and dilapidated metal ones. For our historic site we had always hoped for a more appropriate look and these wooden feeders fit the bill. The Eagle project was to design and build two, both of which were completed in 2024. They have been so well received that we are starting another Eagle project to create three more feeders. Besides looking appropriate for the site, these feeders encourage the horses to get their food from the feeder and its tray, rather than the ground. This is important for reducing digestive issues such as sand colic which can cause horses distress and even death.

House Path Bender Board

The front of the house includes a semi-circular gravel path as part of the formal garden structure that we know has been in place since at least the 1930s and probably is original to the site from the late 1800s. It has degraded over the years and digging for irrigation work left more damage. Additionally, the path as we inherited it was bordered in brick, an addition late in the last century, with the original path having been defined by classic bender board. An Eagle Scout took on the project of digging out the existing path and laying in curved bender board for a new path in 2023. The actual gravel installation was done by professionals with all work completed in 2024. This was a great example of partnering volunteer work with professional services to achieve our preservation goals at significant cost savings.

Heritage Gardens

The ranch has multiple Garden areas that help with our goal of interpreting the site in its historic context. The backyard garden, sometimes called the kitchen garden, is planted year around in produce crops from the Ranch’s period of significance, roughly the 1860s to 1930s. It can include household vegetables and cover crops as well as demonstration plantings of agricultural products such as wheat and barley. If the harvested food fills a good-sized basket it is often delivered to a local non-profit food bank. Smaller harvests tend to get handed to visitors and volunteers. Some of the seed stocks originally from heritage seed banks are now planted completely from seeds collected in previous ranch harvests.

As it would have been in 1890, the garden is amended with compost created on the ranch, and we presume pollinated by the on-site 4-H bees.



Another planting area is the formal garden at the front of the house that integrates with the semicircular path mentioned above. Formal gardens were an important part of a ranch home's appearance during our historic period. The family would carefully separate the home "living" space from the large agricultural area and this decorative area is more interested in showy plants and trees and almost nothing intentionally useful like food unless it also was decorative. Our garden team works hard to maintain a space that looks historic while taking advantage of modern water-saving drip irrigation.

There is also a demonstration orchard on the house's north side. This orchard, like the kitchen garden, demonstrates a wide range of fruit trees that would have been typical of our site. This was installed in 2023 with a grant from the Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club, made possible by a generous grant from Maudie Kuenning. Maudie passed away in 2024, but we think of her with each fig, apple or plum that gets harvested from her orchard.

Special Events

The ranch hosts occasional special groups throughout the year. School classes, special needs groups, English language learners and artists are among the visitors we have hosted. Our partner organizations, 4-H and Sunflower Hill, also make use of the space through facilitation of the Heritage Guild. These may be fundraisers, educational programs, volunteer/team building,



Preservation, Restoration, Infrastructure

Basic Maintenance

As happens every year, there was a lot of maintenance in 2024, including replacement of fence boards, gate repairs, building stabilization, plumbing fixes and electrical repairs. The activity from each on-site group requires a steady cadence of repairs and we now have a couple of volunteer repair teams sharing the work. Each year sliding doors jump their tracks or old valves refuse to seal, and the sun beats down weathering everything. Even our internet connection, strung from rather historic wiring, needed a full upgrade. Mischievous horses knocked down fence boards and gate panels, and we continued with pulling weeds, trimming trees, tending the landscape, etc. The tools for those tasks require maintenance themselves as everything wears and eventually wears out. Overall, the upkeep required of an active 5 acre ranch that is over 150 years old is quite substantial.

Preservation Work

Since the Guild has been on the Hagemann site, a number of structures have been through significant preservation and restoration, with new projects each year. Previous years have seen restoration of the chicken coop, the windmill building, the wash house / milk house, chicken coop #2 and so on.

This year the building restoration work slowed a bit while more mundane repairs dominated, including rebuilding of some of the large gates and repairing panels and structural elements in various buildings.

In 2023 we initiated a contract with Avelar (architecture and structural engineering consultants) to do a full analysis of the work required to restore the main house's foundation and provide a robust structure that can carry the house and two barns forward another few centuries. That work was largely carried out in 2024 for a report to be submitted in 2025 to the City. This work should give scope to the truly major work of preserving and restoring the main house, which currently sits with wood slowly decaying into the dirt. Preservation will not be simple or inexpensive for this complex building (many additions were made in its first decades), but our goal is to preserve it as the centerpiece of the site.



Last year's restoration of an original, local bundle wagon had already been successful, but some additional historic photos and available historic hardware allowed for further improvements this year. The bundle wagon is now an integral part of the ranch story, giving a physical touchstone for discussing the work of a harvest providing food for a ranch full of horses.

Administration

Volunteers

An important part of administering the site is recruiting and organizing volunteers. As in years past we start with our team of dedicated Guild volunteers and then add groups from NCL

(National Charity League), YMSL (Young Men's Service League), Scouts, students looking for community service hours and local residents looking to serve their community. We continue with a mix of dedicated project teams, handling things like tractor repair or event preparation, along with cross-functional volunteers who jump at whatever need presents itself.

Overall, the Guild provided and coordinated over 3500 volunteer hours for ranch projects. Based on the estimate from Independent Sector, a group that studies the non-profit industry, just the hours alone are valued at well over \$100,000. Skills which would be expensive to hire are volunteered every



day, including plumbers, electricians, arborists, craftspeople, planners, designers, gardeners, accountants, preservationists, researchers and more.

The volunteer work is of course without pay, but we do try to reward and recognize our volunteers. Besides effusive thanks, we feed them when needed and recognize their contributions. The work done by many to preserve Hagemann Ranch for our community is always top of mind.

Security and Safety

The on-site caretaker, active volunteer programs, vigilant neighbors, a network of cameras and probably some luck have contributed to keeping the site safe. Alerts from the Ring cameras keep our attention focused and are immediately checked by our caretaker, though we typically find horses who outsmarted their gates. When the gates are open for service, classes, projects or similar small activities we do get occasional uninvited visitors, typically curious passers-by, we greet them and direct them to the next Open House event.

The fire alarm system has been operational all year. Though alarms do not prevent fires, the hope is to make sure that any fire does not spread. Fire extinguishers are also stationed around the site and we have a regular program of checking fire extinguishers and first aid kits to make sure the safety measures we put in place stay ready. Safety and security issues are reported at each monthly meeting as well, keeping safety and security top of mind for our team.

Utilities, Services

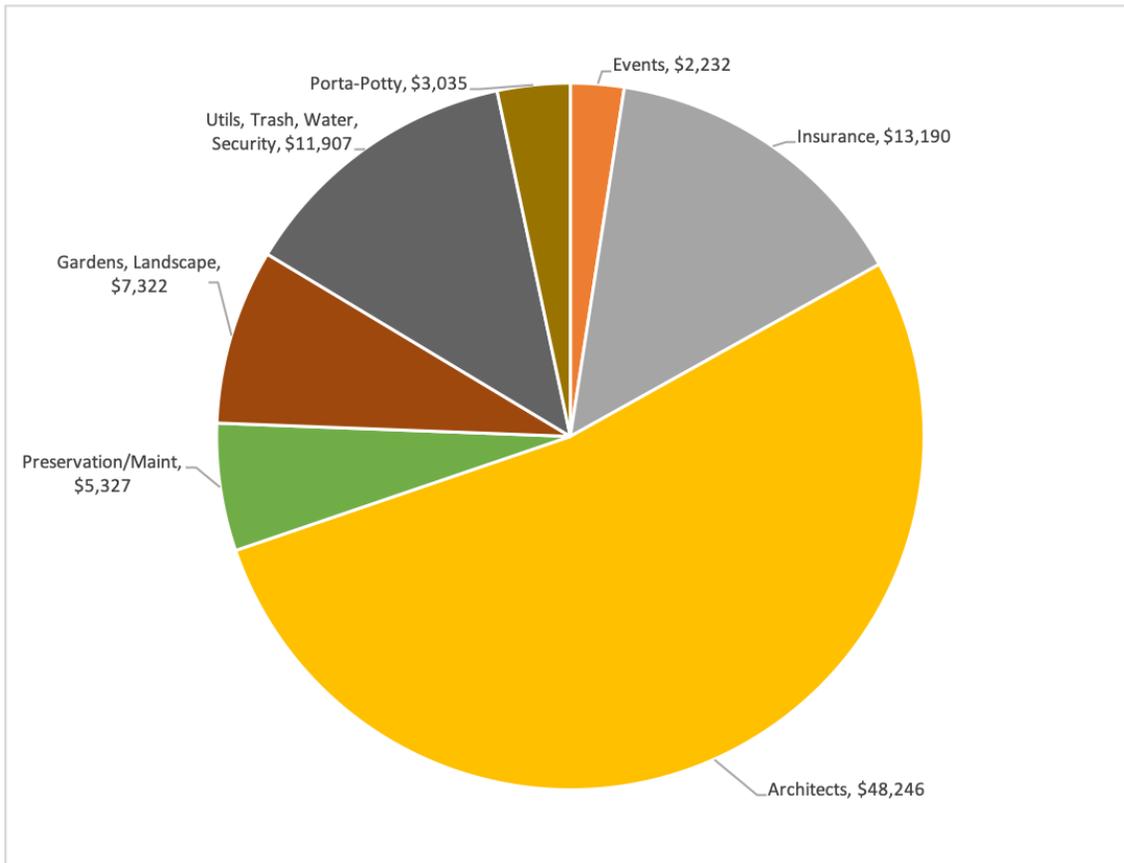
The Heritage Guild manages all utilities and services for the Hagemann Ranch site. Although water is delivered by our on-site well, this creates a significant electricity bill to supply the gardens and animals, even as other electrical usage has fallen due to our increased installation of energy saving lighting. The site has a wireless LAN serving the on-site groups which also allows for security camera access. Other services include monitored fire alarms, porta-potty outhouse, pest control, trash and bottled drinking water.

2024 Expenditures

Our annual budget for the site is overseen by the Guild Executive Board and managed by the Hagemann Ranch committee. It is updated throughout the year as new costs, projects or opportunities arise. It covers the recurring liabilities of utilities and services, as well as the costs for preservation, infrastructure and programs. Expenditures were similar to last year, but starting last year, we added a very large project for initial planning and engineering studies for the preservation of the house and two of the barns. The project is ultimately to be taken on by the City, as part of their responsibility for building preservation and safety, but the Guild felt it would be supportive to create an outline of the scope of work. To make that credible, we brought in professional architects, Avelar and Associates. The final report is to be submitted in 2025 (has been done as of this writing) and the Guild hopes that this major investment helps move the project forward and gets the house on a solid foundation.

As with every year, our largest expenditure is of volunteer time and talent. Our Sundays at Hagemann events have a modest material cost, and raise only a few dollars in casual donations, but costs us over 1000 volunteer hours. Site management, planning, coordination, urgent service calls and project assistance also draw lots of volunteer hours. We are fortunate to draw on the skills of engineers, mechanics, planners, artists, tradespeople, and the willing hands of passionate volunteers of all stripes. And as noted above, we draw on the volunteer services of outside groups for many special projects.

The heavy volunteer workload makes the financial picture somewhat misleading in terms of where we put our attention, still, it is useful to look at where the money goes. This year we combined the Maintenance and Preservation budget items, since infrastructure maintenance is often preservation, and building preservation is often maintenance.



2025 Projected Activity

We have a couple of projects which have been on hold and will hopefully be realized in 2025. This includes our goal of installing professional interpretive signage around the site. This will be for buildings as well as equipment and functional spaces such as the gardens. More generally the work on site will be a continuation of our responsibilities of years past. Preservation, operations, events, and incremental site improvements ranging from plantings to displays. And of course, another year of welcoming the community to Sundays At Hagemann.

Hagemann Ranch Vision Statement:

Hagemann Ranch, where

Heritage is shared, interpreted and preserved

Hope is nurtured and hearts are opened

Harmony reigns

