ANNUAL REPORT

Hitchcock Woods

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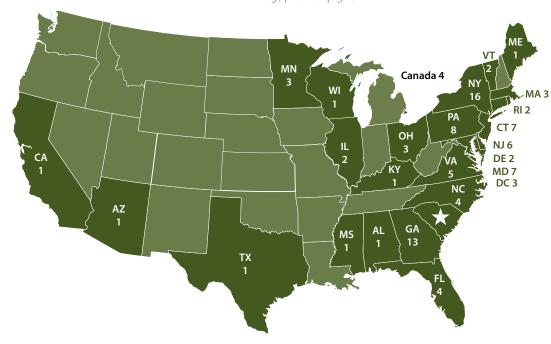
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For commentary, please see page 3.



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The Foundation's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, aligning our annual budget and operating schedule with the cycle of peak activity in the Woods, from early fall to late spring

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

You are receiving this report because you are a contributor to and a friend of the Hitchcock Woods and, as such, you are vitally important to our organization. You realize what a huge asset the Woods are to this community and we are deeply grateful for your support and good will. The effort and resources that go into preserving the Woods and its cultural uses are far greater than people realize.

I have had a very challenging and rewarding three years as Chairman of the Board and the Foundation has had some major events during this time. At the March meeting of the trustees, the board unanimously elected Randy Wolcott to serve as the Foundation's tenth Chairman. Randy has the mind, the spirit and the enthusiasm to lead this organization into the future. He has a fully committed board and staff supporting him.

There were some other important changes on the board this past year. Longtime trustees Michael Laughlin and Lucetta Knox retired, as did Martin Ritter. We have sorely missed them. New on the board is the young and enthusiastic Paul Simons, a lawyer and environmentalist who was married this spring. A huge loss and sadness for the board was the passing of trustee emeritus and dear friend, Bud Herbruck.

There was a landmark change on our staff with the retirement of Woodsman Namon

Corley, who had been the heart and soul of the Woods for 50 years. Namon is thoroughly enjoying his well deserved retirement although he is not exactly sitting at home in the rocker!

Another major development this year was the land acquisition

of some private property in a sensitive area of the Woods near the Coker Spring entrance that was being considered for development. Coker Spring is probably the most widely used entrance by equestrians and it was collectively decided to purchase 10 acres and thus avoid unimagined changes to that entrance. It is satisfying to know that this historic entrance to the Woods is preserved for future generations.

This year has also brought great hope for the decades old problem of erosion caused

"The effort and resources that go into preserving the Woods and its cultural uses are far greater than people realize."

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Gail King, with her ever present companions, Bunker and Birdie (left and right), enjoy a rare moment of rest on the stairs of the Foundation's new Administrative Office in the Hitchcock Woods.

by municipal stormwater in the Woods. The City of Aiken engaged an institute at Clemson University to assist in developing, once and for all, a comprehensive, long-term plan to solve the problem. Participants "came to the table" and agreed to develop a plan that addresses our mutual needs. This will be another positive change.

In the past three years, the Foundation has hired its first Executive Director and a full complement of committed and loyal staff. The Foundation has moved into its first "owned" office space in a wonderfully renovated historic home in the Woods. In addition, several other critical land matters have been resolved, including a few generous donations of land on the perimeter of the Woods.

The Foundation is now fully focused on all elements of its mission and vision, which guide our operations. Part of our mission is to "maintain and manage historic and traditional equestrian and pedestrian uses" of the Woods. We are proud to uphold the great tradition of the Aiken Horse Show as part of the legacy of Hitchcock Woods. This year, participation in the Aiken Horse Show demonstrated this community's commitment to this historic event. Words are not enough to thank and recognize our sponsors, committee, volunteers, exhibitors, spectators and the outpouring of support from the Aiken Hounds.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank all of the trustees for their support and hard work, and most particularly Doug Rabold, Chris Reichel, Bennett Tucker, Carol Stewart, and Deon Mealing. Their dedication and love of the Woods is

very obvious. Hitchcock Woods is a passion for all of us and we thank you for your continued support.

(air B. Ving

Gail King has served as a trustee of the Hitchoock Woods Foundation since the 1980s and as Chairman of the Board since 2005. She has been highly instrumental in the organization's fundraising activities for many years.



Newly Elected Chairman Randy Wolcott

MISSION

The mission of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation is to:

- protect and preserve the Hitchcock Woods in a natural and ecologically healthy state,
 - maintain and manage historic and traditional equestrian and pedestrian uses, and
 - foster education and research on the history and resources of the Woods.

PROTECTING THE WOODS TAKES ALL OF US

The U.S. map on the cover of this year's annual report tells an important part of the story of Hitchcock Woods. It's no secret that Hitchcock Woods is among this community's most beloved treasures, but this forest also is a favorite destination for visitors from far flung places. This has been true since the beginning, when the Hitchcocks famously invited their friends and family from all over the country to enjoy the pleasures of the Woods. Today many in Aiken uphold this tradition.

Since the Friends of the Woods membership program was established two years ago, just over 100 out-of-state households have participated as members. The program is represented by households in 24 other states, Washington D.C., and Canada. At the time of this report, total household membership nationwide stands

This year the Foundation also exceeded the 100 mark in its Business Partnership program. At present, 104 area businesses or organizations have partnered with the Foundation, demonstrating the connection between the Woods, its visitors, and the local economy.

This past year was the busiest fundraising period in the Foundation's history. Special

events were designed for specific populations interested in the Woods. The calendar included the Triple Crown of Polo Gala in September, the Aiken Steeplechase Fall Fete in October, the Hunt Week Gala in February, the Friends of the Woods Premiere Party in March, the Knowles Bowl golf tournament in April, and the Aiken Equine Charities Cup in May. The last event is held by 302 Polo, which also founded the annual Tommy Hitchcock Memorial Polo Tournament.

One might ask, "Why so many fundraisers?" The answer is twofold. First, Hitchcock Woods is open to visitors entirely free of charge 365 days a year. Second, 2100 acres amount to a big forest. A lot of effort and expense go into managing not only the recreational and natural features of the Woods, but also the complex issues that arise from its many uses, recreational and environmental. This leads us to another development.

Regulatory agencies have taken a renewed interest in the Woods. Site visits were made this year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and South Carolina Department of Health &

"Hitchcock Woods is among this community's most beloved treasures, but this forest also is a favorite destination for visitors from far flung places."





Unnamed trail between Lovers Lane and Peek-A-Boo Lane

Environmental Control. All of these agencies have developed a keen interest in the ecology of the Woods.

The ecological values of the Woods were recognized publicly by two renowned South Carolina scientists. Dr. Patrick McMillan of Clemson University featured a visit to Hitchcock Woods in an episode of "Expeditions with Patrick McMillan" on South Carolina Educational Television. In addition, Dr. Whit Gibbons of the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory wrote a piece on the Woods for his syndicated column.

Outreach has become an important function for the Foundation. Speaking engagements were held with Aiken Outdoors Club, First Presbyterian Church, Rotary South, Aiken Senior Men's Club, and Kalmia Landing, to name a few. The Foundation hosted an outreach booth at the City's Earth Day celebration and the Chamber's member appreciation picnic.

Some outreach was held within the Woods. The Foundation hosted a visit by the 2008 class of Leadership Aiken County and supported a cross-country meet in the Woods held among Aiken High, South Aiken, and three other area high schools.

To help support the growing

communication needs of the organization, the Foundation hired Carol Stewart as its first Communications Specialist. Carol supports daily operations and organizes special projects such as the annual calendar and newsletter that serve as benefits for our members and partners. She also is working on the previously promised renovation of the Foundation's website, which will make us more responsive to our visitors.

Thank you for sustaining your support. We look forward to the challenges that are before us, and to elevating our management practices toward our vision of serving as a national model for urban forest stewardship.

Hamples E. Kabola

Doug Rabold has been involved in Aiken's business, civic, and cultural life since 1990. He was hired as the Hitchcock Woods Foundation's first Executive Director in October 2005.

VISION

The vision of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation is to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of the Hitchcock Woods and to serve as a model for sustainable urban forestry, balancing stewardship of forestland natural resources with compatible human uses.

A VOICE FROM THE WOODS

The old saying "time flies when you're having fun" holds true for my first two years as Woods Superintendent. I truly enjoy my work and, like many, I love being in Hitchcock Woods. I hope this shows in our management of the Woods.

Highlights this year include hiring a Woods Technician, managing Woods ecology through the prescribed burn program and the mechanical thinning of an overgrown corner of the Woods, and rebuilding the historic schooling area known as Crawford Fences. In our day-to-day efforts, we were proactive in enhancing attention to detail in trail and jump maintenance, and in adding features for improved emergency response. Some of our efforts are more reactive, like our massive cleanup task following a destructive storm this spring.

In November we welcomed Deon Mealing as our new Woods Technician. Deon is originally from Edgefield, South Carolina. He came to us after serving seven years in the U.S. Army, where he earned a Purple Heart as well as various medals for combat in Iraq, Kuwait, and other overseas missions. Deon brings with him a resume full of medical first responder training,

fitness training certifications, leadership skills, and a strong work ethic. He's already a familiar face the Woods.

Our prescribed burning season began slowly this year due to a dry December and January, but we were able to conduct a few winter burns to reduce fuel loads beginning in February. Thanks to cooperative weather conditions, we were able to conduct several growing season burns this year. Growing season burns are used where fuel loads already have been reduced from previous winter burns. They are effective in controlling hardwood underbrush growth and in restoring native wiregrass.

Another large ecological change was initiated on the west side of the Woods, where we contracted the mechanical thinning of a 90-acre area near Bog Field, Juac Hollow, and Riviere Ride where regeneration was overly dense. Results from this thinning are positive and the basal area (the spacing between the trees) neatly conforms to our management goals. Once these units are burned in the next burn season, the visual results should be very gratifying.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature struck with a violent, unplanned thinning in mid-March. Hitchcock Woods was hit hard by a severe storm with powerful microbursts. An in-house salvage was conducted for the many trees that were uprooted in the storm. Nearly 60 pines trees were salvaged across the Woods in the

"Managing and maintaining 2100 acres alone is a huge responsibility, but we're also stewards of the visitors who come to explore and enjoy nature in the Woods."



Bennett Tucker at work in the Woods

several weeks that followed the storm.

We recently completed rebuilding the popular Crawford Fences inside the Ridge Mile Track. A new course layout by Linda McLean and Girl Wolcott now offers a different approach to this schooling area, including the use of the outer edge for jumps. There are several smaller Aiken Fences, several post-and-rail jumps, two coops, several log jumps, and even a brush box. We were fortunate to have the help of Schuylar and Desmond Reardon, who were back as summer interns. They also assisted with wisteria control, trail trimming, jump rehabilitation, and burning.

Managing and maintaining 2100 acres alone is a huge responsibility, but we're also stewards of the visitors who come to explore and enjoy nature in the Woods. We take the safety of our many visitors very seriously. Emergency 911 address location is important in the Woods, just as it is in your home. Each main entrance to the Woods now has a formal 911 address to facilitate emergency response. Woods staff installed green signs with reflective white numbering of the corresponding 911 address at each entrance. We took this measure to help visitors identify the address in the event of

an emergency to aid emergency responders. This supplements last year's effort of installing alphanumeric signs at the major intersections throughout the Woods to help in navigation and emergency response.

Visitors using the Clark Road entrance have noticed a big change there. The southeastern side of the Woods previously lacked emergency access to many of the trails in the area of Fox Field, Cuthbert Ridge Line, and Mr. Fletcher's Ride. Recent incidents in this area necessitated the widening of the walking trail near Clark Road to create an emergency access road. We installed a new gate, a fence, and signage to finish the job. The project changed the character of that trail, but the new access could save lives in the event of an emergency.

We consider it a privilege to maintain Hitchcock Woods for the enjoyment of this community. We appreciate your support We'll see you in the Woods!

W. Benet linke

Bennett Tucker was bired as Woods Superintendent in June 2006. His many certifications in firefighting and first responder training strengthen our prescribed burn program and enhance our ability to work with public agencies in achieving more efficient response to incidents in the Woods.

NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB

We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors; we borrow it from our Children.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS

Cumulative giving from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008

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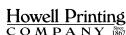
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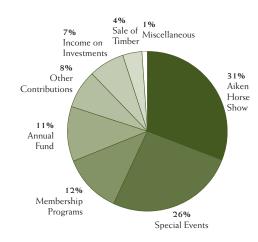




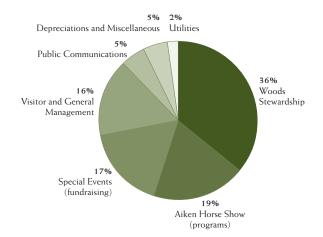




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