

VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

Vol. 3, No. 1
Fall 2009

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Festival of the Woods Creates a Magical Evening

More than 200 people attended the inaugural Festival of the Woods on September 18, this year commemorating the Foundation's 70 years of service to the community. Held on the grounds of the Horse Show Ring, the event featured a catered dinner, exhibits, a raffle, and a guest speaker. Event Chairman Larry Byers was pleased with the effort.

Guest speaker Dr. Patrick McMillan of Clemson University spoke on the remarkable biodiversity in Aiken. (Aiken County is the second most botanically diverse region on the East Coast.) Dr. McMillan is the host, co-creator, and writer of the popular ETV nature program "Expeditions with Patrick McMillan." His speaking engagement at the Festival was his gift to the Foundation and he set the bar very high for future speakers.

A new event on the Foundation's annual calendar, the Festival of the Woods celebrates the wide range of pedestrian uses of the Hitchcock Woods. Activities in this event educate visitors about the history and resources of the Woods, provide information on the Foundation's management and stewardship efforts, and enhance

awareness of visitor guidelines. In 2010, the Festival of the Woods expands to two days, with activities for the whole family planned on Saturday in addition to the Friday night dinner.



Dr. Patrick McMillan, nationally renowned naturalist, was the guest speaker at the inaugural Festival of the Woods in September.



Derrick Equipment Delivers John Deere Tractors

Visitors to the Woods may have noticed staff driving two new 100-horsepower, four-wheel-drive John Deere 6100D tractors. One tractor is outfitted with a versatile loader and grapple and the other has a six-way blade. The capabilities of these tractors will enable Woods staff to focus on the work at hand, rather than on the equipment malfunctions and repairs that had become too frequent in recent years.

Derrick Equipment Company extended nonprofit discounts and adjusted the sale price in exchange for a Diamond sponsorship of the 2010 Aiken Horse Show. Eight generous donors understood the urgency of this need and collectively donated \$53,677 to raise the funds and help make this possible. Success was the result of generosity and teamwork!



Derrick brothers Bobby, Dean, and Brian at the Derrick Equipment location in Aiken. On the tractors are Randy Wolcott and Bennett Tucker of the Foundation

Friends of the Woods

Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have joined or renewed between May 16, 2009, and November 15, 2009. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

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Woodside Farm "Hospice for Horses"S

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Newberry Hall
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\$100 Level

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* New participants from 5/16/09 to 11/15/09

Charter Partners and Friends
S Sustaining Partners

Celestine Eustis Prize Essay Winner

“The Woods” by Meredith Walker, Aiken High School Senior (Spring 2009)

My feet are sore, I'm dripping with sweat, and my clothes are laced with mud. From the looks of it, some might think I've just stepped out of a grueling episode of "Survivor." Appearances aside, I couldn't be more relaxed and at ease, seeing as I've just ended a day well spent in Hitchcock Woods.

The southern edge of the forest sits directly to the side of my house, easily accessible from my backyard. As this spot is a fairly central location, I can hit a number of landmarks within a half hour or less, such as the Ridge Mile Track, Tea Cottage Site, or my personal favorite, Barton's Pond Bridge.

This little landmark was built over the Sand River, which flows languidly through the forest like maple syrup sliding down a plate. The sound of water traipsing over the sand offers some quaint background music, while the view carved by the bridge's supports looks like something that might be found in Snow White's backyard. The smell of clay, sand, and wet foliage offers an intoxicating, inviting perfume that urges the visitor to stop and take another deep whiff of the damp air. Whenever I travel through the woods accompanied by a friend, this is always the first stop on the tour, as though I feel some strange responsibility to share something so quaint and serene.

I first laid eyes upon Hitchcock Woods when I was three years old and my father would take me for short hikes, all the while sharing his love of nature with me. On these little journeys, he would point out different plants and animals, giving me a short biology lesson on each, and later making good on his promises to quiz me before we got home. In those years, I would ask all sorts of questions, most often concerning distance traveled, distance yet to travel, and any upcoming snack breaks.

As I grew older, however, I began to ask questions concerning slightly more sophisticated topics such as faith, death, decisions, and morality. Our talks and time spent together in the woods developed within me not only an exceptional bond with my father, but also a curious mind bent on questioning anything and everything that could be discussed from Whitney Drive to Cathedral Aisle and back.

The woods have also provided a unique setting in which to develop another very precious relationship – the one between a girl and her dog. Murphy, the now geriatric Labrador retriever, has always seemed to possess qualities that mesh perfectly with my own personality. Her sweet nature and ever loyal demeanor entirely make up for what was, in her younger days, a rambunctious and easily distracted personality along with a Houdini like ability to conquer the backyard fence, canine harness, or whatever else held her from her own adventures.

My favorite time spent with Murphy has always been during the summer, when, in her youth, I would take her swimming in Black Gum Pond. Because of her tendency to forget her own name when under the spell of a cool, deep pond on a hellish July day, I would chain together a few leashes, creating a makeshift tether, and let her take roam of the pond while preventing an otherwise likely Murphy hunt. After taking such an enthralling dip, she would always return to my side, give me a sort of mischievous grin, and shake her fur in such a way that would make Little Egypt jealous. Soaking me seemed to be her way of teasing me with the fun I always missed by staying on dry land.

I have seen the same trails over and over again for years, from many different angles. I have leapt through on horseback, raced through at cross country practice, and occasionally stumbled through after overstaying my visit and finding myself caught after hours. No matter how many times I may traverse a trail, Hitchcock Woods never fails to enchant me, in one way or another. I still have many paths to walk, many questions to ask, and many memories to be made in the place that has watched me grow and learn with each venture into its depths.

For information on the 2010 essay contest, please write info@hitchcockwoods.org.

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

1. The 2010 monthly wall calendar, titled "Quiet Moments in Hitchcock Woods," features art photography by Aiken resident Forrest Roberts. Copies of the calendar already were provided as a benefit to all Friends of the Woods households and Business Partners, but gift copies are available for just \$10.
2. Photographs from the 2010 calendar make a great addition to your home or office, and they make great gifts. Holiday orders with payment must be received by Monday, November 30. Prices range from \$25 to \$55 per print, depending on size. All proceeds benefit the Foundation.
3. This fall, the Foundation printed the first edition of "Origins of Names of Trails, Waterways, and Places in the Hitchcock Woods." This booklet provides brief synopses on the origins of the names seen on signs posted in the Woods, and on the many maps of the Woods over the years. Copies are available for only \$5.
4. Encourage your family and friends to learn more about the Woods and the Foundation by signing them up for a Friends of the Woods membership. The cost is \$50 per household.

More information is available by writing info@hitchcockwoods.org or by calling the office at 803-642-0528.



Blessing of the Hounds

The Aiken Hounds' annual Blessing of the Hounds in Hitchcock Woods is one of Aiken's favorite Thanksgiving traditions. The community is invited to observe the ceremony at Memorial Gate at 11:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day. The ceremony lasts for about 30 minutes, but visitors should allow 90 minutes altogether to find a parking spot, walk to Memorial Gate, observe the event, and return to their vehicles.

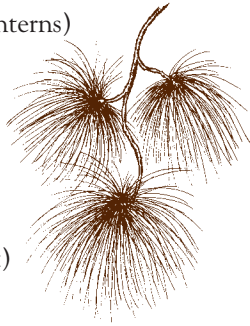
For the safety of pedestrians, no vehicles will be permitted beyond the intersection of Laurens Street and South Boundary Avenue.

Please Use the Woods Responsibly

Third in a series on specific topics in our Visitor Guidelines

Visitors are asked to honor guidelines and signage posted in the Woods. The following are prohibited from the Hitchcock Woods, except as authorized in the Visitor Guidelines.

- Alcohol
- Audio equipment
- Bicycles
- Firearms
- Fires (including candles and lanterns)
- Fireworks
- Fishing
- Game hunting
- Littering
- Metal detectors
- Moonlight rides
- Motorized vehicles (except for use by management)
- Overnight camping
- Smoking
- Trapping
- Use after dark



Visitors should know that the distance from this point to Memorial Gate is six-tenths of a mile. The return walk is a slight uphill grade. Attendees also are advised to leave their dogs at home. Those bringing dogs will be turned away in deference to other pedestrians and to avoid distracting the hounds during the ceremony.

In the event of rain, please inquire about the status of cancellation by calling the Hitchcock Woods Foundation at 642-0528 or the Aiken Hounds at 643-DRAG.

International Venture's 2010 Equestrian Safari, the Best Ever!



Looking for the ultimate escape for 2010? Those who have attended the Aiken Horse Show in recent years know that the showpiece of the Silent Auction is the safari donated by International Ventures. Next year, the riding safari on auction is more valuable than ever ... it's a \$10,650 value, to be exact. This trip is sure to be very popular among the equestrians in Aiken. It will be a nine-day / eight-night "Okavango Horse Safari" for two. It features one night in Johannesburg, South Africa, and seven nights at three different camps in Botswana. It's never too early to start planning your bidding strategy. See you at the Aiken Horse Show on March 26 to 28!

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.



Hitchcock Woods

FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 1702

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