

# VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods  
FOUNDATION

Vol. 5, No. 1  
Fall 2011

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## FESTIVAL



## ... Lives Up to Its Name

In its third year, the Festival of the Woods blossomed with the involvement of five community partners who added variety and depth to the event. The two day celebration included an educational and entertaining talk by a nationally known author, an extended tour of the Hitchcock Woods with six distinct talk stops, tours and activities for children, and a range of topical exhibits.

After a sunset dinner at the Show Grounds on Friday evening, writer and naturalist **Janisse Ray** charmed the audience with tales of her experiences in exploring some of the natural areas of the South. Ms. Ray speaks as she writes, with wry wit and sensitive insight, sharing a passion for the natural world.

Events on Saturday kept visitors busy with many options. Activities of partners complemented exhibits and programs hosted by the Foundation.

- **Ruth Patrick Science Education Center** staff provided special tours and activity tables designed for younger students.
- **Savannah River Ecology Laboratory** staff hosted a large, hands-on exhibit featuring wildlife common to the Woods.
- **South Carolina Bluebird Society** hosted an exhibit on cavity nesting birds and spoke on a bluebird study.
- **Green Gardeners Garden Club** members and friends designed and created the décor, and volunteered with set-up.
- **Palmetto Dog Club** members presented a lively demonstration of dog obedience and agility as lunchtime entertainment.

Those who took the two hour tour of the Woods enjoyed learning from six speakers on various topics: Jim Burke on bluebird nesting, Bennett Tucker on stewardship activities, Courtney Conger on Woods history, Dr. Ken Perrine on wildflower populations, Dr. Harry Shealy on botanical diversity, and Dr. Walt Kubilius on geological features.

Special thanks to the 44 volunteers who helped in making this event a great success.



Grace Ellis, Rosey Sorensen, Madelyn Smith, and McCall Massey enjoyed student tours of the Hitchcock Woods and related activities at the student tables. In the background, attendees head toward one of many exhibits at the Festival.

## Aiken Wins Big at **treesSC** Awards Ceremony



Board Chairman Randy Wolcott (third from left) accepted the award on behalf of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation and the community. Also featured are Trees SC representatives Carroll Williamson, Karen Hauck, and Mark Arena.

The Hitchcock Woods Foundation was graciously honored with two awards this year. After receiving the **Stewardship Award** in January from the Historic Aiken Foundation, the Hitchcock Woods Foundation was recognized with the **Community Forestry Award** in October by Trees SC.

Trees SC is a statewide nonprofit that provides a forum for the stewardship of South Carolina's urban and community forests. Trees SC annually sponsors the Golden Acorn Awards to recognize excellence in stewardship in four categories: a professional, a volunteer, a community organization, and a government program. In 2011, the judges reviewed the highest number of nominations ever.

When making the presentation at an awards ceremony in Columbia, the Trees SC spokesman commented that the Hitchcock Woods Foundation is a model for the state in conservation of an urban forest. Donors are a crucial part of this effort and this award is truly shared with the entire community.

In addition, Aiken naturalist and ecologist **Robert (Bob) McCartney** of Woodlanders was honored with the **Distinguished Professional Award** for his many significant contributions over the years. Most notable is his Aiken Arboretum Project. For 30 consecutive years, he has worked with the City of Aiken to add new and interesting trees to public and private properties, including more than 150 species of oaks.

Mr. McCartney has made many contributions and serves as a non-trustee member of the Foundation's Forestry and Conservation Committee.

# Friends of the Woods

Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have joined or renewed between 5/19/11 and 11/9/11. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

## BUSINESS PARTNERS

### \$1,000 Level

Hodges Badge Company, Inc.  
Woodside Farm "Hospice for Horses" S

### \$250 Level

Aiken Neurosciences, PC  
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### \$100 Level

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\* New participants from 5/19/11 to 11/9/11  
# Charter Partners and Friends  
S Sustaining Partners



## 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 (including golf carts and any motorized vehicles) will be permitted beyond the intersection of Laurens Street and South Boundary Avenue. 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.

## Hitchcock Woods Wares and Calendars Make Great Gifts

### Merchandise

Just in time for the shopping season, Hitchcock Woods Foundation has released its 2012 line of merchandise sporting the Hitchcock Woods logo. It is available exclusively at **Birds & Butterflies** in downtown Aiken (117 Laurens Street NW).

Popular items like sweatshirts are back, as are ball caps and long sleeve T-shirts in new colors. Back, too, are sports bottles, tote bags, note cards, pins, and vehicle plates. New this year are pedometers, visors in various colors, coffee mugs, and koozies.

All proceeds directly support the care of the Woods, courtesy of Ron and Dori Breneman of Birds & Butterflies.

### Calendar

Every year, the Hitchcock Woods Foundation publishes a calendar featuring photographs of the beautiful 2,100 acre Hitchcock Woods. The 2012 calendar has just been released.

Titled **The Light and Night & Weather and Water of the Hitchcock Woods**, the 2012 calendar reveals glimpses of the Woods as you've never seen them. It features fine art photography by Aiken's own Brent Cline, who has a career in commercial photography with regional and national clients. The calendar is available for purchase exclusively at **Stoptight Deli** in downtown Aiken (119 Laurens Street NW).



## Foundation Plants Seeds at SEED

Hitchcock Woods Foundation participated with an exhibit on the Hitchcock Woods in the 26th Annual SEED, or Science Education Enrichment Day, held on October 15 on the campus of the University of South Carolina Aiken.

Organized by the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center and USCA, the event was enjoyed by the record setting 3,312 visitors who attended this year. This event provides an important service to the greater community of young learners and their families by encouraging interest in education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Hosted by Executive Director Doug Rabold, the Foundation's booth focused on the longleaf pine ecosystem and various efforts by the Foundation to protect and restore the Hitchcock Woods.



*Students and families from Aiken County and neighboring counties study growth rings on a cross section of a longleaf pine from the Hitchcock Woods that dates to the 1660s, more than a century before the Declaration of Independence.*

## Range and Decline of the Longleaf Pine

1. Longleaf pine occurred on an estimated 90 million acres at its peak, dominating on an estimated 60 million acres, probably the largest area on the continent dominated by a single tree species.
2. By the mid-1900s, over half of that forest was gone.
3. By 1995, an estimated 3 million acres remained, most of it in poor condition.

## Qualities of the Longleaf Pine

1. It is the native forest community over much of the upland southern landscape, evolving here naturally in response to environmental conditions.
2. It has strong links to the South's history and culture.
3. When restored to ecological function, it is among the most diverse forest ecosystems in the world.
4. It grows well on a variety of sites.
5. It is risk-averse, tolerating fire throughout its life and minimizing catastrophic loss to insects, disease, ice, and wind.
6. It is long-lived and grows throughout its life, storing carbon for long periods of time.
7. It produces excellent wildlife habitat for many species, including game and non-game species and threatened and endangered species.

# Life in the Woods, by Annalise Eberhard

## Essay Contest Winner: Cèlestine Eustis Prize

Tree branches blind me. Roots trip me up. The sand muffles my footsteps. I'm sweating. I'm dirty. I'm exhausted. I'm so utterly lost, but I know where I am. I'm in Hitchcock Woods. Isn't that enough? And even though it's getting dark, and this trail is foreign to me, I don't need to panic. The Hitchcock Woods is my second home.

Ever since I can remember, the Woods has been a part of my life. Although it might sound absurd, the Hitchcock Woods has raised me. Since my grandparents' house is on Clark Road, many visits there would end in a Woods adventure. We were explorers. Hitchcock Woods was uncharted territory. We'd splash through the "raging rivers." We'd discover new lands. It was our personal playground. You could do anything in the Woods. You could be whoever you wanted to be. Hitchcock Woods is for the dreamers, and I was a dreamer.

Years later I took up horseback riding lessons at Fulmer Stables. I wasn't great at riding horses. I didn't do any shows or camps. My form was nowhere close to perfect. I was completely and utterly mediocre. But I loved to ride. I loved the way the horse felt underneath me: its strong body gliding over the sand, kicking it up as I held on for dear life. The days I loved the most were the "Woods days." Riding in the Woods was a treat. We would walk, trot, canter, and gallop. We flew down hills and over jumps. The Woods sheltered us. It was quiet, save for the sound of hooves pounding the earth.

After I decided to stop horseback riding lessons, I took up a new sport. I started running for Aiken High's Cross Country team. It turned out to be a great decision since every day we would practice in the Woods. After spending so much time running in the Woods, I now know almost everything about it. I know where that twisty trail ends, what parts of Sand River I should avoid stepping in after it rains, and in which field I can stop running and not be caught by my coaches. But I still can't find the mythical Gravel Pit!

This is where we would go on hour long runs. We would do hill repeats on Cole's Hill. Even our home meet course wove through the Woods. Suddenly practices became a whole lot more tolerable. How could you hate running in pure serenity?

I have a problem of getting distracted in the Woods while I'm running. I want to stop and soak up everything. I used to think the Hitchcock Woods was quiet until I actually stopped and listened.

The Hitchcock Woods is alive with sounds. The trees sing with chirps and twitters, and the ground moves with hungry squirrels foraging for food. One day I just stopped running and sat down on a decaying log. Sometimes I get so busy in life that I forget to just listen. I'm so caught up in school, in my sports, and in my social life that doing absolutely nothing for ten minutes is unthinkable. So for that day I just sat and reflected on life. Surrounded by nature, I found peace. It was a beautiful moment for me.

Hitchcock Woods has become part of who I am. Wherever I go in life, I know I'll take with me my own personal slice of the Woods. I'll remember the deep sand, the wind in the trees, and the sweat on my brow. The Woods might be for the citizens of Aiken. It might be for adventurous tourists. It might be for Aiken High's Cross Country team. But the Woods will always be my home.



*Annalise Eberhard, shown with parents Brian and Beth, won the 2011 Celestine Eustis Prize for her winning essay on the Hitchcock Woods. Annalise is on the Aiken High Cross Country Team, which trains in the Woods. She turned her \$500 cash award over the Aiken High All Sports Booster Club to support the team.*

Visit Our Website  
[hitchcockwoods.org](http://hitchcockwoods.org)

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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