VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

Vol. 3, No. 3
Spring 2010

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Aiken Hounds Donates "Orange Crush"

The Aiken Hounds generously donated a four-wheel-drive Kubota L2800 tractor for the care of the Hitchcock Woods. The gift followed the acquisition of two new John Deere 6100D tractors last fall through the assistance of Derrick Equipment and the generosity of a group of donors. The smaller Kubota supplements the Foundation's maintenance fleet, providing capabilities that support routine tasks in the Woods.

The size of the Kubota makes it useful for spreading seed and fertilizer, and suitable for pulling the small finish mower used to groom the Show Ring, the grounds at Memorial Gate, the entrance at South Boundary Avenue, and the lawn of the Foundation's office. Equipped with a front loader, the Kubota comes in handy for moving small logs, moving earth, and excavating kaolin for patching trails. Thank you, Aiken Hounds!

Woods Technician Deon Mealing mows the Show Ring. Nicknamed "Orange Crush" by the Aiken Hounds, the new Kubota perfectly complements the John Deere tractors, affectionately dubbed "Hulk" and "Buck" by Woods staff.

FESTIVAL *of the* WOODS

Save the Date … You Don't Want to Miss It

On September 24 and 25, the Hitchcock Woods Foundation will host the second annual Festival of the Woods, a new program that features a dinner with a guest speaker and a variety of family activities such as tours, exhibits, fun runs, and picnicking.

While the Friday night dinner is a paid event, there is no admission charge to "current" Friends of the Woods households for Saturday. Additional information will be announced later this summer.

Mr. Cothran Leaves a Legacy

Shortly after the first of the year, the community mourned the loss of Samuel A. Cothran, the former editor and publisher of the Aiken Standard. Mr. Cothran also served as the chairman of the board of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation from 1979 to 1989. He was among the first to serve as trustee emeritus.

One of Sam's projects as chairman was to get a good map of the Woods that was more useful at pinpointing your location on a specific trail. He had map boxes built and placed at all entrances so that anyone who wished to use the Woods could have a map. It encouraged people to visit the Woods.

Sam Cothran and Skyjack

Sam's two greatest contributions to the Woods occurred in the mid 1980s. He was the first chairman to add acreage to the Woods. Originally, Thomas Hitchcock had given 1,191 acres to create the Woods, but an additional 229 acres still belonged to several heirs. Sam skillfully negotiated the acquisition of the remaining family land. In order to purchase the acreage, the Foundation had to harvest timber and this led Mr. Cothran and the board to begin adopting modern forest management practices, another important contribution.

He is missed and will always be remembered.

Friends of the Woods

Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have joined or renewed between November 16, 2009, and May 12, 2010. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

Not and Review

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Celestine Eustis Prize Essay Contest Winner

"Aiken's Crowned Jewel" by Mary Taylor Miller, Grade 12, Aiken High School

Aiken has many "jewels" that are unique to the area, and in some cases the world. Hopelands Gardens, Carolina Bays, The Triple Crown, and Rye Patch are just some places and events that make Aiken unique. But if I had to pick just one, it would be Aiken's crowned jewel, the Hitchcock Woods. The Woods have an enormous impact on most of Aiken's citizens, whether they enjoy themselves best while taking a quiet solitary stroll or galloping behind the Aiken Hounds in full cry. The Hitchcock Woods has been a very large and constant part of my life. Ever since my first riding lesson in the Woods at the age of eight, I have spent an immeasurable amount of my time in the Woods each year.

The writing of this essay has caused me to stop and think about what the Woods means to me, and it surprised me to realize that I had never thought about it before now. I realized that the Woods have been such a huge part of my life, that my whole childhood has been lived around Aiken's precious 2,100 acres that act as the natural heart of the city.

I have had many first-time experiences in the Woods, my first canter, my first fall, my first time jumping an "Aiken," my first foxhunt, my first horse show and many others. During my very first time in the Woods I was too excited about being on Mercury the pony to pay attention to what was around me, but it wasn't until I was older that I could truly appreciate what the Hitchcocks left to Aiken.

My earliest memories of the Woods are of the many group riding lessons I had with friends that I still ride in the Woods with today. When I was about eleven, Laura Hall decided I could stay on well enough to go foxhunting. I had a fantastic time, and it molded what my teenage years in the Woods have been spent doing. My older sister Jessica and I wanted to get our colors, so we asked Diane Horning at a pony club meeting, how we could help out with the hounds. From then on we helped with walking the hounds out, feeding them, and the very important bed-fluffing. I fell in love with the hounds and the entire aspect of foxhunting, and have been increasingly involved ever since. I still help the Huntsman, Katherine Gunter, at the kennels about three days a week, hunt both Tuesdays and Saturdays, and there is nothing else that I would rather spend my time doing than enjoying my favorite animals in the beauty and magnificence of the Hitchcock Woods.

One particular simple memory I have of the Woods sums up how lucky Aiken is to have such a jewel. On the hot and humid summer evenings, Katherine Gunter and I take the hounds out for their weekly Thursday walk in the Woods on foot. We almost always take the same route, from the kennels out to the Little Power line, which comes to the very back pastures of The Stable On The Woods. After making sure all the hounds stay packed up on the way to the power line, and panting and sweating in the heavy afternoon heat of South Carolina, we let them relax a bit while Katherine throws them biscuits. Anywhere on that power line, as long as your line of sight is not blocked by the tall emerald pines, you can barely see the highest part of Richland Avenue, where Wal-Mart now stands. We usually start walking back as the sun starts to slide down behind the pines over the Woods. The sight always makes me think how lucky we are to have such a place, where even at the very edge of the Woods you can barely hear the sounds of cars whooshing by on the bypass, or see the harsh lights and pavement of development in contrast to the beautiful serenity of shadowy pines.

I will always be grateful to the people who have helped preserve Aiken's crowned jewel, and I will do my part also to make sure that other children, in the years to come, may also live their childhood in the beauty and safety of the haven, Hitchcock Woods.

Carriage Drive

A group of carriage drivers enjoyed a tour of the Hitchcock Woods on a beautiful Sunday morning in late March. Organized by residents with a long history of driving in Aiken as well as some drivers who are new to the community, the carriage tour upheld the long standing (and spectacular) tradition of carriage driving in the Hitchcock Woods.

Hiking Tour

A group from Aiken Newcomers Club toured the Hitchcock Woods in May with tour guide Sara Wampole (kneeling on far right). Since she moved to Aiken in 1991, Sara has volunteered her time to take groups on hikes in the Woods. Sara said this might have been her retirement tour for large groups. Thanks, Sara, for the many walks you have led for nearly 20 years.

Earth Day Reaches Students

Photo courtesy of Lista's Studio of Photography

Every year the Hitchcock Woods Foundation participates in the communitywide Earth Day celebration organized by the City of Aiken. This year, as part of the City's 175th year Celebrate Aiken! program, the event drew record numbers of area students to learn about the importance of our shared natural resources. There couldn't be a more beautiful setting than Hopelands Gardens for this worthwhile educational event. Executive Director Doug Rabold of the Foundation chats about the Woods with curious attendees.

2010 Trail Sponsors

The following generous supporters had the winning bids on trail sponsorships in silent auctions held at recent events.

Cathedral Aisle Fences – Brian Maddox
Coker Spring Trail – Julie Matheson
Cuthbert Ridge Line – Jane and Shepard Ellenberg
Horse Show Grounds – Sherry Lukens
Juac Hollow Line – Lucy Knowles
Pigeon Trap Loop – Sylvia and Kevin Igoe
Ridge Mile Track – Sara and Rich McNeil
Whitney Drive – Jon Samuels
Willie Barton's Line – Pat and Larry Byers

Visit the Foundation's exciting new website!
hitchcockwoods.org

It Takes a Community to Make the Aiken Horse Show a Success

Thank you for doing your part to make the 2010 Aiken Horse Show succeed on so many levels. Through the years, this event has retained its original charm and character. In preserving these qualities, we pay homage to the history and culture of this community. The Aiken Horse Show brings together longtime Aiken residents and those who more recently have discovered the Hitchcock Woods and have made it an important part of their lives.

This year the Foundation enjoyed increased financial support from generous class, course, and corporate sponsors, as well as from supporters of the silent auction. These funds help to sustain and maintain the Hitchcock Woods for the enjoyment of the residents and visitors of this community.

Committee members and many volunteers worked tirelessly to create a positive experience for exhibitors and spectators at this year's show. Special thanks are extended to our corporate sponsors.

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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
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