

VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

Friends *of the* Woods

Program Reaches a Milestone ... But There's Work to Be Done

Vol. 5, No. 3
Spring 2012

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Donors to the Hitchcock Woods Foundation recently passed an important milestone. A few months ago, the number of households that have participated in the Friends of the Woods program over the last five and a half years exceeded the 1,000 mark.

At present, a total of 1,046 households (from 33 states) have participated in the program since it was launched in September 2006. However, every month, there is always attrition, as some members do not renew when their 12 month participation period expires. Today, 634 households are "current" with their annual membership fee, which is just 60% of the potential participation.

So here's the message to expired Friends of the Woods. Please come back! To stress the importance of this program, even at the theoretical full participation (1,046 members times the \$50 annual fee, or \$52,300), this program would fund less than 13% of the Foundation's annual operating expenses. The Foundation clearly needs your support.

What does it mean to be a "Friends of the Woods" household? Friends of the Woods members are the

donors who are most aware of the Foundation's operations and challenges. They are the advocates and champions of the Hitchcock Woods.

To become (and remain) a member, donors must annually "designate" a \$50 gift as their membership fee. The Foundation does not automatically make every donor a member of this program ... donors must specify it each year.

Most of the membership fee helps to support the management and maintenance of the Hitchcock Woods. A portion of the annual fee makes member benefits possible.

As a member, you receive three annual newsletters, the annual report, a wall calendar featuring photographs of the Woods, event invitations and special letters, all of which are intended to keep you informed and involved. Obviously there are expenses associated with providing you with these materials and services, but these costs are an investment in your awareness, good will, and commitment.

If you visit and value the Hitchcock Woods, please do your part. Please become and remain a Friend.

Grant Funds for Hitchcock Woods Restoration

The ongoing restoration effort of the longleaf pine ecosystem in the Hitchcock Woods will accelerate, thanks to the efforts of Gary Burger, who helped direct some grant funds toward the Hitchcock Woods Foundation. Gary served as the Forest Manager of the Hitchcock Woods for 12 years, from May 1994 to March 2006. He is a Registered Forester now working with the National Wild Turkey Federation, where he has secured grants for a variety of wildlife habitat and forest restoration projects.

Through one of Gary's proposals, the National Wild Turkey Federation recently secured grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct longleaf pine restoration in South Carolina.

The NWTF and the USFWS agreed that the Hitchcock Woods would be an excellent location to accomplish true longleaf pine ecosystem restoration due to a number of factors, including the current longleaf stands in the Woods, the remnant native understory vegetation and seed bank, and the Foundation's ongoing management practices.

Subsequently, the NWTF proposed a collaborative longleaf pine restoration project with the Foundation



Grant initiatives will complement the prescribed burn program.

to provide technical assistance with its Registered Forester and Certified Wildlife Biologist, and financial assistance with grant funds up to \$25,000,

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Friends of the Woods

Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have **joined or renewed between 3/7/12 and 5/15/12**. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

BUSINESS PARTNERS

\$1,000 Level

Aiken Saddlery & Supply Inc.

\$500 Level

Banks Mill Feeds
Suzan S. McHugh, Realtor*
Stockton and Moore Luxury Rentals

\$250 Level

Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, LLP*
Hull Barrett, P.C.
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Vista Bank*

\$100 Level

Birds and Butterflies
East Coast Equine Dentistry -
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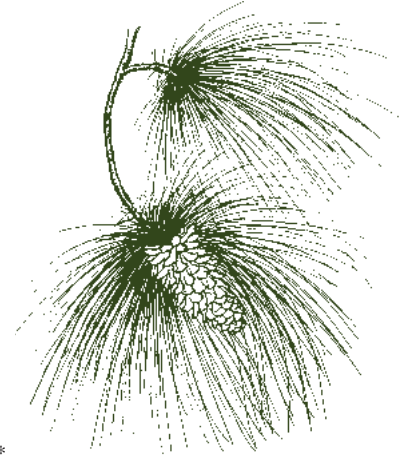
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* New Participant
Charter Partners and Friends



The Aiken Horse Show ... A Family Affair!



Pictured here are this year's winners of the Family Class. The riders are (from left to right): Nancy Wilson, Epp Wilson, MFH, Wendi Wilson Gunnell, Nelson Gunnell, Thomas Gunnell, and Mark Thompson.

Photo by Tracy Kelsey.

The 96th annual Aiken Horse Show demonstrated yet again that the show is true to its roots. Various generations of area families competed in the 42 classes, and two even placed in the same division. More families are finding themselves in the spirit of passing along Aiken's great traditions. Mrs. Hitchcock would have been proud.

Many thanks are extended to the 10 corporate sponsors, 15 family sponsors, 73 business partners, 79 silent auction donors, and 74 sponsors of the classes, course, and program.

Through positive word of mouth from previous years, the show enjoyed the participation of many talented exhibitors from across the region, making for an even more exciting and spectacular show.

Congratulations to all of the exhibitors and winners.

2012 Trail Sponsorships

Cathedral Aisle
Coker Spring Trail
Horse Show Grounds
Juac Hollow Line
Mr. Crawford's Fences
Pigeon Trap Loop
Ridge Mile Track
Whitney Drive
Willie Barton's Line

Mary Katherine Philipp
Claire Voegelé
Danny Hazel
Suzan McHugh
Crawford Anderson
Brian and Sherry Higham
Rich and Sara McNeil
Peter and Carrie Kelen
Larry and Pat Byers

Aiken Hounds Wins Big at Hound Show



Aiken Trailer was top Penn-MaryDel and Grand Champion of the Show.

Photo by Louisa Davidson.

Aiken Hounds and Huntsman Katherine Gunter had an outstanding performance of hounds and juniors at the Carolinas Hound Show in Camden on May 12.

Aiken Trailer was top Penn-MaryDel at the Show and followed
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Collective Appreciation for a Retiring Trustee



Iris W. Freeman with her dog Panda and her horse Viola

My first view of Aiken and the Hitchcock Woods was in February 1956 on a family trip northward. My only previous knowledge of Aiken was gleaned through perusing pages of *Life & Sport in Aiken*, the Harry Worchester Smith classic, which brought to life all activities in Aiken at that time, particularly those of the Hitchcock family.

Little did I know that in 1967 I would spend the winter in Aiken accompanied by my brother Adam and our good friend “Sister” Grew, an unlikely triumvirate all supportive of the Hitchcock Woods. The Woods became a great part of our daily routine, exercising polo ponies, hunters and dogs, bringing us to a deeper appreciation of the unique landscape it offered. Having been brought up in a conservation oriented family in the north, I was honored to become a trustee of the Foundation at the end of the winter. That same year, my brother Adam purchased what would become the Winthrop Polo Field and one of the early conservation purchases in Aiken.

Board meetings used to take place at tea in Mr. Seymour Knox’s house and business would be conducted mostly through his generous checkbook! Though things are more business like now, I do think Mr. Knox would be pleased that the spirit of giving to the Woods remains strong.

The Hitchcock Woods, as we all know, is an extraordinary asset to the quality of life in Aiken. I have been honored to serve on the board for many years and, though I will no longer be a trustee, I remain committed to the future of the Woods.

Essay Contest Rewards Students

Area students are invited to participate in the fifth annual Hitchcock Woods essay contest. **The winner receives a cash prize of \$500 and his or her name is engraved on a sterling silver trophy. The winner is announced at the annual Festival of the Woods held in September.**

A panel of judges reviews all entries and selects a recipient whose appreciation of the Woods is in the tradition of Célestine Eustis, who purchased land in the pine forests of Aiken more than 130 years ago. She had a passion for flora and fauna, and loved the serenity of the woods.

Célestine’s niece was Louise Eustis (Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock). She helped to ensure that her family and future generations could enjoy what we know today as the Hitchcock Woods.

Individuals may apply for themselves. Others may nominate a deserving youth. Even an entire class may apply.

Entry Rules

1. Entries are accepted until August 31, 2012
2. The candidate/s must be under 21 years of age
3. Non-winning entries from previous years may be resubmitted
4. Candidates must have contributed time to the preservation of Aiken traditions or values in support of the Hitchcock Woods
5. Candidates, or a third party wishing to nominate a candidate, must submit an essay explaining why Hitchcock Woods is important to the candidate/s and detailing the project or involvement of the candidate/s
6. Essays may be typed or hand written and may be sent with photos or artwork
7. The judge panel’s majority vote will determine the recipient of the prize

FESTIVAL of the WOODS

September 28 & 29, 2012

Now in its fourth year, the Festival of the Woods is an annual celebration of the wide range of pedestrian uses of the Hitchcock Woods. The Festival honors the history and resources of the Woods. Participants will experience the natural environment and learn about the Foundation’s management and stewardship programs.

Friday features a ticketed dinner with a guest speaker. Saturday offers free admission and features tours, exhibits, and family activities, as well as a picnic lunch available for purchase. More information will be available in August.



*A favorite of the Festival is the “tour with talk stops.”
Photo by Ginny Southworth.*

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which the Foundation will match through its own, ongoing management practices.

As longleaf pine already exists over much of the Woods, the primary need in restoring the overall ecosystem is in enhancing what is already here. After more than 25 years of prescribed burning in the Woods, it has become apparent that, in many areas, fire alone is not sufficient to control the scrub oak and other hardwoods that have firmly occupied these sites through previous years of fire suppression.

In order to effectively reduce this hardwood competition and move these areas toward full ecological restoration, the NWTF, the USFWS, and the Foundation agree that the use of properly labeled and carefully applied forestry herbicides would be most beneficial. Several contemporary herbicides have been tested and proven successful for just this type of restoration. Selective hand application

methods through the use of backpack sprayers can limit incidental impact to existing native vegetation.

In the spring of 2011, the Board approved a pilot project for Woods staff to use one of these herbicides in three one acre test plots in various locations in the Woods. These tests demonstrated successful mid-story control and already are resulting in a return of native groundcover.

Like the prescribed burning program, the Foundation's strategic timber thinning practices also have played an integral role in the overall ecological restoration of the Woods. Therefore, this restoration project will include selective timber thinning operations to complement ongoing prescribed burning, along with the enhanced use of herbicide applications. The project will begin this spring and will take several years to complete.

Aiken Driving Club Enjoys Tour

The Aiken Driving Club enjoyed a good turnout for a peaceful drive in the Hitchcock Woods on May 12, thanks to a team effort. The participation of 14 carriages was organized by Bill Allen, short and long courses were established by Ann Mitchell, and a picnic lunch after the drive was coordinated by Pixie Baxter. Hitchcock Woods staff dragged the trails and assisted with marking the courses.

It was a beautiful day for a drive in the Woods, a regular and favorite destination for the Aiken Driving Club. For more information about the history of driving in the Woods, visit the Article Library in the Learn tab at hitchcockwoods.org.



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that by being chosen Grand Champion of the Show. Trailer is an unentered hound by Red Mountain Truckstop, who was reserve champion Penn-MaryDel.

Trailer and his brother Truck won the couple of unentered hounds class as well as winning the 'stallion hound with get' class with their father. Aiken's Reddy and Erkel won the couple of entered hounds class.

In the Junior Handler ring, young Livi Johnson won the 6 and under division with Naugahyde, and her sister, Dora, won the 7-12 division with Elf, also known as Little. Brooke Miller and Caroline Wolcott won the Junior Pack Class.

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.