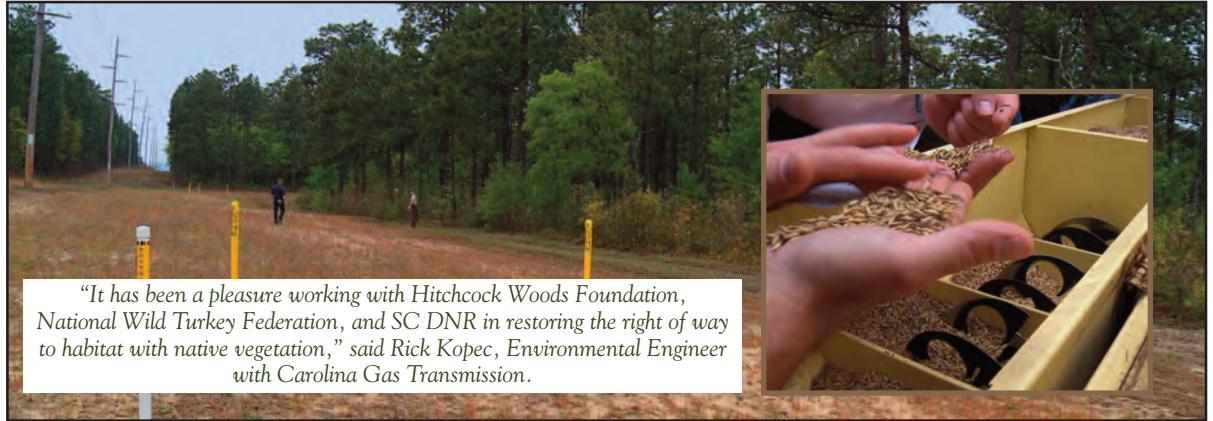


VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

The Right Direction for the Right of Way By Melanie Metts, intern, USCA



"It has been a pleasure working with Hitchcock Woods Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, and SC DNR in restoring the right of way to habitat with native vegetation," said Rick Kopec, Environmental Engineer with Carolina Gas Transmission.

Visitors to the Woods may remember last summer when the gas line was being replaced in the utility right of way on the west side of the Woods. The construction effort was a temporary inconvenience for visitors. But for Gary Burger, former Forest Manager of the Woods, it represented an opportunity for restoration. Instead of having the utility company simply reseed the disturbed soil with its customary practices, the project afforded a window to restore native groundcover within the right of way.

Gary has been assisting the Foundation in various forest restoration initiatives through a U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant he secured while recently working with the National Wild Turkey Federation. (He now is the Statewide Forester for the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.)

Funds from this grant resource, along with support from Carolina Gas Transmission and its parent company, SCANA, made it possible to turn the reseeding obligation into a groundcover habitat restoration effort.

The Foundation enjoyed the cooperative spirit and generosity of these parties, as well as the assistance of the National Wild Turkey Federation,

Roundstone Seed Company, and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

The utility seeded winter oats in the right of way last fall as a temporary measure to secure the soil for the winter. This spring, however, that vegetation was replaced. To start, Foundation staff Bennett Tucker and Eric Grande planted 2,500 wiregrass plugs. Then Roundstone Seed Company was contracted to plant a carefully selected native seed mix. "The mix of southeastern ecotype seeds included seven grasses and 15 forbs that are all native to South Carolina and to the Hitchcock Woods specifically", Gary explained.

Be patient: first year results will be modest. "The native seed mix that we planted generally does not produce a lush groundcover in the first growing season," Gary said. "By the second growing season, the native plants will have become more established and will fill in, and the flowering plants should bloom much better."

The native plant community will be beneficial in providing habitat, as well as plant and insect food, for various wildlife species, including bobwhite quail, wild turkeys, eastern cottontail rabbits, and some songbirds.

Now "that" will be a beautiful right of way.

Aiken Horse Show, Making Memories

By Melanie Metts, intern, USCA



Photo Credit: Louisa Davidson

The 97th annual Aiken Horse Show was a success on many levels, largely due to the amount of help that was so graciously given. "The volunteerism was incredible and was much appreciated" said Gail King, Show Director. "We have such an amazing team," she added. Thanks to positive word of mouth and effective outreach, this year's show experienced a record number of entries.

The silent auction saw the greatest year since its beginning in 2005. A heartfelt "Thank You!" is extended to all of the silent auction donors, and to Jane Page Thompson and auction volunteers.

Congratulations to all of the exhibitors and winners. For a list of this year's winners, please visit aikehorseshow.org.

Vol. 6, No. 3
Spring 2013

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Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have **joined or renewed between 2/23/13 and 5/9/13**. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

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\$500 Level

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Thank You, Trail Sponsors!

Trail	2013-2014 Sponsor
Cathedral Aisle	Howard and Linda Hickey
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Juac Hollow Line	Elizabeth Page Carey
Pigeon Trap Loop	Kathryn Hartnett
Ridge Mile Track	Richard and Sara McNeil
Whitney Drive	Louise Mellon
Willie Barton's Line	Larry and Pat Byers



Photo credit: Ken Perrine
This screech owl is residing, appropriately, at Owl Outlook in an owl box recently installed by Woods Superintendent Bennett Tucker and Wildlife Committee member Ron Brenneman.

Harry Shealy Elected Chairman



Dr. Harry Shealy was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation at the board's annual meeting in March. Harry has been a member of the Board since 1980 and has served in many different capacities. He first served as the Chairman from 1989 to 1993 and has served twice as the Vice Chairman. For many years he has chaired the Forestry

Committee which oversees the management of the forest restoration.

Harry studied at the University of South Carolina and in 1972 received his Ph.D. in biology with an emphasis in botany. In 1972, he accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada to do research on seed-shriveling in the wheat/rye hybrid, triticale. He came to Aiken in 1970 to teach biology labs at the University of South Carolina Aiken and in 1973 he became an Assistant Professor of Biology. He later served for ten years as the Associate Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs at USCA. In 1993 he returned to the classroom as a Professor of Biology.

Many know Harry from his educational tours of the Woods and

his longtime service to the Foundation. Harry has been active in numerous community, professional, and state organizations, a partial list of which includes:

- Chair of the USC Aiken Faculty Assembly
- Co-founder and past president of the Aiken Land Conservancy
- Chair of the Craig's Pond Scientific Advisory Committee
- Member of the SC Department of Natural Resources Heritage Trust Advisory Board as a member of the Natural Areas Committee
- Board member of the SC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy
- Member and past Chair of the Board of the Conservation Voters of South Carolina
- Appointee to the South Carolina Conservation Bank Board
- Past Governor of the USC Alumni Council and current member of the USC Alumni Academy
- Past member of the executive committees of the USC Ex Libris Society and South Caroliniana Society

Congratulations on a job well done to Randy Wolcott, who served as Chairman from March 2008 to March 2013.

Respect & Regard for a Retiring Trustee “I Love the Hitchcock Woods”

By Scott Riviere

There is timelessness about the Hitchcock Woods. You can feel it within minutes upon entering; the resonance of a whispering breeze wafting through the pines that melts your cares and worries away. Whether I have been on foot or mounted on a horse, the Hitchcock Woods has provided succor and growth experiences for me since childhood. The lure of the Woods has brought me back again and again for 50 years. Each path, trail, and jump holds a memory for me.



Scott with Miles

The stewardship of the Hitchcock Woods is serious business and it requires the active participation of individuals in many areas of service: areas such as administration, maintenance, and the preservation of its traditional uses. Great satisfaction can be had in

serving and working for something you love. It has been my privilege to serve as a Trustee of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation. The structure for the maintenance and protection of the Woods has evolved in recent years. The Foundation now has:

- a professional, creative Executive Director & Administrator
- a professional, dedicated Woods Superintendent & Woods Technician
- an office in the renovated "Green House"
- modern equipment (tractors, etc.) and a facility to house them
- a newly established endowment program

There are presently numerous opportunities for members of the Aiken community, who truly appreciate the value of this precious resource, to assist in its support. First, become a "Friend of the Woods!" Then consider attending the Festival of the Woods, the Aiken Horse Show, or participating as a volunteer in a project or program. Perhaps you have a particular talent or skill-set that would be helpful to the Trustees. Would you be willing to share that expertise on a committee or possibly at Board level? Also, an endowment program is currently in place to give individuals an opportunity to provide funds and leave bequests. This is to ensure that the Woods receives care and protection to the highest standards in the future. What an outstanding legacy that would be!

The Hitchcock Woods endures as a piece of the Aiken fabric: culturally, ecologically, and as a restorative resource. The Woods, for me, represents Aiken's vital force. It connects us. I can't imagine Aiken without the Woods. These Woods face tremendous pressures in the 21st century, and without continued thoughtful stewardship, overwhelming degradation would occur. It requires us, as a community, to be vigilant and supportive in promoting a natural and ecologically healthy state for this urban forest.

The future looks bright for the Hitchcock Woods ... and whilst proactive Trustees have put a structure in place, the vibrancy of that structure depends much upon the participation of the Aiken community for it to flourish. I realized at some point that I need the Hitchcock Woods in my life; then I realized that the Woods needs me. In fact, it needs all of us. I hope you will personally explore ways and modes to give back to the Hitchcock Woods that are appropriate for you. It has been my greatest joy.



The Hitchcock Woods is a ready resource for area Scout troops. Boy Scout Troop 146 of Aiken conducted a shakedown hike to prepare for a three night backpacking trip on the South Carolina Foothills Trail in the northwest corner of the state. The Scouts started their Hitchcock Woods hike at the Coker Spring entrance, made their way to the Show Grounds and Bluebird Hill, and then continued north to the Rabbit Valley entrance to the Woods. On the return hike, they used Pigeon Trap Loop and wound their way back to Coker Spring Road. The troop was led by Andy Duncan, John Cathey, and Danny Fishburne. The Scouts were Benjamin Duncan, Scott Kimball, Sam Johnson, Trey Seivers, Austin Fishburne, and Matthew Head. Welcome, Scouts!



Eight travel writers from across the East Coast visited Aiken in March, hosted by the City of Aiken's PRT Department. They stopped by the Hitchcock Woods one morning to experience its wonders. Upon their arrival, Doug Rabold, Executive Director, provided the journalists with a presentation on the many roles that the Hitchcock Woods plays in contributing to the community: historically, culturally, recreationally, environmentally, and economically. He then took them on a tour of the Woods. The writers witnessed firsthand all of the major uses of the Woods, seeing hikers, dog-walkers, runners, trail riders, carriage drivers, and even a demonstration by Aiken Hounds members who were jumping some world famous "Aiken fences" along Pigeon Trap Loop.

Mark Your Calendar for the Festival!



Photo credit: Ginny Southworth

Curious children learn about forest resources and natural systems from staff of Ruth Patrick Science Education Center. RPSEC is one of the many organizations that partner with the Foundation on the Festival.

Join the community in celebrating the wide range of pedestrian uses of the Hitchcock Woods. Activities feature the history and resources of the Woods, highlight the Foundation's management and stewardship efforts, and enhance the visitor experience. This year's festival will be held **September 27 and 28**. The Festival is open to the entire community, but to receive a personal invitation, please be sure that your Friends of the Woods membership is current.

Photo credit: Sara Wampole

Aiken Driving Club continued the tradition with a drive in the Woods on Saturday, May 11. Here, Walter Sirrenberg and Pixie Baxter enjoy the view.



Two New Trustees Passing the Torch By Melanie Metts, intern, USCA

Connie Young and Dana Massey were elected as trustees at the board's annual meeting in March. Both women plan to share their love of the Woods with the community.

Connie and Dana share some common experiences. They both grew up in Aiken. While life took them elsewhere for personal pursuits, Aiken drew them back home. Now they are sharing the gift of the Woods with their families and the community. For them, the Woods is a place to learn and grow. Sharing a deep respect for the Woods is a personal goal for each of these new board members.

"The Woods has been the fabric on which I have explored life: from picnics and Tea Cottage dances to climbing the greased pig and falling off," said Connie. "The Hitchcock Woods is nature's great laboratory. I feel we must continue to teach our kids and grandchildren about how to care for our most special and precious natural resource here in Aiken."

Dana grew up with the Woods as her "back yard." She recalls spending most of her weekends venturing out into the Woods to explore.

"I hope I can create awareness among locals, especially young families, that the Woods is a wonderful place for a quiet walk or a special talk with a loved one," Dana said. "I hope to encourage people to grab a map, leave the hustle of life behind, and go on an adventure in these beautiful woods that we are so blessed to have in the heart of Aiken."

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.