

VIEWS *from the* WOODS



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Spring 2015

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

(803) 642-0528
HitchcockWoods.org

The 99th Annual Aiken Horse Show

As we look back upon the Aiken Horse Show, it is truly remarkable to see all the people from the community come together for a wonderful cause. The Hitchcock Woods Foundation is so grateful for the support and donations that made the 99th Annual Aiken Horse Show possible. From the exhibitors, to the tent patrons, to the silent auction donors, to the countless volunteers, and to anyone else that gave of their time and money for a great cause that is near and dear to all of our hearts, we would like to express our thanks and gratitude.

The 99th Aiken Horse Show was a tremendous success, and as we look towards the centennial edition of the event, our hope is that the Aiken Horse Show will be an unprecedented success in 2016. For anyone who has yet to experience the magic of this event, we urge you to mark your calendars now and plan to attend the celebration. Those of you who are regular attendees, we certainly hope that you will continue your support of this historic event and join us April 1-3, 2016.

The Foundation would like to extend our congratulations to this year's winners. For a complete list of class and championship winners, please visit www.AikenHorseShow.org. For those of you who may be looking for pictures from this year's Aiken Horse Show, the following photographers have some amazing photos!

Tracy Kelsey- Equine Photography (Official Show Photographer)
www.tracykelseyphotography.com

Megan Timmerman - M. Timmerman Photography
www.mtimmermanphotography.com

"Moose" Nicholson - P&N Foto
www.pnmfoto.com



Photo courtesy of "Moose" Nicholson of P&M Foto

Cultural Resource Survey of the Hitchcock Woods

By: Carl Steen of the Diachronic Research Foundation

The Hitchcock Woods Foundation recently conducted a formal archaeological survey to record known and unknown sites, and to determine what kinds of cultural resources are present, as well as their condition. Crews began research in the Woods in January, and fieldwork consisted of excavating small "shovel tests" following compass guided transects marked by biodegradable pink tape. Landforms were prioritized by their potential to produce intact sites.

So far, forty one archaeological sites have been recorded, covering about one third of the Hitchcock Woods property. The earliest sites date to about 11,000 years ago. Native American artifacts have been found on sandy hilltops, clustered around seeps and on flat ground. Historic sites are present too. Settlers were few in the area before the introduction of the cotton gin in the 1790s, but plantation agriculture caused the local population to triple by 1830. In the 1840s, Benjamin Barton built a mill at the confluence of the streams now called Sand River and Crazy Creek. Hitchcock Woods was the site of important industrial development as well.

The South Carolina Railroad was the first in the United States and ran through the Woods along Sand River. There was also a brick factory in operation in the 1880s, and a potter making Edgefield style alkaline glazed stoneware was at work on Crazy Creek in the 19th Century.

As you can see, the cultural resources of the Hitchcock Woods are rich and varied. This story is far from complete as we hope to continue our work over the next two years.



Earthen Vessel From Pottery Site
Photo courtesy of Carl Steen

A very special "Thank You!" to our Aiken Horse Show Corporate Sponsors!

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The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published yearly in the Annual Report.

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Thank you to all of our Business Partners and Friends of the Woods for your continued support!

Changes at the Hitchcock Woods Foundation

Gail King: A Dedicated Supporter of the Hitchcock Woods

As some of you may know, the Hitchcock Woods Foundation recently had one of our longest tenured Trustees step down from the Board. Gail King served on the Board of Trustees for many years and her work has helped to not only preserve the Woods and its rich history, but she helped to shape the future of the Foundation. During Gail's tenure as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, she helped to secure multiple tracts of land for preservation as well as oversaw the restoration of the Foundation's headquarters. Perhaps most importantly, Gail directed the search for the first Executive Director of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation.

With all of her accomplishments as a trustee, it seemed appropriate to hear from some of the people who know her best, on what she means to the Foundation:

"Gail King personifies grace and absolute dedication in her work on behalf of Hitchcock Woods. Her passion for the Hitchcock Woods motivated her to always go above and beyond what was expected of her and she always accomplished whatever the task was without drawing attention to herself. Working with Gail was always fun and inspirational."

-Sandy Tucker (Former Trustee)

"For many years, Gail and a succession of Springer Spaniels with golfing names like Bunker, Birdie, Putter and Wedge, were my early morning walking companions in the Woods. Our conversation naturally centered on what was happening in our beloved forest, and Gail's knowledge, care, and concern were always evident. She will be sadly missed as a Trustee, but I know she will always be there for us when help and advice are needed."

-Courtney Conger (Secretary, Board of Trustees)

"Gail King's dedication to the Woods has been consistently evident during my time as an employee for the Foundation. She has shown herself to be extremely capable and successful in various leadership roles yet she willingly serves and performs mundane gritty tasks as well. I believe she has been the heart of this organization and will truly be missed."

-Chris Reichel (Financial Administrator for the Hitchcock Woods Foundation)

"Gail and I have served together on the Hitchcock Woods Foundation board for over thirty-five years and in that time she has served the Woods as Chair of the Board of

Trustees and Chair of both the fundraising and the horse show committees. Gail works hard at any task given to her, but she always makes it fun. To say that she will be missed is an understatement. Gail has given so much to the Foundation and to the Woods that it is almost impossible to measure her impact on the quality of life in Aiken. I am very happy that Gail has agreed to stay active with the Foundation, at least for a while as a non-trustee volunteer. Her legacy will continue."

-Harry E. Shealy, Jr. (Chairman, Board of Trustees)



Gail King on the steps of the Hitchcock Woods Office

Christine K. Rolka Named Executive Director

Christine K. Rolka was named executive director of the Hitchcock Woods Foundation in March. According to Rolka, "The opportunity to work on behalf of this precious green space that is so dear to me, my family, and to the Aiken Community is truly humbling."

An outdoor enthusiast, Christine was delighted to discover the Woods after moving to Aiken in 1991. She and her husband decided to settle in Aiken after purchasing a lot and building a home across the street from the Woods on Dibble Road. According to Rolka, "The Woods have served as my personal and family playground and sanctuary since moving to Aiken".

Rolka earned a BA degree from the State University of New York at Cortland and a Master of Arts Degree in Natural Sciences from the University of South Carolina. She worked for Aiken County Public Schools for six years as a teacher and guidance counselor, before working for fifteen years for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) - a national non-profit wildlife conservation organization. In this position, she was responsible for the development, management, and expansion of the NWTf's Museum and National Education Programs.

"I look forward to being an integral part of the Foundation's great work, and to ensuring that the stewardship and appreciation of the Woods and its heritage remain paramount and are passed along to future generations," said Rolka.

Christine, her husband Tom, and children Lance (10) and Heidi (7), and dog Scout, can usually be found enjoying the Woods and the outdoors.



Christine K. Rolka

New Faces on the the Board of Trustees

The Hitchcock Woods Foundation recently welcomed two new faces to the Board of Trustees, and we would like to take a moment and introduce them. Our newest Trustees are Sara E. McNeil and Anne B. Kiser, both of whom are longtime supporters of the Hitchcock Woods. Both Sara and Anne bring a love and passion for the Hitchcock Woods to their new roles.

Sara McNeil moved to Aiken with her husband around ten years ago. One of the major reasons for their relocation from the Boston area was the Hitchcock Woods. Sara enjoys the Woods as an equestrian and a pedestrian. As a supporter of the Woods, Sara has attended our events faithfully through the years, from the Festival of the Woods, to the Hunt Week Gala, to the Aiken Horse Show. When asked what she was looking forward to the most about being a trustee, Sara replied, "I love the Woods and consider it a great honor to be able to contribute to the organization in any way I can."



Sara E. McNeil



Anne B. Kiser

Anne Kiser joins the Hitchcock Woods Foundation Board after living in the Aiken area since 1985. Anne is a multifaceted Woods user and has attended many of our events over the years including the Festival of the Woods and the Aiken Horse Show. When asked what she's looking forward to the most about being a Trustee, Anne replied, "As a forester who is intensely passionate about the longleaf pine ecosystem and the restoration of native plant species, I look forward to being able to provide support and experience in managing this incredibly precious resource."

Please join us in welcoming our newest Trustees!

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Mark Your Calendars for the 2015 Festival of the Woods

The 2015 Festival of the Woods will take place on Friday, September 25th at the Horse Show Grounds in the Hitchcock Woods. The Festival of the Woods is an annual event to celebrate the history and natural resources of the Hitchcock Woods. We hope to see you there!



Safe Fires Promote Safe Harbors

What's Going on with the Blue Dots?

If you have visited the Northeast Memorial Gate Corridor area of the Woods recently, you may have noticed blue dots donning many of the trees. These dots indicate that this area will soon be thinned, meaning those trees with blue dots will be removed in order to thin the forest canopy.

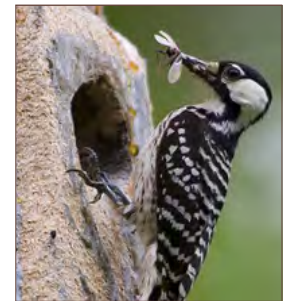
Like prescribed burning, thinning is a forest management tool that promotes forest health, enhances wildlife habitat, and is essential for restoring the Woods to its native longleaf ecosystem. Rotational thinning is part of the overall Forest Management Plan for the Woods. These management practices, along with their beautiful results, are part of the Hitchcock Woods vision "To maintain and restore the ecological integrity of the Hitchcock Woods and to serve as a model for sustainable urban forestry, balancing stewardship of forestland natural resources with compatible human uses."

Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers in the Hitchcock Woods?

The presence of cavities in older pines, are evidence that the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker once inhabited the Hitchcock Woods. In fact, they were once considered common in the Southeastern United States Longleaf Pine Ecosystem. They are the only woodpeckers that excavate nests and roost sites in living trees. Populations declined as their mature pine forest habitat changed overtime in the Woods and across their native range.

Thankfully, our efforts to restore the native longleaf pine ecosystem in the Woods has also reestablished suitable habitat for this federally endangered species. In January 2015, The Hitchcock Woods Foundation entered into a Safe Harbor Agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. A Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) is a voluntary agreement involving private or non-federal property owners whose actions contribute to the recovery of

a species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). What does this mean? It means that this endangered species can once again feasibly inhabit our Woods as a result of the forest management we are doing.



Red-Cockaded Woodpecker -
Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

For more information about our forestry practices, please visit www.HitchcockWoods.org.

Célestine Eustis Essay Contest

Area students are invited to participate in the fifth annual Hitchcock Woods essay contest. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$500 and his or her name engraved on a sterling silver trophy. The winner is announced on Friday, September 25 at the annual Festival of the Woods.

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.

For more information, entry form, and a complete list of rules, please visit http://www.HitchcockWoods.org/celestine_eustis_essay_contest

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.



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