

VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods
FOUNDATION

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Winter 2011

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Aiken Horse Show Promises Grace, Charm, and Cheer

The Aiken Horse Show is a distinctive experience that one does not easily – or want to – forget. People have been taking home lasting memories of the Aiken Horse Show since its founding in 1916 under the watchful eye of Louise Hitchcock.

The 95th annual show will take place on April 1, 2, and 3 at the Show Grounds in the Hitchcock Woods. The Hitchcock Woods Foundation and the Aiken Horse Show Committee work diligently to preserve the historic character of this community event. The class list honors tradition, but has evolved, venturing into new territory to keep things exciting and responsive to community interests.

The judge of this year's Show is Mr. Paul D. Cronin, one of the most distinguished old-school horsemen in America. Mr. Cronin was the director of the riding program and the head instructor at Sweet Briar College in Virginia for 34 years. Today, his loyal students live and compete throughout the country, including quite a few who call Aiken home ... or "home away from home."

If you haven't yet experienced the Aiken Horse Show, please join the tradition. Admission for the Hunt Breakfast on Saturday and the Luncheon on Sunday are available through the Foundation office.

Detailed information for exhibitors and spectators alike is available at AikenHorseShow.org. For questions, please call the office at (803) 642-0528.



Silent Auctions Speak Volumes About Donors

Please bring your items by the Foundation office at 444 South Boundary Avenue by March 24.

Since 2005, silent auctions have garnered nearly \$200,000 for the care of the Hitchcock Woods and its uses. So ... don't think for a moment that your once cherished but now unused item has no purpose. Give it a new appreciative home and help the Woods at the same time.

Maybe you have an item in the house, attic, or barn that could raise funds for the Hitchcock Woods Foundation. Something you simply don't need or want anymore just might be someone else's treasure. An old book, a piece of furniture, a fashion accessory, an antique, or a work of art ... all of these make popular items in a silent auction. Be creative. A weekend at a vacation home, a professional service rendered, or tickets to an event can create sparks as well.

The silent auction is always a highlight of the Aiken Horse Show. Thank you to our silent auction donors, buyers, and volunteers for "giving it up" for the Woods!

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Listed below are only the names of Business Partners and Friends of the Woods who have joined or renewed between November 12, 2010, and March 10, 2011. The complete list of all current Partners and Friends is published once a year in the Annual Report.

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* New participants from 11/12/10 to
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Visit Our Websites

hitchcockwoods.org
&
aikenhorseshow.org

Woods Walkers Enhance Traditions

By Sue Harden Hayes

When the “Daughters of the Dawn” began walking together in September of 1997, it quickly became apparent that they had found the perfect blend of exercise, rhythm with nature, and “girl gab.” (An observer remarked, “Not only are they out there at dawn, they’re laughing!”) Trash pick-up and “first responder” duties were added in, and it soon became apparent that stewardship, appreciation, and support of our treasured pathways in Hitchcock Woods were a big part of this equation.

In lieu of Christmas gifts that year, the “early light brigade” had a breakfast after the walk and pooled their annual Hitchcock Woods Foundation donations in a spirit of “thanks” for the organization’s service. Others wanted to participate as well – Coker Spring vicinity neighbors, other Woods walkers and neighbors, riders, and just plain supporters.

The occasion has outgrown a private home and into the Crawford barn at Calico Corner and has generated some \$5,000 per year for the Foundation. Now it is termed the “Word of Mouth Breakfast.” (When you somehow get the “word” about a “nine-o’clockish,” early December, Saturday morning date, you’re invited.)

Just come, bring a dish to share, enjoy the food and fellowship, and slip your sealed donation envelope into the Hitchcock Woods Foundation basket. If you can’t attend, you could earmark your donation in honor of “The Daughters” and their efforts to help maintain and protect this unique environment.



Photo: Ginny Southworth



The Historic Aiken Foundation Bestows Honor

At a ceremony on January 30, The Historic Aiken Foundation recognized the “Hitchcock Woods Foundation Board, Staff, and Donors” with a Stewardship Award for the protection and care of the Hitchcock Woods. The breadth of the awardees acknowledges the community effort needed for sustaining and maintaining the Hitchcock Woods.

“In the conviction that a city’s virtues are reflected in the preservation of its historic assets,” the award reads, “The Historic Aiken Foundation has established an award to honor individuals and entities for outstanding preservation and promotion of one of Aiken’s key historic properties.”

This historic distinction is an honor shared by all of those who actively participate in this collective purpose.



Avoid a *Run-In* With Our Two-Footed, Four-Pawed, and Four-Hoofed Friends

Part of a series highlighting specific Visitor Guidelines

Below are some of the Foundation’s guidelines for runners visiting the Woods. All guidelines for runners, as well as for other visitors who enjoy the Woods, appear on the Foundation’s website, hitchcockwoods.org.

1. **When encountering pedestrians, pedestrians with dogs, or pedestrians with children, be courteous and slow to a walk or stop.** (Dogs might chase a runner.)
2. Runners are responsible for awareness of prohibited activities and uses in the Woods.
3. Stay on the trails at all times to protect the fragile soils, the vegetation, and the wildlife.
4. Runners need to be aware of the noise they make and its effect on a horse’s behavior.
5. When encountering a horse and rider or carriage from the front, slow to a walk, stop if necessary. Ask if it is safe to pass and move away quietly and slowly.
6. When encountering a horse and rider or carriage from behind, speak to the rider as you approach to make your presence known. Ask the rider when it is safe to proceed. Move away quietly and slowly.
7. Do not touch the horses unless invited to do so.
8. Stand in a visible place and do not hide off the trail.
9. Groups of 14 or more must register with the Hitchcock Woods Foundation office prior to a scheduled event.
10. Large groups of runners pose more of a disturbance to horses, so spread out on the trail into groups no larger than two to three runners.

Watch the Progress

Pardon the Inconvenience of Trail Closures

This spring, a contractor of the City of Aiken will be working on Foundation property to relocate a sanitary sewer line that passes through the Hitchcock Woods. The buried line currently runs under Sand River at the end of Coker Spring Trail. A series of very heavy rains last summer resulted in a major washout of this area, exposing the sewer line and eroding the opposing banks of Sand River.

The City installed a long I-beam across Sand River to brace the exposed pipe while it worked on a plan and sought bids to relocate and fortify the sanitary sewer line. It will be moved to an upstream location away from trail crossings. The Foundation has kept the troubled crossing closed until the relocation project can be accomplished.

Please be aware that at least portions of Devil's Backbone and Pete Bostwick Trail will be closed to the public when the contractor initiates the project in mid April. The duration of the project will be determined partly by weather conditions.

Thank you for your steady patience as the effort to correct this problem continues.



In downtown Aiken, sloping "bioswales" planted with turf grass and contoured rain gardens planted with flood tolerant plants have been installed in select parkways along Park Avenue and Chesterfield Street. These features collect rainfall and allow the water to percolate into the soil, replenishing the groundwater.

This reduces stormwater runoff and helps to abate some of the associated problems. Rain gardens can lend aesthetic interest for nearby homes and businesses, as shown here by the rain garden in the Chesterfield Street parkway. In the foreground are juncus and switchgrass, planted and ready for the growing season.

Groundbreaking for Woods Maintenance Complex

In February, the Foundation broke ground for construction of the Woods Maintenance Complex, a major capital initiative that began in 2006 and is nearing completion. Another \$23,000 remains to be raised to cover the total cost of the complex.

An enclosed metal building measuring 40 feet by 62 feet will be erected near the three existing maintenance structures at the South Boundary entrance to the Woods. Three bays will house the Foundation's newly acquired maintenance vehicles and equipment. Watch for the next newsletter for an update on the completed project.



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.