

# VIEWS *from the* WOODS

Hitchcock Woods  
FOUNDATION

## Aiken Horse Show Assures Excitement for All By Melanie Metts, intern, USCA



Photo Credit: Tom Bossard



The 97th annual Aiken Horse Show promises to be a treat for both regulars and newcomers. The AHS Committee is working hard to make the show fresh and exciting while still holding on to the traditional aspects of the show. Changes have been made to the Aiken Horse Show's prize list to encourage more exhibitors to participate, including:

- The three Foxhunter Divisions will require the rider and horse to have participated in only four hunts rather than six hunts as in previous years. This will encourage more riders to show and increase the numbers in each class.
- There will be a \$500 Aiken Horse Show Junior Hunter Stakes and a \$500 Aiken Horse Show Junior Foxhunter Stakes this year. In past years, the Junior Horse / Pony Hunter and the Junior Foxhunter divisions would compete against one another in the Stakes Class. Now junior riders can compete against only those in their division for the stakes.
- Historically the top four competitors in both the Under Saddle and Over Fences classes would compete in the Stakes Classes. Now only the top six riders in the Over Fences classes will be invited to compete in the Stakes Classes.
- There also will be a Best Turned Out Junior Foxhunter awarded in this year's show.

The 2013 Aiken Horse Show recognizes the late Mrs. Elizabeth "Sister" Bird as well as the late Mr. Stephen Groat as Honorary Chairmen. "Sister Bird was a longtime supporter of the Aiken Horse Show as well as the Hitchcock Woods Foundation," said Gail King, Show Director of the Aiken Horse Show. "She was a woman of immense charm and style. She loved everything about Aiken, especially the Woods."

While attending Aiken Prep School, Stephen Groat rode in the Aiken Horse Show. He also served as a Master of the Aiken Hounds. His support of the Foundation was greatly appreciated.

The judge for the 2013 Aiken Horse Show is Claudia Rohland of Atlanta. Claudia was highly recommended by last year's judge, Susie Schoellkopf. Matt Collins will be the Competition Director and the Sidesaddle Judge for the show. Randy Wolcott, Chairman of the Board, said that "Matt is a very knowledgeable and experienced judge who has great ideas for the course this year."

Lunch will be held on Saturday as opposed to a Hunt Breakfast. For admission information, please contact the Foundation office at (803) 642-0528. For detailed information about the Aiken Horse Show please visit [AikenHorseShow.org](http://AikenHorseShow.org).

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A group of enthusiastic walkers from Mount Anna Baptist Church set out on their first adventure through the Hitchcock Woods.

# Respect & Regard for Retiring Trustee

By Ginny Goodyear

This is about and for my Mom, Patty Goodyear. Thanks, Mom, for all you've given us. Today I want to focus on the love of the



Patricia Goodyear

Hitchcock Woods that you inspired and instilled within me – a love that has stayed with me throughout my life and provided me with what I consider a wonderful, sacred place. This love was instilled long ago, from the earliest times that I can remember. You would take me, sometimes accompanied by another sibling, on these wonderful adventures in the Woods. I remember I would be sitting next to you on the seat of a yellow carriage, behind a paint pony named Dandy. A warm blanket and a sure hand on the rein were the ingredients for what would always prove to be an exhilarating outing. It was

always fun to be taken for a carriage ride in the Woods but the times when we followed the Aiken Drag were the times when the fun really began. What would always prove to be a whirlwind experience was never complete without a rendition of “over the river and through the Woods, trot fast my dapple grey, spring over the ground like a hunting hound for this is Thanksgiving Day!”

From those early days of carriage rides we transitioned to riding lessons with Mr. Newman, then the little and big rides with the Aiken Prep School boys. Mom would patiently watch all of my lessons and speak on my behalf about my reticence in going out in the Woods – where the wild dogs lived! (Yes, there were truly packs of wild dogs during those days!) Then there were the wonderful Aiken Drag Hunts, as they were called back then. She would take us early every Saturday morning to Mr. Newman's stable where our horses would be saddled and ready to go. Upon our return there she would be patiently waiting. Not only was she there to watch the riding lessons and get us to and from the stable for the drag hunts, but having inspired her children to ride she now had to take us to shows where she would sit for hours while she waited for our classes to be over. At least the Aiken Horse Show was within close proximity to our home – so one show, and the best show, did not involve too much of a sacrifice! The riding lessons, where we were often taken out in the Woods, and the drags provided an opportunity for me to gain a familiarity with the Woods.

Over the years the riding slipped away and was replaced for me with runs in the Woods. The Woods are a very special place where one can escape the everyday trials of life, a place where often the only noise you hear is the hush of the pines, and visually there is always something different – the fox squirrels at the Show Grounds, the variety of wild flowers springing forth at different times of the year, the occasional fox, deer, snake, or coyote, the scent of the seasons, all provide me with a sense of nostalgia and peace – a peace that for me cannot be found anywhere else. I feel so fortunate to have such a spot which provides such solace and beauty. It is truly my sanctuary, and I thank you for that, Mom.

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## New Trail Map in the Works

By Melanie Metts, intern, USCA

In efforts to make the map of the Woods as accurate and current as possible, the Foundation has contracted Phillip Miller and Scott Rhodes of Forest Management Services in Barnwell to use global positioning system (GPS) technology to collect location data throughout the Woods. This will help the Foundation in creating a more complete, more precise trail map.

In early February, Phillip and Scott began gathering GPS data points on over 70 miles of trails. By using GPS hardware and software, and gathering the information on horseback, their effort will provide highly accurate positioning data. These points will map out all of the trails and features on the current map and those not currently represented.

The Foundation has been pursuing funds for this initiative since 2007. However, over the same timeframe, the Foundation has focused its efforts on raising funds to restore the “Green House,” to acquire a new maintenance fleet, to construct the Woods Maintenance Facility, and to purchase additional land. “Now, with these capital initiatives completed and paid for, the Foundation is in a better position to focus on elevating its management and stewardship practices,” said Doug Rabold, Executive Director.

The GPS “points, lines, and polygons” also will be used in developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) that will serve as a management tool for the board and staff to visualize and assess data in order to make better informed decisions.

Eventually, the Foundation also will work on developing applications to enhance the visitor experience. “This technology can be used in many creative ways to facilitate navigation and to learn about the history and natural resources of the Woods,” Doug said. “Cherie Moritz, a resident of Aiken and an expert in GIS technology, has offered to assist the Foundation in exploring these ideas in the near future.”

## Success of Silent Auction Is No Secret

Since 2005, silent auctions have garnered over \$270,000 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 any more just might be someone else's treasure.

Largely due to the tireless work of Jane Page Thompson, the silent auction is always a highlight of the Aiken Horse Show. Please bring your items by the Foundation office at 444 South Boundary Avenue by March 29.

## What Is Best Turned Out?

By Nancy Francis, Trustee

“Turnout” is a word used for appropriate attire for the rider and his horse. Each equine discipline has its own tradition. This tradition arises from the needs of the rider and his horse and the terrain and conditions that they might encounter. This is true for the Fox Hunter. The rider must be clean and neat with polished tall boots and spurs, breeches of appropriate color, hunt coat, gloves, stock tie with pin to hold it in place, and a hard hat with chin strap. The horse must be in good condition with a gloss on his coat. The plain brown bridle must be clean and conditioned with a polished bit. The brown jumping saddle and girth also must be clean and conditioned with a shine on the stirrups. The saddle pad must be clean and shaped to the saddle. We must honor our horses and the hunts we hunt with and do our best to keep the tradition for generations to come.

# Two Step Process Speeds Restoration

By *Melanie Metts, intern, USCA*

January 21 marked a milestone in the Foundation's longleaf pine restoration program. As a follow up to the selective herbicide treatment conducted last June, 66 of the 170 treated acres were burned in an effort to restore native ground cover.

The Hitchcock Woods has adopted a two-step process that will reduce the amount of hardwoods in the forest more efficiently. For over 25 years, The Foundation has been using prescribed burning as a means to control the growth of hardwoods in the uplands that compete with the native herbaceous species of the Woods. Now, the pilot application of selective herbicides is being used to help in the maintenance of the Woods. The native herbaceous ground cover of the longleaf pine ecosystem will now be able to grow back without much competition from hardwoods.

Woods Superintendent Bennett Tucker notes a great improvement where the herbicides were applied last spring. He says that this program is likely to provide "20 or more years of restoration in three to five years' time." This treatment has begun to halt the growth of some species of hardwoods. Bennett refers to the herbicide treatment of the Woods as "another tool in the toolbox." The Foundation's prescribed burning program is working hand in hand with herbicide treatments to reduce the understory that tends to crowd out native ground cover.

The first dormant season burn of the year was conducted from Hastings Line to the intersection of High Point Line and Whitney Drive. The plan for the growing season is to burn the two adjacent areas that also were treated with herbicides. From now on into the future, these areas should only need to be burned for maintenance purposes every two to three years.

The effort for this restoration project has been funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has been managed by grant recipient the National Wild Turkey Federation for the restoration of the

longleaf pine ecosystem in South Carolina. Bennett says this project will help get the upper hand against the hardwoods and expedite the longleaf pine restoration.



*Burn Crew assistants Alan Willing and Josh Parry use drip torches to ignite the prescribed burn.*



*Woods Superintendent Bennett Tucker uses a mini pump to extinguish a pine tree set aflame by the prescribed burn.*

## New Staff Member - Eric J. Grande



*Eric Grande*

Please join us in welcoming Eric Grande, who was hired in February to fill the vacated position of Woods Technician. Eric will assist Bennett Tucker in the day to day stewardship of the Woods.

Eric is a graduate of the University of South Carolina Aiken where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology with a minor in geology. Eric's educational background is well suited for the position, including courses in environmental earth science, ecology, botany, animal behavior,

and conservation. He comes with very positive work and academic references, as well as a lifelong familiarity with Aiken.

An avid outdoorsman, Eric said, "I wanted a job where I can utilize my biology education while also gaining work experience in the field." Welcome, Eric!

### 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.