

the CONSERVATION Chronicle

Newsletter of the Aiken Land Conservancy

JANUARY, 2009

The Aiken Land Conservancy: Land Conservation Comes of Age in Aiken County

by Sarah Eakin and Stephen Hale

Although the Aiken County Open Land Trust had amassed over 1,200 acres of protected land in Aiken County over the past 18 years, the time had come for a broader new understanding of the organization and its important mission. With the public announcement of a new name, a new logo and a new slogan this August, the organization enjoyed a rebirth under the title of Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC).

In the planning stages, ACOLT Executive Director Dacre Stoker held several think-tank meetings with public relations consultants Sarah Eakin and Stephen Hale of Eakin-Hale Publicists. As a result of these highly productive sessions involving board members and supporters, the renamed Aiken Land Conservancy revealed its new look to community leaders and the media at roll-out events held in October at The Willcox.

The launch of the land conservancy was combined with the unveiling of the tag line, "Preserving Aiken's Natural Heritage," and a new logo to represent the organization's broad new role in conserving wetlands, watersheds, farmland, forests and open spaces. ALC also has a new web site: www.conserveAiken.org

At the same event the newly named organization installed a new President, Paul Rideout of Security Federal Bank, who took over the reins from USC Aiken professor Harry Shealy following his six years of service. Shealy was the group's third president, following local conservationists and benefactors to the land trust, Iris Freeman and Lee Dane.

"I want to thank Lee and Iris for the foundation they built before I took over," said Shealy. "Paul has been a resident of Aiken for

many years and is quite an outdoorsman. Only the other day he was telling me about his kayaking..."

Rideout said he was thrilled to take up the mantle of a cause so close to his heart. "I was lucky enough to be born and raised in Aiken," said Rideout. "And I am happy to be back. I am pleased to be here and to be a part of this [ALC]."



Iris Freeman, founding president of ACOLT in 1991, and her successor Lee Dane, marked the re-launch of the group by signing documentation concerning conservation easements on their own extraordinary properties.

Ron Monahan, Mrs. Freeman's partner in The Ridge at Chukker Creek—an impressive and very "green" new housing development south of Aiken—announced that a recently preserved 60-plus acres has been named the Freeman Preserve after Iris and her husband, Hall of Fame thoroughbred trainer Mike Freeman.

Lee Dane signed a letter of intent to place a conservation easement on 300 acres of her Ridge Spring area farm that includes several streams and the North Fork of the Edisto River where huge "Civil War" hardwoods near the water will in her words "be preserved for as long as they can stand."

Stoker also read a letter from Scott Riviere stating that Mrs. Freeman's influence led him to establishing an easement on his 17 prime acres along Grace Avenue in the heart of Aiken's horse district. Furthermore, Brian Sanders, recently promoted to deputy County Manager, announced the placement of conservation easements on significant portions of the Langley

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Executive Director's Report

Dacre Stoker



I feel it is important to start off the new year by bringing to your attention two recent reports whose findings are very important to all Aiken County citizens.

The first is entitled Economic Impact of the Aiken Equestrian Industry: A study by Dr. S. Porca and Dr. J.R. Byington of USCA for the Aiken Chamber of Commerce. With respect to the equestrian industry, the study utilized the data obtained from two different surveys and answered questions regarding the scope of the equestrian industry and its economic impact on Aiken County. The \$50.16 million in direct annual gross receipts leads to an additional \$11.76 million in indirect effects and \$9.89 million in induced effects for a total of \$71.82 million in annual gross receipts attributed to the equine industry in Aiken County. In total, 1,814 jobs in Aiken County can be attributed to the operations of the equestrian industry.

The Chamber of Commerce study reported that: "The equestrian industry of Aiken provides many economic and cultural benefits to the people who live here. Aiken's equine industry presents itself in many different ways starting from local business development to veterinarians, farriers, dentists, boarders, and other businesses closely related to horses. Nurturing the equestrian industry of Aiken should be the long-term goal. Industries such as tourism, accounting, marketing, and many others are impacted by continued growth of the Aiken equestrian industry."

The second is a study prepared by Miley, Gallo and Associates for the Palmetto Agribusiness Council. This study reveals that the agribusiness of agriculture and forestry in South Carolina is one of the largest economic clusters and major economic engines in the state. Together, agriculture and forestry have a direct and indirect economic impact of \$33.9 billion a year. Agribusiness provides almost 200,000 jobs in the state.

Having read both of these reports, in my opinion the only thing missing in telling the complete story of the effects of the equine and agribusiness industries in Aiken County is how land use and land conservation fit in to the big picture. Now that we have been able to quantify the economics of the equine industry in Aiken County and agribusiness in our state, don't you think it is time that we stand up, take notice and get involved in protecting the lands that are responsible for sustaining these industries? Without adequate lands, these businesses will not prosper, and our quality of life will suffer.

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Aiken Land Conservancy

Preserving Aiken's natural heritage

The mission of the
Aiken Land Conservancy is to
preserve natural and historic resources
through land conservation.

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www.ConserveAiken.org

the Lands of ALC:
THE PARKMAN RESERVE

by Lee Dane

In 1991, ALC received its first land donation, from Mr. J.P. Parkman. That first donation, in the Creekside development, consisted of two parcels, one of 12 acres, one of just over 27 acres, for a 40 acre total. Mr. J.P. had hunted the land years ago, and liked it so much that he bought it. He had two incentives for donating the land. First, much of it was either wet or steep, and thus difficult and expensive to develop. Then, he said firmly that he was never going to pay the IRS as much tax as he had the year before; the donation would help to reduce what he sent to the government. The tax deduction was a large incentive in this case.

Who won? Everyone. Mr. J.P. got his tax deduction. And the Land Trust got two truly wonderful pieces of land. The 12-acre parcel stars wild azaleas and kalmia under the tall pines and hardwoods. The 28-acre parcel offers many interesting wild flowers, including a couple of wild orchid species, and, like the first piece, is well worth a visit in the spring, or any sunny afternoon. Fall color can be spectacular, too.



This was only the first of several donations by Mr. J.P. The following year Mr. J.P. donated six lots along the border of the 12-acre parcel, giving the Land Trust dedicated access. In 1993, another three lots adjacent to the 12-acre parcel were donated. These 9 lots ensured that the stream and wetland below would be permanently protected from runoff and siltation.

In 1994, Mr. J.P. made a last gift to the Land Trust before his death. This 27 acres joined the original 28 acre gift, running from the big hardwoods on the southwest border of the original reserve to the center of Town Creek. It rolls across gently hilly land to a large beaver pond that controls the wetland below. It is more open than the original tract, holds differing plants and birds, and has been an excellent example of succession as it grows up to climax vegetation.



Mr. J.P. was a character who told wonderful tales of growing up in Edgefield County, hunting the fields, watching the trains go by, of his determination to be more than a farmer (which he certainly became), and of his wife, "the Queen Bee." When told by a board member that he was a "charmin' man", he replied "You OK, too, for a Yankee!" Quite a man, and the Land Trust is grateful to this day for his foresight and generosity. 🌿

Don't let this be your **LAST** Land Trust newsletter!

Renew your membership TODAY!

Not sure if your membership is up to date?
Check on the "Members" page of the ALC website (www.ConserveAiken.org)
for a list of 2009 members.

ALC Receives a Holiday Gift of Land

ALC Board member John Pickett and Carol Jantzen presented the Conservancy with an unexpected but very welcomed gift this past December. As they have done in the past, John and Carol donated two parcels of land just in time for the holidays. Located in the Creekside subdivision on the south side of Aiken, these two lots, 0.44 acre and 0.51 acre, respectively, will add to the ALC's holdings that connect the Lyman Preserve and the Parkman Reserve (see page 3). These two small but critical lots improve the connection to the Parkman Reserve, the Lyman Preserve, and to land on which John and Carol have previously placed a conservation easement. These large tracts include several ponds, creeks with wild azaleas, kalmia, and large hardwoods, a large open meadow, and mixed hardwood uplands. As illustrated in the aerial photograph to the right, all of these lands together form a sizeable area available for pedestrian and equine pursuits. These donations highlight the effect of combining different methods of land conservation, such as outright donations and conservation easements. What results is a large connected tract protected forever from intense commercial and urban development. ALC thanks Carol Jantzen, John Pickett, and all of our land donors for helping to preserve Aiken's special places for everyone to enjoy. 🌿



Aerial photo showing lands protected by ALC. Areas in green are the 90-acre Parkman Reserve, donated to ALC in the 1990's. The Jantzen-Pickett Preserve includes the two larger areas in yellow, protected by a conservation easement, plus four small lots in the Creekside subdivision that have been donated to ALC. The 90-acre Lyman Preserve, in pink, is also protected by a conservation easement.

The New ALC

(continued from page 1)

**“IN THE END,
WE WILL CONSERVE
ONLY WHAT WE LOVE;
WE WILL LOVE ONLY
WHAT WE UNDERSTAND;
AND WE WILL
UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT
WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT.”**

Baba Dioum

Pond site and the former Savannah River Site recreation area.

“We all prize the beauty of our area and working together we can slow the growth of urban sprawl and preserve many of our natural treasures for our grandchildren and theirs,” said Stoker.

“We all instinctively understand the intrinsic value of keeping the natural world the way it was created, but protecting land also makes good economic sense. New tax laws allow landowners to defer taxes for up to fifteen years and the value of adjacent land is greatly enhanced when a conservation easement is applied to a property – just think of the value of property around Hitchcock Woods!”

Stoker urged anyone who has an interest in preserving their land, or helping others to save our natural heritage, to contact the ALC by calling (803) 649-7139, or sending an e-mail to mail@conserveAiken.org. 🌿

President's Message

Paul Rideout

A recent trip out of state reminded me how the thoughtful preservation of natural resources and careful land planning can create and preserve the beauty of a city, such as Aiken has done. The city I visited was nice, but not near as charming as Aiken. I enjoyed returning home.

As we move into 2009, the ALC is finalizing its strategic planning process.

One key objective will be, over the next five years, to identify and secure the protection of 1,000 new acres of agricultural, forest, wetlands, and historic and natural areas through conservation easements, fee interests, or land donations.

Our organization has been identifying specific geographical areas of Aiken County in which we will



target our conservation efforts. With the vast potential that exists, we feel this will help maximize our success. We will be working with City and County planning departments to help identify parcels, with owners of significant conservation properties, various conservation groups, and other landowners who can help us achieve our goal of preserving Aiken's natural heritage.

We hope we will be working with you. We need the support of your time, your knowledge, and your financial donations if we are all going to be successful preserving Aiken's beauty. Get in touch with us to see how you can help, and get outdoors to enjoy Aiken's natural resources. 

Don't Miss it! **Mark Your Calendars for the 2009 ALC Annual Meeting**

The 2009 ALC Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 8, from 3-5 PM at The Willcox. Join us to hear about the latest Conservancy activities, including the recent re-branding of the organization, strategic planning efforts, and plans for the coming year.

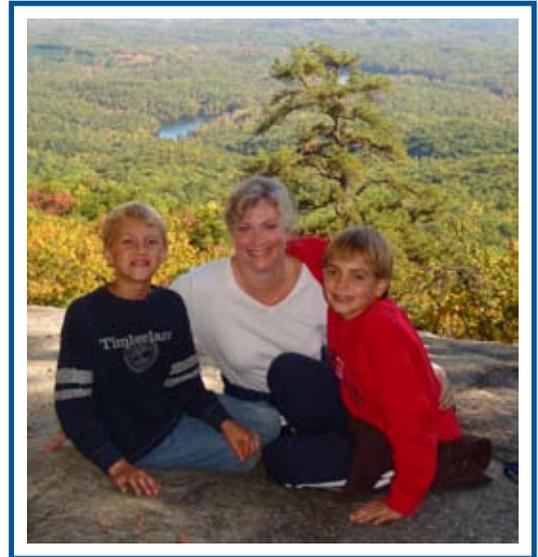
Our guest speaker for this year's meeting will be Mr. Charles G. Lane, from Charleston, SC. Mr. Lane, a 2008 Field and Stream Heroes of Conservation finalist, helped form the ACE Basin Task Force in 1989, originally hoping to protect 90,000 acres surrounding the Ashpoo, Combahee, and Edisto River estuaries. The group has preserved 172,000 acres that were under the threat of development, and now has set a goal of saving 250,000 acres. Until recently, Mr. Lane served as Chairman of The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board. This Board, established during the 2002 South Carolina legislative session as an independent state agency, distributes funding to historical, cultural, and environmental projects. As Chairman, Mr. Lane was responsible for hiring staff and establishing operating procedures and grant guidelines. Mr. Lane has also served on a variety of boards, including The Bank of South Carolina, The South Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League. Mr. Lane recently completed work on the governor's Quality of Life Task Force, which made sixty-two recommendations to the governor to improve environmental quality in South Carolina. Mr. Lane received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Clemson University in 1977. In 1998, he was awarded the distinguished alumni award.

The 2009 annual meeting will also host the First Annual ALC Silent Auction. Be sure you don't miss the opportunity to bid on a variety of items and services as varied as bales of pine straw, a signed, framed art print of conserved ALC land, fly fishing lessons, a weekend at a North Carolina mountain house, and much more! 

ALC Welcomes New Board Members

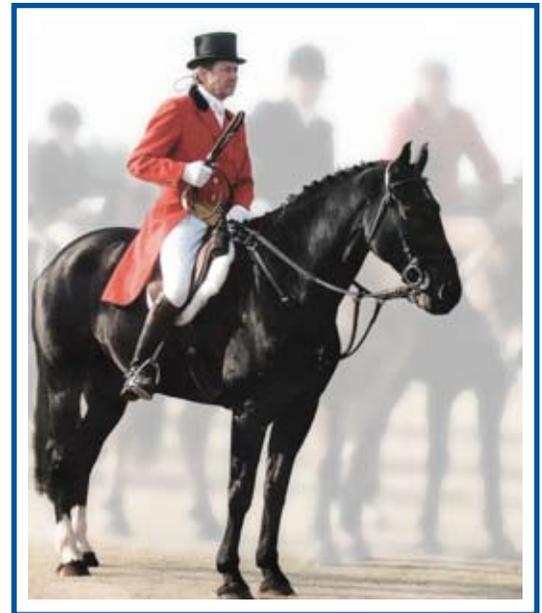
As we ring in the new year, the Conservancy welcomes two new members to the Board of Trustees: Janet Wertz and Linzee Whittaker.

Janet Wertz has a B.S. in Business from Wake Forest University and worked as a financial analyst for Westinghouse Savannah River Company on the SRS from 1989-1997, retiring when she had her first child. She began volunteering as a treasurer for the SRS United Way Campaign, is a former member of the Aiken Junior Woman's Club, and has worked for many years with Hitchcock Healthcare and their community auction, serving as auction chair for two years. Her children attend Mead Hall Episcopal School, where Janet serves on the Board of Trustees as past treasurer and current vice-chair. Janet states that enjoying the outdoors with her family "really illustrates why I'm interested in working with ALC — to preserve what we have for our future generations. And to make available places to be enjoyed now by everyone."



Janet and her sons Will and Eric after hiking to the summit at Table Rock last October.

Linzee Whittaker lived in Long Island and Westchester County, New York, prior to retiring and moving to Aiken with his wife, Lena, in 2003. An avid foxhunter, Linzee moved to Aiken because there are still many good places in this area to ride and hunt, activities that were becoming increasingly difficult and expensive in New York. Having heard about the "horse friendly" nature of Aiken, he and Lena came down for hunt week in 2003, and by June of that year they had moved to town. Linzee is a member of several local hunt clubs, including the Whiskey Road Foxhounds, the Aiken Hounds, and the Flat Branch Foxhounds. Since coming to Aiken he has been instrumental in securing permission with local landowners for various hunt clubs to foxhunt on their lands. Linzee is joining the ALC Board because he "doesn't want to see Aiken go the way of Long Island and Westchester County."



Linzee's love of foxhunting and equestrian pursuits drew him to Aiken.

We also extend a big "Thank You" to out-going Board member Dan Connelly. Dan has served on the ALC Board of Trustees since 1993. As a member of the ALC Stewardship Committee, Dan has also been active with the Conservancy's efforts to provide annual surveillance of lands upon which ALC holds conservation easements. 

**Want to use your credit card to renew your ALC membership
or make a donation?
Check out the "Members" page of the ALC web site (www.conserveAiken.org)
to make secure on-line payments via PayPal.**

Executive Director's Report

(continued from page 2)

Even people who may not ride a horse or attend an equine event benefit from the land use associated with this industry. Large tracts of land are required to exercise and train horses, for grazing, to grow crops, and to hold competitive events. These same tracts of land provide habitat for wildlife and many plant species, they serve to recycle our air as they act as carbon filters, they purify and recharge our ground water, thus ensuring clean and safe drinking water. As global climate change affects our environment, we need as many natural areas as possible to act as buffers for the harsh conditions ahead. Protected open spaces, simply put, are also welcome visual amenities to the communities we live in; just their presence means less ingress and egress of traffic, resulting in less stressful driving and more scenic vistas.

We at ALC feel strongly that more people should get involved in supporting land conservation. We have embarked on a five-year strategic plan to identify lands, determine conservation strategies, and establish internal policies and procedures to ensure that ALC can provide the necessary tools to assist landowners in their conservation efforts. We continue to educate as many people as possible in Aiken County about the merits of utilizing conservation in their land and estate planning, with the hope that landowners will recognize the economic value as well as the peace of mind that comes with placing permanent conservation easements on their land.

Additionally, we plan to position ourselves to educate and encourage city, county, and state officials to legislate in favor of conservation whenever possible.

To be most effective, we need the involvement of many more people than currently support the ALC. I encourage anyone reading this column, specifically those of you who enjoy equine activity and those who benefit from it in any way, to join us, and also to donate generously, so we can continue to work for you. 

CONSERVATION CREDITS ARE NOT JUST FOR LANDOWNERS

You do not have to be a landowner to enjoy tax savings from conservation tax credits. You can buy the credits at a discount and save money while helping landowners conserve South Carolina's farmland, forests, coastlines, and recreational areas. SC is one of only four states in the country that allow the trading of conservation tax credits. Transferability of the credits helps landowners with low tax liabilities and out-of-state landowners make conservation gifts.

The credits typically sell at 75-80% of their value. The discount means credit buyers earn 20-25% while investing in South Carolina's future.

How does it work? In South Carolina, you pay 7% state tax on your taxable income, through withholdings from your paycheck or quarterly estimated payments. On April 15 you file your state tax return and either pay a balance due or receive a refund. Instead, you can use conservation credits to pay your state taxes or to receive a refund on taxes already paid. For example, you contact the Exchange and offer 80 cents on the dollar for \$20,000 in credits. It matches your offer with a conservation landowner and submits the transfer to the SC Department of Revenue. When the transfer is approved, you pay the landowner \$16,000 and claim \$20,000 in credits on your state tax return. You may carryover any unused credits to future years.

Typically, the credits are suitable for SC taxpayers and businesses generating \$100,000 or more in annual taxable income, and taxpayers with taxable events such as the sale of a business or investments. Selling credits at a discount makes sense for landowners who have a large number of credits relative to their income. For example, a landowner who has earned \$200,000 in credits, but owes only \$5,000 a year in state taxes would wait 40 years to use all of the credits.

Learn more about credits at the South Carolina Conservation Credit Exchange web site: www.conserveSC.com, or call the Exchange at 704-975-3016.

Conservation consultant Robin Underwood, CFA, CFP® operates the Exchange in association with the Palmetto Conservation Foundation. Sellers pay Exchange fees out of the proceeds of the sale. The fees support the operation of the Exchange and future conservation efforts in South Carolina. Neither land trusts nor the Exchange offer tax advice. Credit buyers and sellers must rely on their own advisors to determine if conservation tax incentives are appropriate for them. 

**“UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU
CARES A WHOLE AWFUL LOT,
NOTHING IS GOING TO GET
BETTER. IT'S NOT.”**

Dr. Seuss' The Lorax

New and Current Members of the Aiken Land Conservancy

Listed below are members who have joined or renewed their memberships from October 1, 2008 through January 6, 2009.

FRIEND (\$35) LEVEL

Ms. Elizabeth Baumann
Ms. Pixie Baxter
Mr. Thomas Coleman
Mr. David Collie
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Combier
Mrs. Ford Conger
Mr. Charles Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Doremus
Ms. Melba Fair
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Glassman
Mr. Bryan Haltermann
Mr. and Mrs. James Hammond
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Harkins
Mr. and Mrs. David Hayes
Ms. Laura Holley
Mr. and Mrs. Delano Knight
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Leader
Ms. Helen Marine
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Newburn
Mr. Doug Rabold
Ms. Carol Ryder
Dr. and Mrs. Joe Spencer
Ms. Evelyn Vought
Dr. George Wicks
Ms. Julie Zapapas


FAMILY (\$50) LEVEL

Mr. and Mrs. Kiempe Andringa
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Botsch
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Connelly
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Eberhard
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Geddes
Rev. and Mrs. Robert Hibbard
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hofstetter
Mr. James Sproull
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Storey
Mr. Frank Thomas
Mr. and Mrs. George Thomas
Mr. T.J. Voss and Ms. Charmaine Wilson


SUPPORTING (\$100) LEVEL

Mrs. Peter Baumgarten
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bird
Mr. Gerald Blackwell
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brunson
Ms. Bernadette Clayton
Ms. Jane Crayton Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Dewar
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dickson, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Jennings
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel McCarthy
Mr. Charles Maxwell and Ms. Barbara Nelson
Mr. and Mrs. Richard McNeil
Mr. and Mrs. Elmo Percle
Mr. William Pidcoe, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Richardson
Dr. and Mrs. Carl Strojan
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Uskup
Ms. Nannie Von Stade Ward


SPONSOR (\$250) LEVEL

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Dane
Mr. and Mrs. David Hathaway
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hottensen, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnston
Ms. Margaret Marion
Ms. Rosamond McDuffie
Mr. and Mrs. S.J. Paterniti
Mr. and Mrs. Dacre Stoker


PATRON (\$500) LEVEL

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rideout
Mr. David Scott
Dr. and Mrs. Harry Shealy
Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Tucker
Mr. and Mrs. Tim Wertz


BENEFACTOR (\$1,000) LEVEL

Mr. Wilkins Byrd
Mr. Charles Fliflet
Ms. Mary Guynn
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hosang
Ms. Hollister Houghton
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Soucy
Dr. and Mrs. Bauer Vaughters


*“Thank You” to everyone who has joined or renewed their memberships
with the Aiken Land Conservancy.*

*ALC relies upon membership payments and donations to fund
our mission of preserving Aiken’s natural heritage.*

Help us save some trees!

If you have an e-mail address, we can send you our newsletters and eNews updates electronically and save not only paper (and trees!), but the cost of printing and postage as well.

If you would like to be added to ALC's e-mail list, please send a message to: mail@conserveAiken.org and put "subscribe" in the subject line.



--- ✂ ---
Clip and mail this form to renew your membership with the Aiken Land Conservancy

JOIN THE AIKEN LAND CONSERVANCY AND HELP PRESERVE AIKEN'S GREAT SPACES

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

e-mail address: _____

- Levels of membership:
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend – \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family – \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting – \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor – \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron – \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor – \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservator – \$2,500 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward – \$5,000 and above |

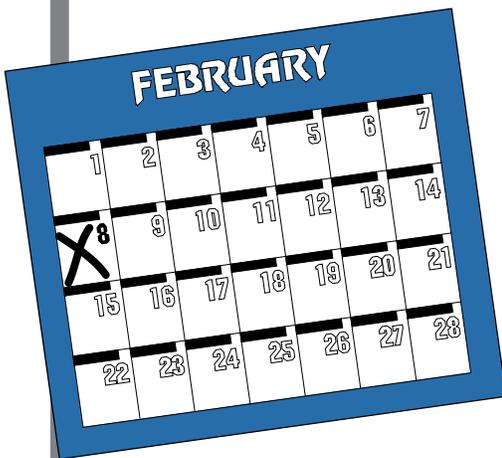
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Make payments to: ALC, PO Box 3096, Aiken, SC 29802

SECURE ON-LINE GIVING IS NOW AVAILABLE AT WWW.CONSERVEAIKEN.ORG
Donations to the Aiken Land Conservancy are tax-deductible.

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Mark your calendars!

Join us for the Aiken Land Conservancy
ANNUAL MEETING from 3-5 PM on
Sunday, February 8, 2009,
at The Willcox.

Our guest speaker at the annual meeting will be
Charles G. Lane, of Charleston, SC, who helped
form the ACE Basin Task Force.

*And don't miss the first ever ALC **Silent Auction**,
where you can help ALC raise money and
bid on items and services that you can't live without!*

When you've finished reading your newsletter, please pass it along to a friend.



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