

the CONSERVATION Chronicle

Newsletter of the Aiken Land Conservancy

OCTOBER, 2010

Why Should I Support the Aiken Land Conservancy?

by Harry E. Shealy, Jr.

There are two things I tell students in my classes. One is that there really are only three things that most living organisms absolutely need to live: oxygen, water, and food, in that order of urgency. The second thing I tell them is that all wealth ultimately comes from natural resources: minerals, soil, water, plants, and animals—things we often take for granted. For many of us who grew up in South Carolina, we felt these things would always be with us; they were in endless abundance. Those were the musings of youth when I also thought my hair and 20/20 eyesight would also always be with me.

Recently, the Division of Research, in the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina, conducted a study of the economic impact of South Carolina's natural resources. The report, published in 2009, was titled "Green Means Green, The Economic Impact of South Carolina's Natural Resources." The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of natural resources and how they generate significant economic value.

In the report they state "South Carolina's natural resources—its forests and soils, its rivers and marshes, its lakes and ocean—are the foundation for an immense amount of economic activity. Largely, this economic effect is taken for granted and is under appreciated." Well actually, that quote is probably more true than most of us would care to admit.

There are basically four state agencies charged with managing our natural resources. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is often

called the "Wildlife" department because, in the past, most of us associated it with regulating hunting and fishing licenses. The other agencies are Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (PRT), and the Departments of Forestry and Agriculture. The South Carolina Department of

Agriculture is the only one of these agencies that has an elected constitutional officer, the Secretary of Agriculture. Amazingly, these four agencies produce about one-third of the state's revenues each year, about fifty billion plus dollars and even more amazing, these four agencies receive less than one percent of the state budget.

This study concludes by noting, that "South Carolina is a land of incredible natural bounty and beauty. Protecting and enhancing South Carolina's natural resources base while nurturing the continued growth of value-creating industries is a challenging endeavor. Stewardship promoting the natural resources base should play a key role in South Carolina's economic development policy." I can only add a resounding "AMEN" to that conclusion.

There are a couple of simple things that we can do to preserve the natural resources of our state and county and at the same time ensure our economic stability and sustainability, especially in our rural areas. First, remembering that the things we really need are air, water and food, we can encourage our elected officials to vote for clean air, pure water, and sound land use policies! You can access the voting records of most elected officials on key environmental legislation or you can just ask them how they voted.

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Executive Director's Report

Katie Roth



I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Aiken Land Conservancy. I am thrilled to take on this position and bring with me a strong background in Public Relations, Marketing, Sales and Event Coordination. I believe my past experience in all of these areas will benefit the ALC and help the organization grow to new levels.

I would like to thank Dacre Stoker for all of his hard work and accomplishments—he is certainly giving me some big shoes to fill! We all wish Dacre continued success on his book and hope that he will continue to stay involved with this organization which he has helped to make what it is today.

I grew up primarily in the Midwest and have a Journalism degree from Ohio University. From college, I moved to Georgia to start my career and made Atlanta my home for the next 16 years. During this time, I watched as the city became larger and larger and the outlying green areas became subdivisions and strip malls. The green space in Atlanta was disappearing at a rapid rate. My commutes to and from work reached an hour and a half each way and my stress level increased. Concrete replaced forests and smog replaced fresh air. While living in Atlanta, my husband Jack and I would come to Aiken regularly to visit my parents, who retired here. We always enjoyed the time we spent in Aiken—especially all the outdoor activities and the charm of this town. During our drive home after one of our visits, we decided to move to Aiken. Atlanta's traffic congestion, pollution and overcrowding convinced us it was time to make a change.

When we were searching for a home, I realized how large Aiken really is. When we came to visit, we frequented the restaurants, stores and tack shops, but never really ventured all over the county. I was surprised at the beauty of this area and the friendliness of those who live here. We found a wonderful home and property here and are enjoying more "elbow room" than we could have imagined in Atlanta. We spend a lot of time outdoors with our dog, Fritz and horse, Taiga. Moving to Aiken has given me a new perspective on the importance of preserving land for generations to come and I know that beautiful views of pastures and vistas have improved my quality of life. Now it's time to make sure we can do the same for all who live here—and those who will live here in the future. 

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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New Owners, Same Vision

by Katie Roth

The 94-acre Lyman Preserve was ALC's first conservation easement in 1994, donated by Mrs. Arthur T. Lyman. This beautiful property is now owned by Sara and Richard McNeil, who purchased it in May 2010. The McNeils share Mrs. Lyman's vision of keeping this land protected from development.

The property, located on the south side of Aiken, consists of a large hay meadow that sweeps down to a wetland seep, which contains native azaleas and other interesting plants. Two ponds and an adjacent stream are home to ecologically important plant communities and offer valuable wildlife habitat for animals such as deer and turkey. There is a historic farmhouse on the property which provides spectacular views of the meadow from the back deck. "Just like Mrs. Lyman, Rich and I love to sit on the deck and enjoy the natural beauty here," said Sara.



The McNeils met Mrs. Lyman years ago—she was actually the reason they came to Aiken. They were in Massachusetts at the time and she told them about Aiken. "We came to take a look here because of her," Sara said. The McNeils bought a place in town about five years ago, which they enjoy, but it has limited pasture space for their horses. They were looking for a place to give their horses more room to graze, and it just so happened that Mrs. Lyman's land became available.



It is interesting that the person who brought the McNeils to Aiken would also one day give them the opportunity to own this beautiful land. "That fact that the property was under a conservation easement made it possible for us to purchase it," said Sara, "otherwise, we would not have been able to afford it."

The Lyman Preserve provides a variety of ecological benefits to the area. There are three sections that can support rare species, including upland longleaf pine, a wet meadow along the secondary stream system, and an old growth hardwood bluff and slope communities. Oconee azaleas (*Rhododendron flammeum*) are present along the old hardwood growth bluffs and green-fringed orchids (*Habernaria lacera*) can be found along the forested stream border. The large hayfield provides ample food and cover for fauna. The old field borders also provide a stable food supply and cover for many insects, birds, and small mammals. The trees in this preserve include Southern Red Oak, Water Oak, Sassafras, Hickory, Cherry, and Flowering Dogwood. The large ponds contain healthy aquatic habitats for this region.



The McNeils and their animals are looking forward to spending lots of time on this land. They have four horses and two Golden Retrievers who will love the open space and room to run. The McNeils enjoy trail riding and are hoping to connect to other conservation properties nearby that can enhance their trail system. The possibilities are endless!

McNeils are proud to carry on Mrs. Lyman's tradition by ensuring that the Lyman Preserve remains a peaceful and serene oasis on Aiken's south side. 

Save the date and
celebrate the start of
the holiday season
with the ALC

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Join the ALC on
Thanksgiving morning
for

Bloodies and Bagels
on your way to
the Blessing of the Hounds
in Hitchcock Woods
8:30 am - 10:30 am
at the Aiken County
Historical Museum

watch your email for more details or visit
our website at [www. ConserveAiken.org](http://www.ConserveAiken.org)

**“THE IMAGE OF A
COMMUNITY IS
FUNDAMENTALLY
IMPORTANT TO ITS
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING.
IF ALL PLACES LOOK ALIKE,
THERE’S NO REASON TO
GO ANYWHERE.”**

Ed McMahan, Conservation Fund

**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.**

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Secondly, we can support the work of non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) who advocate and actively work for environmental preservation. The Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC) is such an organization. Private land trusts in South Carolina, like the ALC, have preserved over a half million acres of land either through easements or purchase. Based on size, South Carolina is probably number one in land conservation by private land trusts in the southeast and likely number two on the east coast after another small state, Maine.

Anyone interested in maintaining the beauty of this state—whether it’s part of the great Blue Ridge Mountains, the quiet still beauty of our coastal salt marshes, or the stately grandeur of our longleaf pine forests—should also be interested in the work of our state’s land trusts. In

tough budget times, land trusts such as the Aiken Land Conservancy are one of the best vehicles available to help save pieces of our natural history.

If you asked me why I support the ALC, I would say it is the quality of life it adds to our community, but our natural resources are also a major economic driver! ALC has been around for twenty years; we were the seventh land trust formed in South Carolina and we still need your support. So think about what you would like Aiken County to look like in ten years and then think about all of the good things we can accomplish together with your donation of time or of money or, best of all, a donation of both.

Call me if any of this interests you; I would love to talk conservation with you anytime!!! 

Come enjoy the ALC Fall Lecture Series!

what: A fabulous evening that includes a wine and cheese mixer followed by a tour of historic Rose Hill Estate and a presentation by Kent Cabbage. Kent is an ALC Board member and is best known for his haunted history tours of Aiken. Kent's entertaining lecture is entitled "Learning to Love Nature by being Bitten, Stung, and Burned"

when: Wednesday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m.

where: Rose Hill Estate, at the corner of Greenville and Barnwell Streets in downtown Aiken (one block north of Auto Zone)

cost: \$15 per person (payable at the door)

RSVP not required but recommended
(803) 649-7139



The Aiken Land Conservancy recently received a \$1,000 donation from Progressive Show Jumping. Pictured here are Cathy and Rick Cram with ALC President Paul Rideout.

**“CONSERVATION MEANS
THE WISE USE OF THE
EARTH AND ITS RESOURCES
FOR THE LASTING GOOD
OF MEN.”**

Gifford Pinchot

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 2010 members.

ALC Welcomes New Members to the Board of Trustees

The Aiken Land Conservancy is pleased to welcome two new members to the Board of Trustees.

Anne Kiser brings her experience as Deputy Forest Manager at the USDA Forest Service-Savannah River to the ALC Board. Anne has been active in land conservation and protection for the past twenty years, working with the Upper Savannah Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy on projects throughout South Carolina. She is a very strong supporter of prescribed burning and the protection and restoration of longleaf pine. Anne hunts with Aiken Hounds and rides in Hitchcock Woods every chance she gets. Anne is also a beekeeper and has had two hives off and on for nine years.



Anne Kiser

Larry Comegys joins the ALC Board of trustees from a career in residential development that has included active support of conservation and preservation issues. He has been actively involved in organizations that promote Smart Growth, sustainable communities, efforts to control urban sprawl, and preserve significant open space. Larry and his wife Jocelyn, with daughters Lauren and Blythe, moved to Aiken from Florida in 2009. A lifelong hunter, they were drawn to Aiken to be with their horses



Larry Comegys

in a great community. Because of Larry's interest in preserving, protecting, and enhancing Aiken he is very excited to be part of the ALC. In joining the board Larry states that "the next few years will see increased growth pressure on Aiken and the ALC has a critical leadership role that can help manage and direct that growth by protecting open space to preserve the unique character of the community."

ALC also thanks outgoing Board members Phil Richardson, Janet Wertz, and Elizabeth Paterniti. Phil has been active with ALC for many years, serving as Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee. Janet served on the Fundraising Committee and Elizabeth was chairperson of the Board Development Committee. We appreciate their service and wish Phil, Janet, and Elizabeth all the best in their future pursuits. 

save the date for

Derby Dreamin'

302 Polo presents an afternoon of 30-goal polo and a party to celebrate the Run for the Roses to benefit Aiken Equine Charities and the Aiken Land Conservancy

Choose your Kentucky Derby favorite and join us for fun, food, cocktails—and of course, watch the race on the big screen!

Saturday, May 7, 2011
Powderhouse Field
3:00 pm



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