ConservationChronicle

Aiken Land Conservancy Newsletter 2019 Vol. 1

Thirty Years of Protecting Aiken's Natural and Historic Resources

and The People Who Make It (*Made it*) Happen

Thirty years ago, Harry Shealy and Iris Freeman co-founded the Aiken Land Conservancy to save some of Aiken's extraordinary green spaces from rapid and unmanaged development on the Southside of Aiken. Today, ALC is a nationally accredited organization with a diverse portfolio of conservation holdings that also supports important community projects, like protecting the city's drinking water sources in the Shaws Creek watershed and the urban forest that graces our historic parkways.

ALC is passionate about Aiken. We believe that progress and conservation go hand in hand. We believe beautiful landscapes, nature, and abundant wildlife enhance our quality of life and support our physical and emotional health. We believe the natural and historic resources that define Aiken's unique character are worth preserving for future generations.

Our success is in no small part thanks to you, the community. Our efforts to protect the things that make Aiken such a special place to live and raise a family would not be possible without your enthusiastic support. As we move into our thirtieth year, we wanted to take this opportunity to tell you who we are, what we do, how we got here, and where we're going.

Conservation Holdings
28 Conservation Easements
11 Fee Properties

Largest Conservation Property
330 Acres

Smallest Conservation Property
2.5 Acres

Average Conservation Property
82 Acres

Land Preserved
3197 Acres

Natural Areas & Open Space
32

Buffers: 8
Water Protection: 10

Historic Properties
4 in Equestrian District

4 Public Parks

10 Farms

President's Report

Growth and Change at the Aiken Land Conservancy

In my first few months serving as the Aiken Land Conservancy's seventh president, I've come to realize—and am gratified by the fact—that individual actions matter. Your membership contributions and commitment, your volunteer participation, and ALC's volunteer Board leadership and paid staff have accomplished remarkable things in protecting and preserving Aiken for future generations.

We are pleased to announce a new milestone: ALC has hired its first full-time Executive Director, Faren Wolter, to help us continue our good work in the community protecting the places you love. As I am sure you will agree, Faren brings great training and experience to the position, and we are excited about her coming on board. Welcome Faren!

This is an exciting time of transition and opportunity at ALC. The legacy of our past leaders and members over the past thirty years has led us to this place in time: a nationally accredited organization that has made, and continues to make, a real difference for Aiken. We continue to preserve properties across Aiken (with almost 3,200 acres of natural areas, open space, and areas of cultural significance now protected to date); to partner with the City of Aiken to conserve and maintain the city's 23,000 trees; to protect key properties in the Historic Horse District like Winthrop Field; to protect one of the important sources of the city's drinking water—Shaws Creek; and to teach our next generation of conservation leaders through our Aiken Young Conservationist program.

Aiken is a good place to live; a good place to raise a family; a good place to retire. This doesn't just happen on its own. It's a reflection of our community and its leaders. Thank you. Your support has made, and will continue to make, all the difference in helping us protect the places you love in Aiken. We couldn't do it without you.

Steen Smith, President
Board of Trustees

Executive Director Report

Faren Wolter, ALC's New Executive Director

Hello, Aiken Land Conservancy supporters! I am so excited to be in Aiken and to have the opportunity to work with ALC and you to conserve the communities, places, and natural resources we love in Aiken County.

I grew up in Gordonsville (Orange County), Virginia, a historically agricultural area north of Charlottesville. My childhood is filled with wonderful memories of backpacking and camping, hunting and fishing, horseback riding, summers spent catching fireflies, and walking through forests while learning Latin names of trees (thanks, dad!).

I parlayed my love of the outdoors and nature into a BS from Clemson University (go Tigers!) in Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Wildlife Biology with a minor in Environmental Science and Policy. I intended to continue my studies in Wildlife Biology and specialize in raptors, but then I was offered a collaborative planning and policy graduate research assistant position at University of Missouri-Columbia. I was hesitant to accept the position because I wanted to work with wildlife—not people—until Jack Ward Thomas, the 13th Chief of the U.S. Forest Service and a mentor, said to me: *"Managing natural resources is only 10% of the equation, 90% of conservation is managing the public and their expectations."*

That sentence changed my career path. Indeed, we humans cannot separate ourselves from the natural environment—we are simultaneously the challenge and the solution.

I am passionate about conserving natural resources and the communities, both human and wildlife, dependent upon healthy working and recreational landscapes. Changing land use and urbanization pressures in nearby areas increasingly affect community viability and quality of life in rural areas across the country, including Aiken County.

I look forward to becoming part of the Aiken community and working with you to protect Aiken's historic and natural resources for future generations to enjoy. Moreover, although my love of all things equestrian ultimately gave way to education and earning a living, I can't wait to get back into the saddle and roam around the incomparable Hitchcock Woods.

Together, we will make a difference in Aiken County, and we'll have a lot of fun doing it, too.

The mission of Aiken Land Conservancy is to protect Aiken's unique character and cherished natural resources.

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855-252-5263
mail@ConserveAiken.org

Aiken Land Conservancy, Inc. (ALC)

Founded in March 1990 Originally ACOLT—Aiken County Open Land Trust

ALC Co-Founders

Mrs. Iris Freeman
Dr. Harry Shealy

ALC Presidents

Mrs. Iris Freeman
Mrs. Lee Dane
Dr. Harry Shealy
Mr. Paul Rideout
Mr. Larry Comegys
Mrs. Joanna Dunn Samson
Mr. Benjamin Steen Smith

ALC Executive Directors

Mr. Dacre Stoker
Mrs. Katie Roth
Ms. Faren Wolter (full time)

ALC Administrators

Ms. Laura Janecek
Mrs. Meg Ferguson
Mrs. Janet DePrince, Executive Administrator

Thirty Years Ago: the Beginning of It All

In 1989, the federal government announced its intention to spend $10 million on a new production reactor at the Savannah River Plant. Many in Aiken were excited about the economic benefits of the project to our community, particularly to the south side of Aiken, which appeared to be the epicenter of the anticipated economic growth for the coming boom.

Some of us, however, were more circumspect in our optimism; we remembered what happened the last time the federal government spent big money in Aiken in the 1950s when the Savannah River Plant was built. That time was indeed a time of growth and prosperity for Aiken, but the growth was so quick and unmanaged that whole neighborhoods, an old drive-in theater, and numerous wooded, natural areas simply disappeared from the landscape.

Were those things appropriate or necessary victims of progress? Who knows? At the time, no one even asked the question.

Iris Freeman and I were determined to be better prepared when the new Savannah River project kicked into gear. Congress had passed important legislation supporting conservation practices in 1980, including the establishment of excellent tax incentives to landowners who donated conservation easements on their properties to a "qualified conservation organization." Iris and I decided to form a land trust that met IRS requirements so that Aiken County landowners would have a way to preserve their family land and way of life through a voluntary conservation program.

In March 1990, we created a state non-profit called the Aiken County Open Land Trust (which was later changed to the Aiken Land Conservancy to avoid the appearance that we were part of the Aiken County government). We consulted with Iris's brother, Fred Winthrop, who was the head of the Trustees for Preservation, the oldest land trust in the United States, and we sought advice from other land trusts in South Carolina about their mission, experiences, and practices protecting cherished resources.

Local attorney, Danty Busbee, filed an application with the IRS requesting official tax-exempt, qualified conservation organization status. The application was granted in the spring of 1991, and ALC became the seventh land trust in South Carolina with approved §501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt status.

Now thirty years and 3200 acres later, ALC has grown into a sophisticated, nationally accredited organization with a knowledgeable and active board of trustees, a full time executive director. Iris and I couldn't be more proud.

Dr. Harry E. Shealy, Jr.
Co-Founder & Former Board of Trustees President

Expanding Vision & Developing Organizational Strength

Strategic Planning, Advocacy, and Accreditation

When I joined ALC's Board of Trustees in 2010, I was impressed by the commitment and work ethic of the Board, which functioned as a collegial and highly-effective team. Two years later, I was elected president when Paul Rideout retired from the board.

When Katie Roth took over as ALC's second executive director, joined by Meg Ferguson as the administrator, they took over many of the day-to-day tasks previously performed by the trustees. This allowed the board to focus on some key initiatives, like refining our strategic plan to specifically identify the Historic Horse District and the Rt. 302 corridor as focus areas for conservation protection, and broadening our outreach and activities to include such community projects as protecting Aiken's grand trees and historic parkways.

In 2012, ALC rolled up its sleeves to begin the arduous, lengthy task of achieving national accreditation. Four years later, ALC joined the small group of 300+ land trusts in the country to be awarded the gold seal of accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, a prestigious designation that assures landowners and donors that ALC operates in accordance with the highest ethical and programmatic standards and policies in all its endeavors.

As is our practice, I retired from the board for a year in 2017 and served on the Advisory Council. Last year, I was invited back on to board to serve as a trustee. I am proud to do so, because I am passionate about protecting the things and places that make Aiken such a special place to live and raise a family.

Larry Comegys, Trustee
ALC Trustee and past President

In Memorial

The sun rises, the seasons change, camellias bloom in December, azaleas bloom in April, gardenias bloom in June, maple trees shed their leaves in the fall, and the people we love die. These are the inevitable facts of life, but that inevitability doesn't make the loss any less heartbreaking and sad.

In the past six months, ALC has lost some of its most beloved supporters and board members: Rosamond McDuffie, Holly Houghton, Katrina Becker, and Don Nicolaisen. These extraordinary people were passionate about conservation and committed to ALC's mission to protect the places you love in Aiken.

The world will be a slightly dimmer place without them. We will honor their lives and their legacy by continuing our work in their names and the names of all of the folks who believe (and believed in) the preservation of our history, natural resources, and quality of life for future generations.

Rosamond McDuffie

Rosamond was one of ALC's original board members when it was formed in 1990, serving as the corresponding secretary for many years. In the organization's formative years, she was instrumental in securing some of the first conservation easements, managing insurance issues, and encouraging work at the committee level. She continued to attend and be an active participant in ALC's board and executive committees regularly through the years, serving as an honored advisor and supporter.

Rosamond began her ceaseless work for historic preservation and conservation, working with Historic Aiken Foundation, where she served as Executive Director. Under her watch, 94 sites selected for their historic or architectural significance were considered part of the Historic Aiken Tour and designated with numbered brass plaques. Rosamond was named Aiken Woman of the Year in 1998. She was the historian and conscience of the ALC. She made sure our goals and objectives remained in line with our mission and reminded us of our responsibilities to the community. She was truly an integral part of ALC's success.

Rosamond died in March. She was 97 years old.

Hollister Douglas Houghton

Holly was a talented woman of great intellect whose humility, kindness, and quiet reserve belied her extraordinary accomplishments as an artist, equestrian, national and international shooting clays champion, and fly fisherman.

Holly served on ALC's Advisory Council and the Board of Trustees for over ten years, where she supported conservation initiatives locally and in the Edisto River watershed. In 2009, she preserved her former property adjacent to the Hitchcock Woods in perpetuity through the donation of a conservation easement to the ALC. She established one of ALC's signature fundraisers, Clays for Conservation, and co-sponsored the organization's first physical office space on Park Avenue. She spent countless hours trekking through ALC's conservation holdings with the Stewardship Committee on annual monitoring visits. In the past several years Holly took up infra-red photography, capturing images of local natural significance and of sleepy villages on the coast of Scotland. She sold her photographs locally and donated the proceeds to ALC.

Holly died peacefully in her home in Aiken, South Carolina on April 27, 2019 after a battle with cancer. She was 74 years old.

Katrina Becker

Katrina Becker moved to Aiken in 1986 from Charleston, South Carolina. Her intelligence and remarkable range of interests made her fascinating company and a force to be reckoned with in the community. She was an accomplished and fearless equestrienne, participating in horse showing, foxhunting, racing, and championship carriage driving.

Katrina was passionate about the preservation of open space and the protection and conservation of natural areas, and she was a generous supporter, both personally and through her family's Barker Welfare Foundation, of ALC. One of her proudest achievements was the creation of the Katydid Annual Combined Driving Event (or CDE) with Jennifer Matheson, which she held at Katydid Farm every November. The luncheon at Katydid, which was hosted by ALC and generously sponsored, in large part, by Katrina, has been one ALC's most exciting and anticipated fundraising events.

Katrina died peacefully in her home in May. She was 88 years old.

Don Nicolaisen

Don Nicolaisen and his wife Sandie first came to Aiken as an experiment in 2005, renting a house on South Boundary. They loved being in the heart of the historic equestrian district with all its activity and many charms.

In 2014, the Nicolaisens purchased the historic Clark Barn, which is protected by a conservation easement granted by the previous owners ten years ago. The barn was in considerable need of repair, and the Nicolaisens undertook an extensive reconstruction project. Their goal was to preserve the historical character and appearance of the barn, while bringing it up to current codes and usage demands. Although it ended up being a much larger undertaking than originally anticipated, the project was completed, and the results are nothing short of magnificent.

In addition, the Nicolaisens have been consistent and generous supporters of ALC's efforts to maintain Winthrop Field. Last year, they supplied the matching money to bury the power lines running along Mead Avenue between the Clark Barn and Sumter Street, ensuring that the live oaks that line the dirt road will be protected from aggressive utility company pruning practices in the future.

Don died on June 8, 2019. He was 75 years old.

The courtyard of the Clark Barn, meticulously restored by Sandi and Don Nicolaisen.

Clays for Conservation

The day dawned sunny and warm on Sunday morning, April 28th, for the Sixth Annual Clays for Conservation event, a favorite ALC fundraiser and the brainchild of the late Holly Houghton, a beloved board member who passed away only hours before the crowds gathered at the Palmetto Shooting Complex in Edgefield. The competitors were enthusiastic and fierce (but friendly!), and the ALC trustees sponsored four junior shooters who put everyone to shame (ohh, the eye-hand coordination!!) The BBQ lunch provided by Park Row Market No. 1 was a fitting and delicious finale after such an active morning. As always, thank you to Rhett and the Wild Turkey Federation for hosting this exciting event and shepherding the participants around the range and the Woods courses.

Congratulations to all the winners!

High Overall Man:	Derrick Boddy
High Overall Woman:	Tie – Sylvia Igoe & Beth Tunny
Top Men's Team:	Chuck McConnell Bill Wert Jeff Springer Tom Bush
Top Women's Team:	Sharon Reeves Kathy Modesitt Candy Moore Ann Mitchell
Best Senior Man:	Jim Murfey
Best Senior Woman:	Judy McConnell
Best Beginner Man:	Bill Gutfarb
Best Beginner Woman:	Mary Catherine Phillips
Honorary Senior:	Manfred Schach Von Wittenau
Best Junior:	Thomas Rhodes
Clay Conservationist:	Patrice Lamy

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Protecting Aiken's Natural Urban Landscape

South Boundary Live Oak Restoration Project Parkway and Urban Forest Preservation

Those iconic live oaks that grace South Boundary Avenue are a living reminder of Aiken's history. The story goes that in 1905, Henry Dibble (the then President of the Bank of Aiken) and Mayor Julian Salley agreed to share the cost and work of planting live oaks along the carriage path that ran through the treeless, reclaimed farmland upon which so many new homes were being built by the winter colonists. Ever since, generations of citizens and visitors to Aiken have been wowed by the serene beauty of the canopy of those 193 magnificent live oaks arching over the street.

They are more than just beautiful—the oaks provide critical shade and temperature control from the southern sun, produce 14 tons of oxygen, and remove 820 tons of carbon dioxide from the air every year. They absorb up to 10,500 cubic feet of stormwater runoff each year, reducing localized flooding and erosion of precious natural resources.

South Boundary has seen a lot of changes in Aiken over the past 115 years. The roads have been paved and power lines installed. Changing weather patterns, strained municipal resources, and aggressive pruning practices by the power company are making it difficult to keep these proud old-timers healthy.

Thank goodness for the leadership of Mayor Rick Osbon and City Council, who are partnering with ALC and Dominion Energy to protect the live oaks for future generations. The City and Dominion are sharing the cost to bury the power lines on South Boundary, and ALC and Streetscapes (a nonprofit fund established by ALC trustee, Rob Johnston, and his wife Pam) will fund the cost to properly prune and nurture the trees to enhance their long-term health and viability.

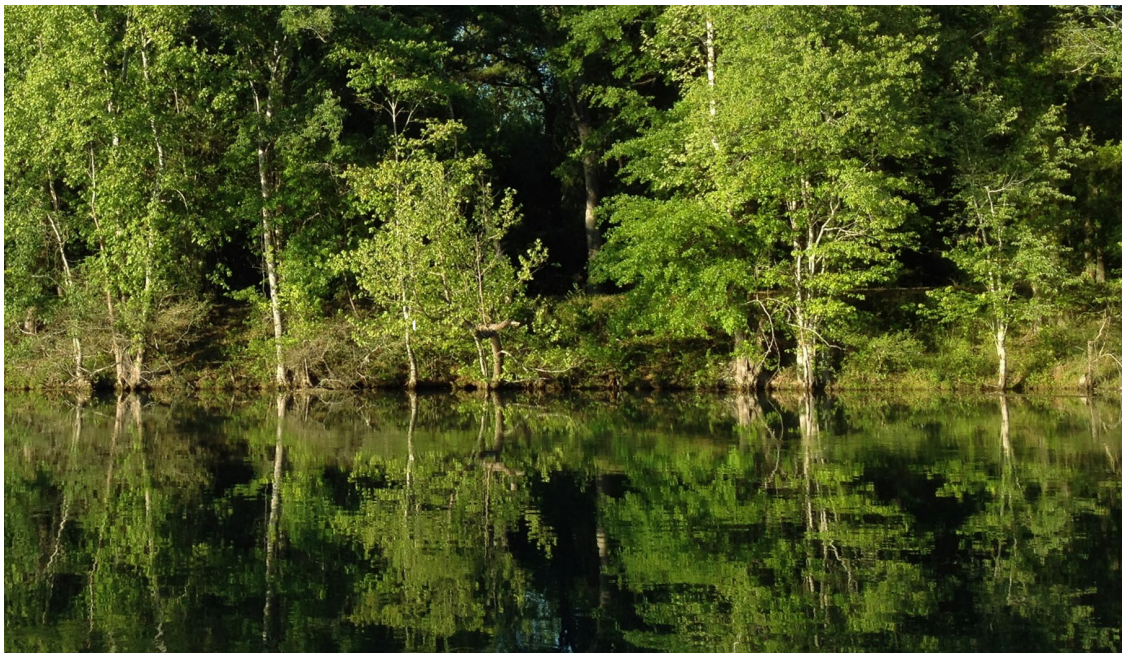
ALC's commitment to protect Aiken's extraordinary urban forest extends beyond South Boundary. We are also working with the City to restore the parkways and replace grand trees on a case-by-case basis, as well as evaluating opportunities to develop innovative storm water projects to protect the Hitchcock Woods from further devastation caused by unmanaged stormwater that drains into the woods from the downtown area.

Protecting our grand trees and urban forest is a long-term commitment, practically and financially—one that ALC cannot do alone. Your continued support is necessary to help us care for Aiken's unique natural and historic landscape for future generations.

Rob Johnston,
Trustee
Board of Trustees

Protecting Aiken's Drinking Water

The Upper Shaws Creek Voluntary Conservation Program



Shaws Creek is a tributary to the Edisto River and a vital resource as both a recreational area and a primary drinking water supply source for the City of Aiken—the City's Shaws Creek water treatment plant supplies water to 15 to 25 percent of the City's 12,584 residential customers and 1,773 business customers. In addition, Shaws Creek funnels water from Mason Branch and the Mason Branch Reservoir under drought and emergency conditions to be processed in the Shaws Creek water treatment plant, making it an important source of backup drinking water as well.

As the City of Aiken grows and expands north into the rural upper part of Shaws Creek, the water sources of Shaws Creek could be compromised by unmanaged development pressure and the aggregate increases of nonpoint sources of pollutants from septic, sewers, construction, agriculture, livestock, urbanization, and wildlife. In anticipation of this growth, the City has initiated the Upper Shaws Creek Voluntary Conservation Program to protect these water sources by working with landowners and farmers in Aiken and Edgefield County to establish protective buffers and best management practices for their fields and pastures around Shaws Creek.

The City has also received funding from DHEC to help offset some of the soft costs associated with implementing five conservation easements on properties that meet certain criteria. In addition to funding provided by DHEC and the City, additional funding and support has been provided by Wood, ALC, USRLT, the Nature Conservancy, Audubon, and the Edisto Riverkeeper.

Clean, plentiful water is not only essential to life itself, but to Aiken's community prosperity and future growth opportunities. The Aiken Land Conservancy is proud to be a part of this on-going effort to protect Aiken's drinking water quality for now and for future generations.

Joanna Dunn Samson, Advisory Council
Past President of the Board of Trustees

Business Spotlight

Natural Migrations Safari Travel Company supports eco-tourism in Africa

Paul and Caroline Swart are the owners of Natural Migrations, a travel company that specializes in safaris to Africa. Originally from South Africa, they have lived in the United States for twenty years. Five years ago, attracted by the warm weather and equestrian lifestyle, they moved to Aiken.

The Swarts both have extensive experience with the tourism industry in Africa, and in 2006, they started their own company offering photographic safaris for the traveler drawn to the continent by the incredible wildlife, diverse culture, history and scenic splendor. Dedicated to the preservation of wildlife and cultural heritage in Africa through eco-tourism, they have carefully chosen partners who work together with local communities and have as little impact on the environment as possible.

Being equestrians—Caroline is a dressage enthusiast and Paul is a three-day eventer—they are pleased to offer horse safaris, along with more traditional safaris. Every journey is planned with individual needs, interests and budgets in mind. Their goal is simple: to exceed your expectation and help you plan the trip of a lifetime.

Paul and Caroline were kind enough to donate a 9-day safari to raise funds for the 2019 South Boundary Live Oak Preservation and Restoration Project, which was auctioned off at The Mane Event, ALC's cocktail party hosted at the premier Eventing Showcase at Bruce's Field in March. Thanks to the Swarts' extraordinary generosity, The Mane Event was not only a social success, but a financial success as well, allowing ALC, the Aiken Horse Park Foundation, and a generous community to provide the necessary care for the iconic live oaks that line South Boundary.

info@naturalmigrations.com
Telephone: 803-642-1800
Toll free: 866-988-7575

Natural Migrations®

Welcome New Board Members

Beth Harpham (Elisabeth) first came to Aiken in 2006 as a winter resident, riding in Hitchcock Woods and enjoying the robust arts programs. She lives in Foxchase with her husband, Sam Kursh, and a myriad of animals, including three horses. Before leaving Chester County, Pennsylvania, she was secretary of the East Marlborough Land Trust for about ten years. She has an undergraduate degree in International Relations from American University, an MS in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University, and a law degree from Rutgers University. Prior to her retirement, she held licenses to practice law in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, as well as a brokers license to sell real estate in Pennsylvania. Beth was awarded a certificate in the Georgia Master Naturalist program in May 2019.

Beth was nominated to the ALC Advisory Council in 2014 and joined the Board of Trustees in 2019. She is interested in, among other things, ALC's advocacy regarding the protection and management of Aiken County's water supply, particularly in light of the extraordinary demands upon the region's surface and groundwater caused by industrial farming.

Steve Hulbert is a writer, poet, musician, photographer, and outdoor enthusiast who has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Africa, Europe, and Central America. Born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, he attended the University of Utah and worked in the Motor Sports industry for ten years after college. In 1985 he moved to Olympia, Washington, where he owned and operated the Cadillac, Pontiac and Saturn automotive dealerships.

He has served on several boards throughout his lifetime and been recognized for his work in furthering education, conservation and environmental sustainability. Today, he lives on a farm in Aiken with his beautiful wife Cathy, their horses Markus, Windhoek and Luna, their dog Jackson Browne and their barn cat Little Blackie. For more information on Steve, visit stevehulbert.org.

Steve was nominated to ALC's Advisory Council in 2018 and joined the Board of Trustees in 2019. Aside from his support and assistance with ALC events, Steve is active in developing and expanding ALC's Young Conservation Program. One of his main goals for his work with ALC is to develop a pilot program and conservation curriculum for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in the public and private schools.

Currently and for the past 35 years, *Wendy J. Collins Gutfarb* has worked as a graphic designer creating marketing materials for various national accounts in high-tech, medical, education, consumer goods and services, with the majority based in the New England area.

Since arriving in Aiken in 2008, Wendy has donated her professional design services to many local projects and nonprofit organizations, including FOTAS, Saratoga WarHorse, Katydid CDE, and the Aiken Training Track. An accomplished equestrian, Wendy is an MFH (Master of Foxhounds) for the Aiken Hounds.

Wendy was nominated to the ALC Advisory Committee in 2018 and joined the Board of Trustees in 2019. Wendy works closely with the board and staff in creating exceptional (and beautiful) marketing and instructive materials for ALC to educate the public on the value of conservation and ALC's work in protecting the places that make Aiken such a special place to live, work, and raise a family.

ALC Hosts The Mane Event at Aiken's First Grand-Prix Eventing Showcase

On March 1st, 2019, the Aiken Land Conservancy was honored to host a buffet cocktail party (called The Mane Event), for the Inaugural Grand Prix Eventing Showcase held at Bruce's Field. Guests enjoyed a drink and hors d'oeuvres in the VIP Tent while viewing the final breathtaking hour of stadium jumping and mingling with the international competitors as they completed their rides.

The net proceeds from The Mane Event will be applied to the 2019 South Boundary Live Oak Project, which is a comprehensive plan by the City of Aiken, Dominion Energy, and ALC to bury the power lines on South Boundary and then properly prune and nurture the iconic live oaks that line the street. The total cost of the project is estimated to be $450,000 to $500,000, to be shared between the City, Dominion, ALC, and Streetscapes, a separate project fund dedicated to the preservation and replacement of Aiken's "grand" trees and formed by ALC trustee Rob Johnston and his wife Pam.

The VIP tent was beautifully appointed by Tom Bossard and Len Cherry.

On the Ground in Aiken County
Stewarding ALC's Conserved Land Holdings

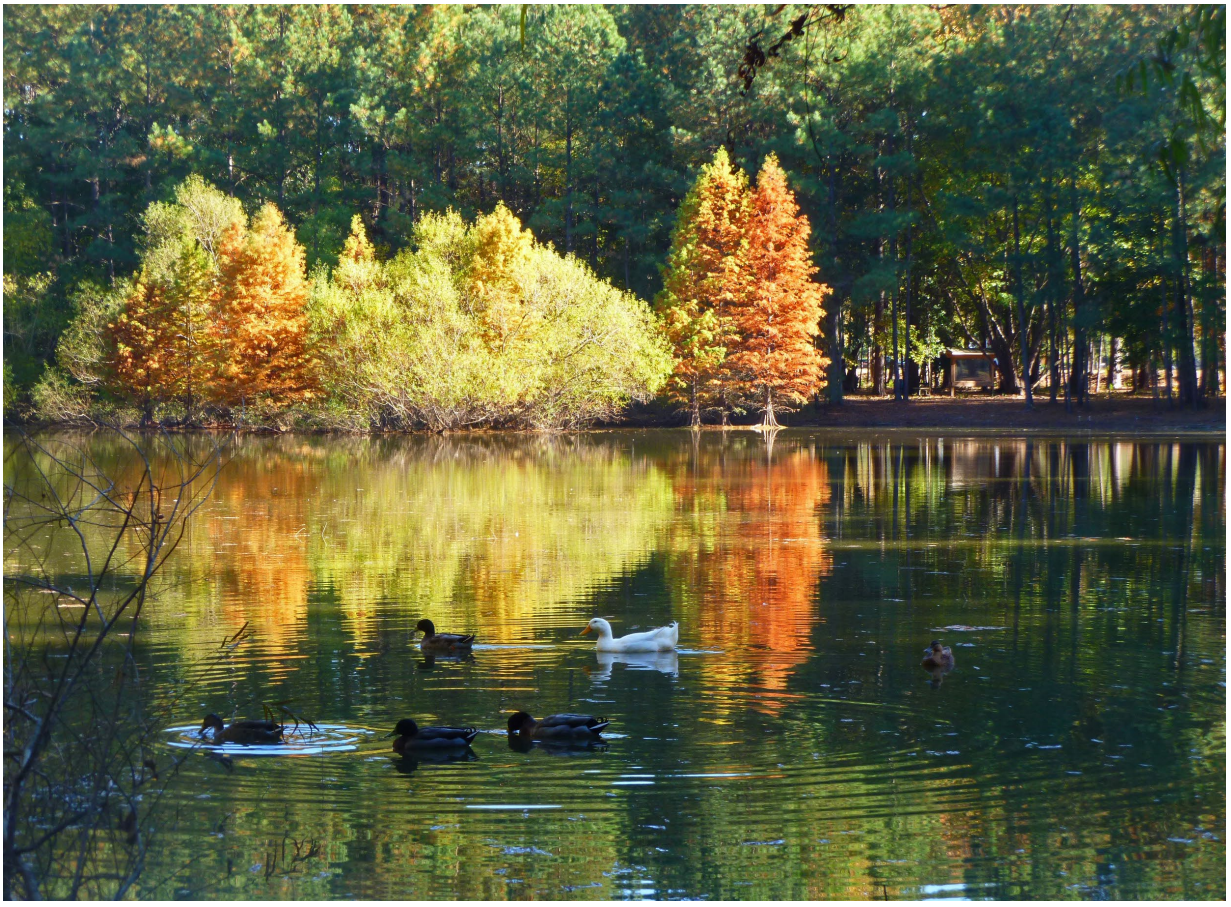
I have spent my entire life outdoors, hunting, fishing, and camping. Through my work at Camp Gravatt (I am now blessed to be the Director of Facilities and Environmental Stewardship), I developed a deeper understanding of the leadership role that land trusts play in protecting forests, open spaces, green spaces, land, and natural resources from unmanaged growth and development.

I had been a supporter of the ALC for several years before I was appointed to the Advisory Council. I elected to join the Stewardship Committee because I wanted to be a hands-on participant in the field and get to know ALC's protected properties and landowners firsthand. After awhile, I was invited to join the board, and when my friend and colleague, Bennett Tucker, resigned as chairman of the Stewardship Committee, I agreed to take his place.

For anyone who loves nature and yearns to spend some time in the great outdoors, the Stewardship committee provides a terrific opportunity to visit these beautiful places, learn about conservation, and have a front row seat to protecting Aiken's wonderful natural resources for future generations.

So, give us a call, pull on your boots, spray on the bug repellent, and join us in our annual visits to some of Aiken's most special places.

Thomas Coleman, Trustee
Former Chairman of the Stewardship Committee



Fall comes to the Carolina Bay Park located next to Odell Weeks. The Bay is owned by the City and protected by a conservation easement held by ALC.

ALC Partners with Girl Scouts
The Next Generation of Conservationists

My wife and I moved to Aiken in 2016 to retire and pursue our love of all things equestrian and natural. Prior to coming to Aiken, we lived in Utah and Washington, and in both of those places, I was active in creating educational programs for children and teenagers to encourage the love of nature and to teach them the values of conservation at an early age—something so critical in an age when 3.5 to 7 billion acres of forest and open space are lost to progress and catastrophic weather conditions every single year in the United States.

When I joined the ALC board of trustees, I was eager to get involved with its Aiken Young Conservationists (AYC) program, which was developed to encourage children to participate in and learn about the importance of land conservation. This year, Girl Scouts from Troops 415, 1417, 173, and 2409 descended upon the Silver Bluff Audubon Center and Sanctuary to become the latest batch of Aiken's young conservationists to earn the AYC patch.

"Our girls love to get outdoors and explore nature," said Patti Bennett, Communications Manager for the Aiken Girl Scouts, who worked with me to organize the event. "Our day at the Audubon Center was just magical."

Beginning in the Spring of 2020, ALC will formally partner with the Aiken Girl Scouts to make this an annual event, Knock on (long leaf pine) wood, I hope that one day those girls will serve as trustees on ALC's board and lead the next generation of Aikenites in protecting the natural and historic resources that make Aiken such a special place to live and raise a family.

Steve Hulbert, *Trustee*
Board of Trustees, Aiken Land Conservancy

2019 Aiken Land Conservancy Membership

Thank you for supporting our mission to preserve Aiken's natural heritage!

If you would like an updated membership list, please visit our website at www.conserveaiken.org

Donors who have continuously given over the past five years are notated in blue.

List includes 2018 and 2019 donations.

When you finish reading your newsletter, please pass it along to a friend

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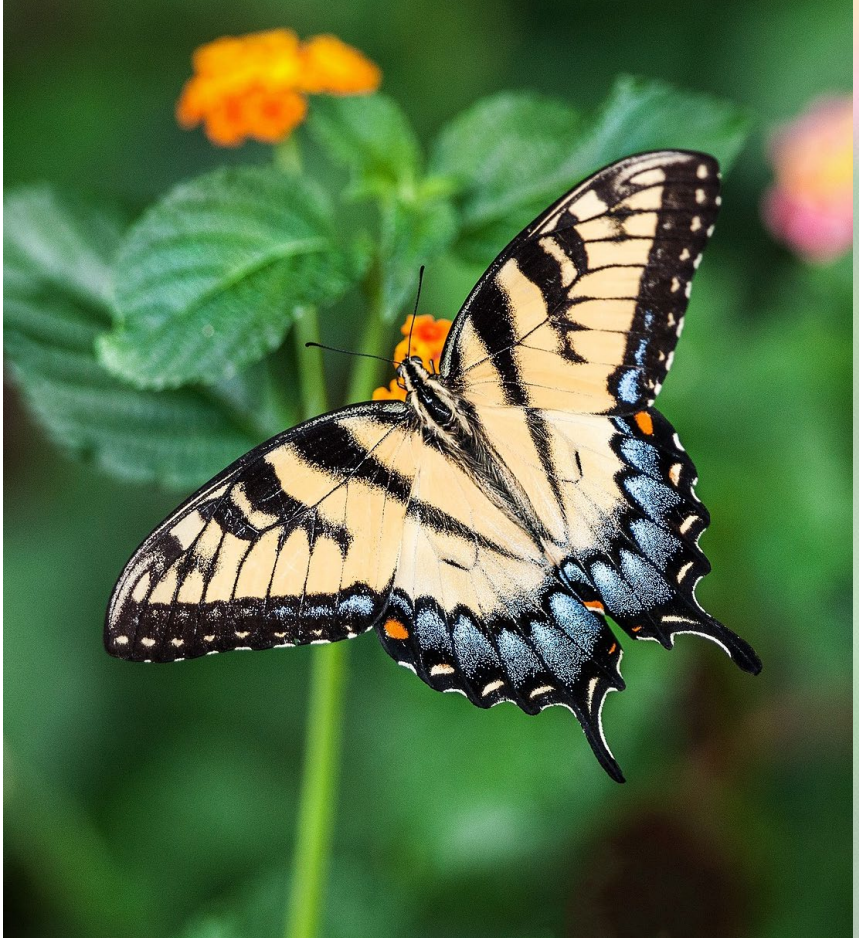

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous."

~ *Aristotle*

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