



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

1-12-14 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. at 37 Woody Bend in Dahlonega

In attendance at this meeting were Donna Shearer, Bob Pledger, Chris Curtin, Frank Gheesling, Susan Chapman, and Rose Mott. Dave Teffeteller, Bruce Granger, and Buz Stone were unable to attend.

BOARD MATTERS

- * Commitment to serve throughout calendar 2014 – All in attendance indicated their commitment to continuing serving. The three absentees has been contacted and given their commitment as well.
- * Signing of annual acknowledgment statement – All in attendance signed the document indicating their understanding of and agreement to abide by our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Absentees have been contacted to confirm their acknowledgment as well.
- * Discussion of roles and areas of responsibilities for FY 2014 – All in attendance agreed to continue in their current roles and special focus areas. Absentees have been contacted and confirmed continuation in their roles and focus areas as well.
 - Donna Shearer – Chairman, Webmaster, special focus on educational programs and research
 - Bob Pledger – Vice Chairman, Lead Facilitator for Rabun County, special focus on Facilitator program and service projects
 - Susan Chapman – Secretary, special focus on engaging new members and service/educational efforts in Habersham County
 - Rose Mott – Treasurer, special focus on engaging youth for education and service
 - Dave Teffeteller – Board Member, special focus on communications and engaging other conservation groups
 - Chris Curtin – Board Member, Lead Facilitator at large for Gilmer County, special focus on membership and fundraising
 - Frank Gheesling – Board Member, Lead Facilitator for Gilmer County west of Hwy 515, special focus on availability/maintenance of soil injectors
 - Bruce Granger – Board Member, Lead Facilitator for Gilmer County east of Hwy 515, special focus on teaching in schools, engaging recreational groups, and outreach to special audiences
 - Buz Stone – Board Member, Team Leader for Lake Rabun area, special focus on service projects

FINANCIAL MATTERS

* Financial reports for FY 2013 (ending November 30, 2013) – Rose presented the following financial reports, and the team reviewed and discussed them:

- Balance Sheet – We started the year with \$9,254 on hand and finished with \$15,407.
- Profit& Loss by Class – Total income was \$27,924, and total expenses were \$21,771. Total spending was 91% for education and charitable service; 9% was for administration, membership, and fundraising.

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| Income | From individuals | \$3,618 | |
| | From foundations | \$11,250 | (including \$10,000 Cox Foundation grant) |
| | From corporations | \$70 | |
| | From nonprofits | \$1,950 | |
| | From memberships | \$8,246 | |
| | In-kind goods | \$2,790 | |
| | Expenses | Clinics | \$808 |
| | Facilitator training | \$3,267 | |
| | Other education | \$3,816 | |
| | Saplings program | \$2,510 | |
| | Treatment program | \$8,829 | |
| | Pubs/communications | \$1,107 | |
| | Administration | \$1,048 | |
| | Membership/fundraising | \$387 | |

- Profit & Loss Previous Year Comparison
 - 2013 income was up by 92% over 2012 income, primarily due to the Cox Foundation grant.
 - 2013 expenses were up by 83% over 2012 expenses, primarily due to increased spending for treatment supplies (financed mostly from the Cox grant), office supplies and printing for educational materials
- Profit & Loss Budget vs Actual
 - 2013 income was 120% greater than budgeted.
 - 2013 Expenses were 137% greater than budgeted.
- Report on Lake Rabun Association Grants (for use in Rabun County only)
 - 9/20/10 grant for \$1,500 was complete as of 9/12/11.
 - 9/15/11 grant for \$1,500 was complete as of 2/8/13.
 - 7/1/12 grant for \$1,500 had \$155 remaining as of 11/30/13.
 - 6/7/13 grant for \$1,000 had \$1,000 remaining as of 11/30/13.
- Report on Cox Funds
 - A grant of \$10,000 was received.
 - A total of \$4,444 has been used, and \$5,556 remains.
 - \$916 was spent for educational purposes, and \$3,528 was spent for treatment projects (primarily in the Cartecay Tract of the Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area).
- Report on Razoo Foundation Funds raised by member Molly Elmore, who ran a trail race in September 2013 for the benefit of SGH. This was very successful – gross was \$510; net was \$485. It was noted that her sponsors were from all over the country. An organization called Classic Racing in Athens helps with this type of promotion. A suggestion was made about a great place for a race near Helen to the north, parallel to the Chattahoochee.
- * Report on Year-End Appeal as of 1/12/14:
 - Year-end appeal letters were distributed to the team in December 2013 and mailed out in December 2013 and January 2013.
 - As of 1/12/14, 25 donations totaling \$1,545 have been received.
- * Current Financial Condition as of 1/12/14:

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| Total income | \$2,025 |
| Total expenses | \$1,236 |
| Cash on hand | \$16,195 |

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2013

- * Review of FY 2013 accomplishments – Bob and Donna led a discussion of the FY 2013 Year-End Progress Report and the FY 2013 Strategy Plan. All agreed that we accomplished a tremendous amount this year, including most of the objectives we set for ourselves in the FY 2013 Strategy Plan:
 - 14 Georgia counties served by Hemlock Help Program (Dade & Walker Counties added this year)
 - 143 Volunteer Facilitators in Georgia and 53 in TN, NC and AL -- total of 196
 - 1,015 calls handled by the Hemlock Help Line, available 7 days a week
 - 7 Hemlock Help Clinics with 149 attendees
 - 6 Facilitator Training Workshops with 61 new Facilitators
 - 1 Lead Facilitator Workshop with 15 participants
 - 15 presentations to community/civic groups with 588 attendees/contacts
 - 31 Hemlock Lessons presented to 892 K-12 students and teachers
 - 2 children’s festivals with 210 K-12 students and teachers
 - 6 community festivals with 1,210 contacts
 - 38 charitable hemlock treatment projects, including 4 with the U. S. Forest Service and 17 with the DNR, for a total of 5,900 trees treated
 - 16 articles by or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines
 - 66 hemlock saplings adopted, 95 saplings ready for adoption, 127 saplings donated, 263 seedlings donated
 - 1 hemlock planting project with 100 kids and 4 teachers, planted 11 large saplings
 - 4,315 volunteer hours logged

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2014

- * Unfinished FY 2013 Business – Bob and Donna led a discussion of objectives for possible carrying forward into FY 2014: These are reflected in the section of Strategies and Activities for FY 2014 below.
- * Hemlock Help Program Expansion in FY 2014 – The team confirmed the decision to expand into 5 more counties affected by HWA -- Hall, Stephens, Banks, Gordon, and Cherokee Counties.

Education

- * Hemlock Help Clinics – Clinics will be offered for the 5 new counties being added to our program this year and for our 14 current counties as needed.
- * Facilitator Training Workshops
 - Facilitator training to be offered for the 5 new counties being added to our program this year as needed and for our 14 current counties as needed.
 - Annual refresher training will be implemented for Facilitators trained prior to 2013.
 - Our annual Lead Facilitator Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 15 in Dahlonega. All current Leads should plan to attend.
- * Youth Education
 - We will continue to offer Hemlock Lessons and projects in current and new counties as our time and resources permit, giving priority to environmental science classes and clubs at junior/senior level in high school and in colleges.
 - Susan and Rose suggested we should explore participation at regional science fairs, inventors clubs, discovery programs, etc.; also Project Learning Tree facilitator training sessions or within PLT curriculum.
 - Rose reminded us that we should focus youth education not so much on immediate action but more on developing future responsible citizens and environmental leaders.
- * Fairs and Festivals
 - We will target events that are most productive in terms of being able to conduct meaningful conversations with booth visitors and gaining new members, volunteers, and Facilitator candidates. Based partly on the informal awareness survey taken by Renee Gracon at the Apple Festival, these will most likely be events that draw locally rather than from areas that may be out of the native hemlock range.
 - The group voted to discontinue our participation in the Apple Festival and to add Trail Fest in March and Indian Summer Festival in October. Other local festivals may be added as they are identified.
- * Presentations to POAs and Civic Organization
 - We will increase our efforts to seek opportunities to share the hemlock message with POAs and civic groups and provide assistance with neighborhood hemlock help planning and project. Team members were encouraged to proactively identify POAs where we can help.
 - Several POAs were specifically mentioned as candidates for presentations – Skylake in Rabun County, The Orchard Community in Habersham County, Lake Rabun and other lake groups in Rabun County, Bent Tree in Pickens County.
- * Rosellinia Research Project
 - The group received a copy of the document titled Proposal to Save Georgia's Hemlocks Inc. for A Research Study on Needle Blight of Hemlocks – Diagnosis, Lifecycle, and control Options – Year 1, prepared for SGH by Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward from the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Georgia.
 - Donna summarized the proposal. It's a 3-year project. The first year will be primarily information gathering by citizen scientists but may also include data and sample analysis by the UGA lab if we can raise the necessary funds (\$7,000 for the first year). Based on findings from Year 1, the 2nd and 3rd years will focus on mapping the life cycle of the disease, how it spreads, what triggers its spread or suppression, and hopefully ways to control or cure it.
 - At this time there are no products specifically labeled for treating Rosellinia. If it is determined that the disease attacks more than just hemlocks (old research indicated it also attacks Sitka spruce and Douglas fir), that might help to gain the interest of the chemical companies to help us understand which current products that don't have disqualifying labels would be most effective or, even better, to seek label revisions for their products.
 - Donna asked the group to review the proposal in the next week and get back to her with a list questions for forwarding to Dr Woodward, who has offered to meet with the team to discuss their questions and concerns.

Service

* Hemlock Treatment Projects

- We will continue working with the U. S. Forest Service and have 4 projects scheduled for this year, with the possibility of 2 more.
- We will continue working on projects in Rabun County using funds provided by the Lake Rabun Association; we will also continue offering charitable service to private property owners, nonprofits, and public land managers in other counties.
- We will continue working with the DNR State Parks Division as requested, provided they complete a memorandum of understanding between themselves and SGH similar to the one in place between DNR Wildlife Management Division and SGH.
- Susan: shared the names of the new management contacts at Unicoi: Harvey Dunbar, General Manager and Terry Rester, Resource Manager . There is concern for the status of the hemlocks under the new management structure. Could we check the number of trees previously treated in the park and any plans for future treatments or retreatments and offer our help? Susan also mentioned that Denzil Hall, who is now a Facilitator, is also a Friend of the Park at Unicoi.
- We may or may not continue working in the Cartecay Wildlife Management Tract of the Rich Mountain Wilderness Area, depending on availability of funds and volunteers and condition of hemlocks relative to HWA and Rosellinia Needle Blight. Chris has identified one special area in the Cartecay Tract that she believes should receive treatment.
- Donna commented that we may have already spent an appropriate amount of money and volunteer time in the Cartecay and should keep ourselves prepared to help other areas as well. If we do continue the Cartecay project, we will need to coordinate closely with Jim Sullivan to ensure beetle release and chemical treatment areas are properly identified.

* Facilitators and Lead Facilitators

- We will recruit Lead Facilitators in all counties that don't have one (Banks, Cherokee, Gordon, Hall, and Stephens) and seek additional Facilitator in all counties.
- To increase involvement and commitment, expectations will be clarified with all current and new Facilitators regarding participating in at least 1 major educational or service event and contributing at least 4 hours per month in other hemlock support activities.
- Sign-up sheet based on our 2014 Calendar will be emailed to all current Facilitators and completed during training for all new Facilitators in the future.
- About 10% of Facilitator visits occur as a result of a call received on the Hemlock Help Line. The rest are generated by Facilitators identifying or responding to needs they come in contact with.
- Facilitators are reminded to keep track of their visits and other activities to turn in their quarterly house.

* Availability of Chemicals, Injectors, and Repair Capabilities

- Retailers to carry treatment products will be sought for Habersham, Towns, Dawson, Murray, Whitfield, and Dade.
- There is still no replacement for the Kioritz soil injector that is no longer made, but we have identified a different device that can be used satisfactorily in a mountain setting – the PTM spot Gun injector made by BASF and distributed by red River specialties in Americus.
- Frank Gheesling has done a great job in identifying sources/makers of replacement/substitute parts for the Kioritz and has recently returned 6 injectors to good working condition for the Georgia Forestry Commission and private owners.
- While we have not yet advertised this capability, informal contacts have resulted in opportunities to help injector owners in 3 other states as well.

* Availability of Qualified Service Professionals

- There are only 5 professional pesticide applicators that we're aware of in north Georgia who are properly licensed and insured for treating hemlocks, and only 4 of them actively do it. So many counties, particularly in the western part of the state, don't have access to a local professional.
- We would like to encourage some additional individuals to get licensed/insured by offering some kind of financial incentive, possibly in the form of a stipend to pay for study materials, testing, and application fees. Donna will talk to a few individuals she knows and ask their ideas on what they would consider financial encouragement.

- Bob suggested that if we find additional pesticide applicators, we should add their name to the list on the Contacts page and announce them in a quarterly newsletter.

* Saplings – We will continue our saplings program, providing seedlings for kids to pot and saplings for individuals to adopt. It is a good way to generate donations, raise awareness of the hemlock problem, and help preserve the species.

Communications and Outreach

* Assessment of public awareness and increased effective communications – Renee Gracon conducted an informal survey at the 2013 Apple Festival to gauge public awareness of the hemlock crisis and opinions about the treatment options. While the survey didn't identify where the respondents were from (and it's thought many were from outside the native hemlock range), it did suggest that there is still an inadequate level of awareness of the problem and that many of the respondents who were aware of the problem had misinformation or inadequate information about the solutions. We need to do a better job of educating the public.

* Current Materials

- We will undertake the revision/redesign of current publicity and educational materials for a more professional user-friendly design. Dave will establish new format(s).
- We need to revise some of our presentations, post newer articles and photos on the web site, and consolidate some of our printed materials to eliminate redundancy.
- The rack cards have been very effective and we need to re-order another 5,000.

* New Audiences

- We will prepare new materials to target our outreach to new audiences, including other conservation/recreation groups, real estate professionals, home inspectors, churches, local government agencies, and companies with environmental mission statements.
- We will put special focus on outreach to youth through high school and college environmental science classes and clubs, Boy Scouts, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and camps.

* Social Networking

- We will make better use of Facebook and other technology – Dave will make frequent entries to Facebook.
- We will also begin utilizing YouTube to post short training videos. Who knows how to do this?

* Newsletter and Articles

- Donna will resume publication of our quarterly *Hemlock Happenings* newsletter and widen the distribution; also will submit more frequent articles to local newspapers and the newsletters of other conservation/ recreation organizations.
- Rose suggested that we invite the newspapers to come out to cover our treatment projects and other special events. This might help resolve the issues of articles not always being published on time.

* Film – We will restart our project to prepare a hemlock film – Chris.

Membership and Partnerships

* Recruiting and engaging new members

- Festivals and training meetings are a good way to do this, and we might be able to do more on Facebook too.
- Susan will continue making contact with individuals who attend meetings or participate in projects to engage them asap in some aspect of our work.

* Partnering with other conservation and recreational organizations

- We want to enhance our current partnerships with organizations such as Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Mountain High Hikers, Mountain Stewards, Trout Unlimited, Go Outdoors USA, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Back Country Horsemen of North Georgia, Friends of the Parks, and others.
- We will identify more organizations with similar goals and interests and seek opportunities to engage in joint projects – Forest Watch, Appalachian Trail Club, Nature Conservancy, Georgia Conservancy, Georgia Native Plant Society, Georgia Green Industry Association, Georgia Urban Ag Council, Sierra Club, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Trees Atlanta, Trust for Public Lands, Elachee Nature Center, Yahoola Trails Conservancy, Co-Trails, Adopt-A-Stream, and other hiking, biking, and garden clubs.

* Increasing visibility of SGH

- Donna: We take membership forms to training meetings, festivals, etc. We should start taking envelopes too.
- Bob: We could put out “SGH at Work” signs wherever we are doing treatment projects.
- Other Ideas: Each board member is encouraged buy a T-shirt to wear at festivals, treatment projects, and other events. Donna will forward Café-Press link to everyone.
- Susan: Tony Reed makes lovely porcelain pins that might be a part of a donation tier. Rose suggested we inquire if she would be willing to donate some of these; we could wear them at SGH events and/or offer them as a thank-you for certain donations.
- The suggestion was made that we get more Bugzilla refrigerator magnets made, a t-shirt designed for kids, and some bumper stickers.

* Hike & Help the Hemlocks 2014

- Date is Saturday, September 27. Location is Cooper Creek HCA.
- We will again partner with the Benton MacKaye Trail Association for this annual event.
- We will invite one or more college-level environmental/recreational clubs and other conservation/recreation organizations to participate.

Finance

* Acceptance of Credit Card Payments – We will not do this. People can make donation using their credit cards via PayPal, and the need for accepting credit cards at festivals and other events is very small.

* Assistance to Property Owners – We will continue to seek and respond to opportunities to provide modest financial assistance to individuals in need, with the amount being determined on a case by case basis. Bob and Buz will be on the lookout in Rabun County, and other team members and Facilitators will do the same in their respective counties.

* Funding of Rosellinia Research Project – In Year 1, the only part of the project that requires money from SGH is the engagement of a UGA lab tech; UGA will contribute funding for the overhead costs. Donna asked the group to consider an amount they might be willing to set aside in our 2014 budget to partially fund the project, with the remaining funds to be raised through partnerships or grants.

* Grants – We will increase our efforts to secure targeted grants to fund certain of our activities/projects.

- One list of grants is on www.eeingorgia.com. Funds may be available through the USFS, Ga Forestry Commission, Ga Green Industry, Ga Urban Ag Council, companies that have environmental mission statements, North Georgia Community Foundation. Others?
- We are also seeking an individual with grant-writing expertise. Rose and Wynn Mott may know of a person.

* Other Fundraising Efforts

- Rose suggested publishing articles about what has been done, then provide information about specific future needs.
- Bob suggested that when we do presentations, we could include attendees in our year-end appeal.
- It was also suggested that we take membership forms and return envelopes to every SGH event, not just presentations and training classes.
- Year-End Appeal – There was general agreement that this year we should distribute appeal letter to team members by the first of October, mail to companies and organizations during October, and mail to individuals by mid-November.

* Budget – Donna will submit a draft budget for FY 2014 to the team based on strategies and activities discussed above.

NEXT SGH LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING – Sunday, April 13, location tbd