

1-18-15 SGH Leadership Team Meeting Notes

The meeting was held at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance were Bob Pledger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Dave Teffeteller, Donna Shearer, and Frank Gheesling. Bruce Granger was unable to attend.

BOARD MATTERS

- **Commitment to serve throughout calendar 2015**

Commitment was received from all Leadership Team Members.

- **Signing of annual acknowledgment statement**

All who were present signed the annual acknowledgment statement indicating they have recently reviewed, and agree to abide by, our ByLaws.

- **Finding new team members to serve as Secretary and Treasurer**

Several suggestions were made, and various Team Members agreed to follow up with the nominees to see if they would be interested in serving and invite them to a future meeting or activity.

REVIEW OF 2014 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

- **Progress Report 11-30-14 and Strategy Plan 11-30-14**

We accomplished a great deal this year, more than in any other year so far. Here are the highlights:

- All 19 HWA-infested Georgia counties now served by our Hemlock Help Program – Hall, Stephens, Banks, Cherokee and Gordon were added this year.
- Hemlock Help Line available 7 days a week with 1,011 calls handled
- 19 Hemlock Help Clinics with 244 attendees
- 2 Lead Facilitator Workshops with 14 participants
- 10 Facilitator Training Workshops with 51 new Facilitators in Georgia and 3 in other states
- Current total of active 176 Volunteer Facilitators in Georgia and 56 in other states
- 18 SGH presentations to POAs and community groups with 493+ attendees
- 5 SGH Hemlock Lessons presented to 273 students and 8 teachers
- 14 festivals/events with 1,383 visitors/contacts
- 20 public service announcements and 17 articles by or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines
- 235 hemlock saplings and 350 seedlings donated, 112 saplings adopted
- 28 Kioritz soil injectors refurbished at no cost or repaired for parts cost only
- 63 hemlock treatment projects with 184 volunteers treating 2,830+ trees*
- 4 hemlock planting projects with 104 volunteers planting 135+ saplings
- Total of 4,272 volunteer hours logged*

*revised upward based on information received during or after the meeting

- **Recap of Hike & Help the Hemlocks 9-27-14**

It was a very productive, educational, and fun day with our friends from the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and special speakers, Robert Fuller, Jim Wentworth, and Ralph Heller. The recap is posted on the About Us page of our web site.

- **Recap of trees treated**

Since our beginning in 2009 we have treated, or helped property owners/managers treat, more than 13,500 trees!

- **Discussion of any unfinished business to be carried forward**

No significant tasks were left unfinished in 2014.

REVIEW OF 2014 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- **Financial summary for FY 2014**

○ Total income	\$18,806.82	○ Total spending:
○ Total expense	\$17,411.60	91.64% education & charitable service
○ Ending balance	\$16,801.93	8.36% membership building, fund raising & administrative activities



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Budget vs actual for FY 2014

Actual income was \$1,578 more than forecast, primarily from increased donations from individuals. Actual expense was \$2,412 more than forecast, primarily in the areas of Other Education and Treatments, both of which were increased substantially over the previous year.

• Status of dedicated LRF grants and Cox award funds 11-30-14

- The first three LRF grants totaling \$4,500 have been used completely for education and charitable service benefiting Rabun County. The most recent grant of \$1,000 has a remaining balance of \$945, which will be used to support similar activities in Rabun County in 2015.
- Over half of the \$10,000 Cox Conserves Heroes award has been used, with the largest percentage going to support the hemlock treatment project on the Cartecay. Several ideas were presented for using the remaining \$4,362, and discussions are ongoing.

• Results of 2014 year-end appeal response as of 1-18-15

To date 47 donations totaling \$4,145 have been received as a result of our year-end direct mail appeal, and we anticipate that the flow of donations to extend through at least March. By this date last year we had received only 32 donations totaling \$2,440.

• Appeal letters yet to be mailed?

All of the appeal letters that team Members committed to send have been sent. Donna plans to send out some additional appeal letters this month, and Dave is planning to send follow-up letters to recipients who haven't responded yet.

2015 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

• Revision of Goals statements

- To reflect our increased focus on actively engaging all members and volunteers in our hemlock saving efforts, Donna proposed that we update our Goals statements as follows:
Educate: Enhance public awareness of the hemlock woolly adelgid crisis, current practical options and emerging control technologies, and the aesthetic, economic and environmental reasons to take timely and effective action to save the hemlocks.
Enable: Ensure easy access to sound hemlock-specific instruction, advice regarding economical solutions, and availability of necessary resources.
Engage: Enlist our volunteers to provide direct assistance to property owners, nonprofits, and public land managers.
- The Team approved the change, and Dave agreed to update our logo to read "Educate - Enable - Engage."

• Preview of 2015 Strategy Plan and Calendar of Events as known so far

- Bob presented the 2015 Strategy Plan in its streamlined form and indicated that it will be updated quarterly based on input from all Team Members. To simplify matters, we're asking that you just send in your Quarterly Activity Log (revised 1/25/15) instead of trying to update the Strategy document itself.
- Team Members reviewed the Calendar of Events and signed up to participate in specific events scheduled so far. Donna will send the Team a confirmation list of responsibilities assumed so far and asks that you **please review the rest of the calendar to see if there are any others you want to participate in.**

• Sharing and scheduling of teaching activities

All members of the Leadership Team committed to share in our teaching activities for Clinics and Facilitator Workshops in their own or nearby counties with help from the local Lead Facilitators. Team members will be supported with sets of training materials and equipment, a list of possible training locations with contact information, templates for publicity materials and publicity contacts, and other help as needed. The education calendar will be set so that the higher priority counties (those most recently added to our program or that need strengthened participation) will be scheduled earlier in the year. Donna will send the Team a confirmation list of responsibilities assumed and asks that you **please review it for accuracy and scheduling.**

• Sharing of outreach activities

All members of the Leadership Team also committed to share in our outreach activities. In some cases, responsibilities were assumed by geographical areas, in some cases by category, and in other cases by specific organization. Donna will send the Team a confirmation list of responsibilities assumed so far and asks that you **please review it to see if there are any others you're willing to sign up for.**

Education

○ Hemlock Help Clinics

- We will offer at least one Clinic per program county. Individuals interested in attending will be asked to register in advance so we can plan our materials appropriately.
- Clinics will continue to be free of charge.

- **Facilitator Training**

- We will offer at least one Facilitator Training Workshop per program county. Current Facilitators who received training prior to 2013 will be expected to attend a Facilitator Training Workshop during the year to refresh their knowledge and skills.
- We will conduct two Lead Facilitator Workshops in February: one for the central and eastern counties and the other for the western counties.
 - Feb. 21 in Dalton: Cherokee, Dade, Gordon, Murray, Pickens, Walker & Whitfield
 - Feb. 28 in Dahlonega: Banks, Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union & White
- Individuals interested in attending Facilitator Training will be asked to register in advance so we can plan our materials appropriately.
- Facilitator Training Workshops will continue to be free of charge (except for reimbursement at our cost if a participant wants to keep the printed copy of the Guide, which is normally re-used).
- Also, while Facilitators are automatically considered to be members whether they make a membership contribution or not, we want to strongly encourage them to become contributing members as it is an important source of support for our hemlock-saving activities.

- **Community programs**

At present our Calendar of Events includes support for several plant sales and community presentations. We will actively seek additional opportunities and anticipate that quite a few more will become known as the year progresses.

- **Fairs & festivals**

So far our Calendar of Events includes 13 fairs and festivals. We are open to participation in a few more, based on the audiences being in counties with hemlocks or having a concern for the hemlocks.

- **Youth programs**

We currently have 4 youth-oriented events scheduled and 1 pending. We anticipate that more will be scheduled as they are requested by schools and youth organizations.

- **Citizen science**

The Rosellinia needle blight research project will be activated this spring. We have approximately 50 volunteers signed up to scout for signs of the fungus and will provide them training on how to document their observations. The data will be used to populate a map showing the known occurrences, which in turn will help us disseminate awareness and controls information to affected counties.

Public Communications

- **Web site, Facebook, and YouTube**

- Donna will continue maintaining the web site and recognizes the specific need to update the Photo Gallery page.
- Dave will continue posting news and information on our Facebook page.
- **All Team Members are requested to be on the lookout for existing hemlock-related YouTube videos that present valid, useful information that we could post links to instead of “reinventing the wheel.”** We will probably create a few new ones on specific hemlock related information or skills as needed.

- **Print and broadcast media**

Dave and Donna will have primary responsibility for submitting articles to publications. **Team Members are requested to send Dave or Donna information about interests and events in their own or nearby counties so they can be publicized as appropriate.**

- **Signage**

Dave agreed to create a “SGH at Work” street sign we can place at hemlock treatment projects to draw attention to our efforts. A sign and metal stand will be provided to each Team Member to use with their personal helping activities as Facilitators. Two of the signs will also have rack card holders to provide information to passers-by during our hemlock treatment projects on public lands.

- **New materials needed for specific target audiences?**

None have been identified at present.

Service

- **Facilitator and Lead Facilitator roles, recruitment, training, and participation**

For Facilitators, we will focus on three main areas:

- Ensuring that our current Facilitators’ skills and knowledge stay up to date with the goal of having every Facilitator who was trained before 2013 attend a refresher training class during the year.
- Recruiting additional Facilitators in the counties most recently added to our Hemlock Help Program and those that need strengthening.
- Increasing the engagement of our Facilitator corps as a whole with the goal of having every Facilitator participate in at least one service or educational event during the year.

For Lead Facilitators, we will focus on two main areas:

- Recruiting Leads in counties that currently don't have one or need a replacement: Banks, Cherokee, Fannin, Gordon, Hall, Murray, Stephens, Towns, Union, Whitfield
- Enhancing the leadership role of our Leads to include sharing in our teaching activities, recruiting new volunteers and members, coordinating various volunteer events, and communicating about local activities, needs, and opportunities.

- **Hemlock treatment projects**

- We currently have 5 hemlock treatment projects scheduled with the U. S. Forest Service and 1 large neighborhood project pending for the Whitepath Golf Course in Gilmer County. It is likely that we can accommodate a few more during the year.
- Dave has been in contact with Chuck Waters concerning the possibility of additional treatment activity on the Cartecay Tract, and Donna has been in contact with Brian Nichols about possible treatment projects in the state parks; both will update the Team as those land managers make decisions.
- Bob and Buz will actively seek opportunities to do treatment and other projects in Rabun County, and we are open to help on public or private land as the opportunities become known.

- **Hemlock project planning**

We have just completed a hemlock project plan and the assessment phase for the Whitepath Golf Course and have another project plan in process for a property owner in Gilmer County. (Note that the Neighborhood Hemlock Project Planning Guide has recently been updated.) **Team Members are requested to be on the lookout for additional opportunities to provide hemlock project planning assistance to POAs and other groups.**

- **Availability of treatment products and soil injectors**

- Our updated Chemicals-Contacts-Sources document and a list of GFC soil injectors were provided to the Team to indicate where treatment products may be purchased and injectors may be borrowed. **Team Members are encouraged to actively seek retailers in counties that currently don't have a local chemical source and to share the information on availability of products and injectors within their communities.**
- Donna will create "tear sheet" mixing/dosing instructions that can be bound into pads and provided to chemical retailers to place with the treatment products in their store. Dave agreed to get them produced. When they're ready, they'll be sent to Team Members for local distribution.
- Donna will also send the Team a complete list of known public and private soil injectors, just FYI. Information about the private ones should not be shared except when an injector belongs to a POA or group with which the individual needing to borrow one has a legitimate connection.

Saplings

- **Adoption & donation**

We expect to donate about 170 saplings and 340 seedlings this year. Some of the saplings will be outright donations to nonprofit groups and some will be offered for adoption. All of the donated seedlings will be used for youth activities. In addition, if there is sufficient demand, we will procure a small number of larger balled and burlapped trees to meet specific adoption requests.

- **Planting**

We will continue to help property owners and nonprofits plant hemlocks in their landscapes or woods upon request.

- **Rescue**

With permission from the property owners/managers, we will schedule several projects during the year to rescue saplings from public and private land where they will not be treated. The rescued saplings will be potted and offered for adoption or used to establish hemlock nurseries.

- **Raising**

Team Members are requested to be on the lookout for schools or organizations interested in establishing hemlock nurseries with donated saplings. This activity helps raise awareness and get more hemlocks out into the community while allowing the school/organization to raise some funds by offering the samplings for adoption.

Membership/Partnership

- **Recruitment and engagement of members & volunteers**

- While we will continue to seek and nurture volunteers and members in Georgia and wherever there is interest, we will put special emphasis on the counties that were most recently added to our Hemlock Help Program or that need strengthening.
- We will also be reaching out to the Atlanta area this year since HWA is now known to be present there.
- Two of the most productive sources of new members are new Facilitators and individuals who adopt saplings.

- **Partnerships & outreach with more conservation and recreational organizations**

Throughout the year (as scheduled by individual Team Members), this initiative focuses on outreach to groups with which we want to continue and strengthen an existing relationship as well as potential new audiences with which we would like to establish a relationship. The goals of these relationships are any combination of the following:

- Increasing our awareness of the perspective, activities, resources, and needs of other groups that share our concern for protecting our forests and waterways and sharing the same kinds of information about SGH with those groups
- Creating opportunities for more effective communication with and service to local communities
- Growing our corps of actively engaged volunteers and/or financial support for our mission
- Keeping our knowledge current about ongoing research and HWA management plans

- **Hemlock Camp Meeting**

Date: Sunday, June 7

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: ETC Pavilion on Legion Rd. In Ellijay

Theme: A gathering of kindred spirits to celebrate and preserve the magnificent Hemlock

Purposes: Thanking our members, volunteers, and donors for their good work and support

Recognizing other nonprofits with similar conservation goals

Increasing our community of friends interested in saving the hemlocks

Program: Music by Downtown Roy, displays and information by each participating nonprofit, nature-themed arts and crafts, activities for kids, picnic lunch of catered barbecue plus pot luck dishes, special keynote speaker, and prize drawing. More detail coming soon.

Publicity and invitations will begin soon.

NOTE: The Hemlock Camp Meeting is not intended to replace our traditional Hike & Help the Hemlocks event which we do every year in partnership with the Benton MacKaye Trail Association the last Saturday of September; that event will go on as usual. However, the Team advised that with the Hemlock Camp Meeting in June, it would be best to move our Annual Meeting from July to August. Done.

2015 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- **Proposed budget for FY 2015**

Donna presented a draft budget for FY 2015, and **each Team Member is requested please to review it and provide any comments by February 13.**

- **Pesticide License Grant**

- In many north Georgia counties within the native hemlock range, there is a current shortage of treatment professionals who possess the necessary Pesticide Contractor's License and who have specific knowledge and experience in treating hemlocks. Therefore, the SGH Board of Directors deems it in the best interest of its mission to encourage and assist eligible individuals in underserved counties of north Georgia to obtain a Pesticide Contractor's License in the appropriate category or categories in exchange for their commitment to provide service in one or more underserved counties, abide by the "best practices" standards endorsed by SGH, and participate in the volunteer work of SGH.
- We have now finalized the documents (the application and the agreement) for SGH's Pesticide License Grant, and they are posted on the How You Can Help page of our web site.
- While priority may be given to individuals who will treat hemlocks in communities currently without a properly licensed applicator, the grant is available (as our resources permit) to any individual who desires to obtain a new or additional license to treat hemlocks in any Georgia county. All applications must be submitted for evaluation and approval by the SGH Board on a quarterly basis.

- **Financial assistance to property owners – SGH & GFC**

- SGH will continue to provide charitable assistance on an as needed basis to help property owners treat their hemlocks. Individual quantities of treatment products will be made available to each Team Member for this purpose and will be replenished as needed.
- The project of designing and proposing a hemlock cost share program to the GFC has been temporarily on hold but will now be continued with the goal of having a proposal ready by early spring.

- **Fund raising and grants**

Dave has several irons in the fire concerning possible grants. More discussion is needed.

ADMINISTRATION

We did not get to the items on our agenda concerning compliance, records, and reports, but we will address them either at our next meeting or by email in the interim.

NEXT LEADERSHIP TEAM QUARTERLY MEETING: Sunday, April 12.