



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

1/8/12 Notes for Board Meeting

The meeting was held Sunday, January 8 at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Donna Shearer, 37 Woody Bend, Dahlonega. In attendance: Bob Pledger, Dave Teffeteller, Frank & Linda Gheesling, Bonnie Mandel, and Donna Shearer. Bruce Granger, Doug Richey, and Bonnie Driver were unable to attend.

Reconfirmation of Current Board Members and Officers

Board members Donna Shearer, Bob Pledger, Frank Gheesling and Treasurer Bonnie Mandel expressed their willingness/ability to continue service for next term (Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting). Donna will follow up with those who were unable to attend to confirm their continuation.

Discussion of Open Board Position

We have one open position on our board and would like to fill it by this spring. Skills/talents/expertise that would be particularly helpful includes but is not limited to the following areas: grant research/writing, visual/on-line technology (video editing/production), database technology (GIS mapping, information extraction), member/volunteer recruitment and engagement, and outreach to youth and adult audiences (schools, garden clubs, civic organizations, POAs, etc.)

Anyone who is interested in serving on the board or knows someone who might be is encouraged to contact one of our current board members or officers (see link on About Us page of our web site) or call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010.

Acknowledgment of Bylaws and Policies

All board members and officers present signed the Acknowledgment confirming that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the SGH Bylaws and Policies. Donna will follow up with those who were unable to attend to obtain their signatures.

Disclosure and discussion of any potential conflicts of interest

The board members and officers present indicated they had no conflicts of interest. Donna will follow up with those who were unable to attend to confirm same.

As a matter of entering it into the record, at the 11-8-09 meeting Donna Shearer disclosed that her husband Mark Shearer has a commercial business, Hemlock Doctor, treating hemlocks in north Georgia. This ongoing relationship is disclosed on the Contacts page of our web site. At the 11-8-09 meeting the board voted unanimously (with Donna abstaining) that no conflict of interest exists.

Financial Report for FY 2011

Bonnie Mandel presented and explained the following reports:

- Profit & Loss for FY 2011 – Total income was \$14,090.56; total expense was \$12,769.01; and net income was \$1,321.55.
- Profit & Loss Previous Year Comparison – Total income was up by 15.49%, and total expense/spending was up by 44.09%.
- Profit & Loss by Class for FY 2011 – This report shows the cost of providing programs in 6 major areas, the donations generated through those areas, other donations, and our costs for administrative, fund raising, and membership building activities. Spending for programs was 89.8% of our total spending, with the balance of 10.2% being for administrative, fund raising, and membership building activities.
- Balance Sheet at year-end (Nov. 30, 2011) – Current checking/savings is \$6,609.10; and other current assets are \$308.58, for total assets of \$6,917.68. Total liabilities are \$6,917.68.

Donna reported that in FY 2011 we received 19 mailed-in donations totaling \$1,400 in January and February 2011 as a result of the direct membership appeal sent out in December 2010. In comparison, the direct membership appeal sent out in December 2011 has produced a 40% increase in the number of responses and a 65% increase in dollars received so far.

She also reported that in FY 2011 we received donations for 53 saplings that were adopted and gave away 1,210 seedlings/saplings to schools, churches, and other community groups.

Strategy Report for FY 2011

Bob presented the Strategic Plan Monitoring and Tracking Report as of November 30, 2011. A great deal was accomplished, resulting in hundreds more people becoming aware of the hemlock crisis and thousands of trees being saved! While a few action

items were not completed (mostly because of personnel changes during the year), the majority of tasks were accomplished successfully.

Several incomplete items were chosen for carry-over into the 2012 Strategic Plan, including but not limited to:

- Hemlock Help Clinics in Towns, Lumpkin, Murray, and Union Counties
- Mailing of awareness post cards to Union County property owners

Strategy Plan for FY 2012

Donna and Bob presented the draft Strategic Plan for FY 2012. It is organized around the following major areas:

- **Education** – Hemlock Help Clinics, Facilitator training and ongoing update process, outreach to schools/youth groups, presentations to community/civic groups and POAs, awareness mailings, fairs and festivals, and major SGH events; also identification of volunteer researchers/writers.
- **Service** – Program expansion into Pickens and Dawson Counties, increased activity in currently established program counties, increased accessibility of treatment products and application equipment, growth of the Facilitator corps, more volunteer service projects, establishment of working agreements with USFS and DNR/GFC, and continuation of the Hemlock Help Line.
- **Marketing & Communications** – publication of newspaper articles and ads, use of visual media, use of on-line technology, including a revised approach to FaceBook, development of educational materials aimed at POAs and real estate market, and appropriate format/use of Once upon a Hemlock. Developing OUAH as a coloring book is temporarily on hold while research is done to find the best way to integrate it into the school curriculum and engage children and their families in hemlock preservation. In considering whether or not to formally publish it, we will first define the strategy or purpose to be realized by publication and distribution for our own benefit and to support pursuit of a grant for printing.
- **Membership & Partnership** – update of Volunteer Opportunities document, development of membership recruitment materials, new procedures for engaging existing and new members/volunteers, development of welcome packet for new members, and another direct membership appeal to be sent before the end of FY 2012. We also discussed working with certain other nonprofits with similar environmental/conservation goals, cross-memberships, and cross-links on our web site.
- **Information Technology** – review of web site content and functionality and update as needed, and the need to identify one or more individuals with data collection/mapping capabilities for infested counties.
- **Financial Development & Management** – preparation and approval of FY 2012 budget, preparation and approval on annual tax filing, identification of one or more persons to do grant research/writing, development of funding plan and resources, maintenance of risk management plan, maintenance of financial records, and currency of compliance information. Note: Our financial records are backed up off site on Carbonite.
- **Organizational Support** – data collection to be done by Lead Facilitators, Secretary, and others for specific counties/areas, including but not limited to POAs, Master Gardener groups, garden clubs and other civic organizations; local organizations concerned with environment, conservation, recreation, and hospitality; major realtors and rental agencies.

Budget for FY 2012

The team agreed that we would use the 2011 P&L by Class figures as a starting point for generating the 2012 budget, with adjustments for programs/activities approved during today's discussion of the 2012 Strategy Plan. Donna will circulate a draft to the board for comments.

Annual SGH Event(s)

In addition to our Annual Meeting in July (which is a combination educational and membership event), the team voted to hold a late spring event combining education and volunteer service similar to the Hike & Help for the Hemlocks last year. It is hoped that the venue will be public lands, that a large number of our Facilitators will participate, and that it will be a joint effort with one or more like-minded organizations.

We also plan to participate in as many annual POA meetings as possible.

Other Board Matters

- **Facilitators** – Bob presented an updated Lead Facilitator Job Description that defines “areas” rather than counties for which Leads would take responsibility and broadened the ways in which the Leads will gather information from and share information with other Facilitators and members of the public in their respective areas. The new job description was approved by the team and has been posted on the web site. We also want to involve Facilitators in more volunteer service projects this year, in part as a means of refresher training.
- **Outreach to youth** – Dave suggested identifying the organization of science teachers in Georgia as a means of offering hemlock presentations or plug-and-play hemlock modules to elementary and middle schools. Frank suggested participating in various summer camps to present hemlock lessons or conduct hemlock-related activities.

- **Display materials** – The team agreed that we need to enhance the display materials we use at fairs and festivals, Hemlock Help Clinics, and other events.
- **Saplings** – Bonnie suggested that while our saplings program is not designed as a revenue generator, we could make some changes in terms of the sizes of trees we offer for adoption to bring the program to at least a break-even point.

Next Board Meeting

Normally our next quarterly meeting would be on Sunday, April 8, but since that's Easter, it will be held on Sunday April 1. At that meeting we will review and approve our annual tax filing that is due April 15.

Related Documents

Acknowledgment of Bylaws and Policies

FY 2011 Financial Reports (4)

FY 2011 Strategic Plan Monitoring & Tracking final report

Lead Area Hemlock Facilitator Job Description, rev approved 1/8/12

FY 2012 Strategic Plan

FY 2012 Fairs & Festivals

FY2012 Budget (draft 1-13-12)