

4-12-15 SGH Leadership Team Meeting Notes

The meeting was held at the Smithgall Woods Education Cabin in Helen. In attendance were Bob Pledger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Dave Teffeteller, Frank Gheesling, Bruce Granger, Donna Shearer, Peggy Reich, and Billy Johnson. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Donna Shearer. A written agenda, budget, calendar of events, and other supporting documents were provided.

BOARD MATTERS

• Finding new team member to serve as Treasurer

- SGH needs a treasurer, preferably someone with QuickBooks experience. Donna will check with Facilitators first and then may advertise for a volunteer. The Treasurer keeps track of income and expenses, generates quarterly financial reports, and prepares the annual tax filing required by the IRS. The full job description can be found in the SGH Bylaws.
- Donna also clarified questions about ‘officers’ and ‘board members.’ The SGH Bylaws describe the leadership team as consisting of seven voting board member positions and two non-voting officer positions. The Secretary and Treasurer are officer positions but may also be filled by board members.

• Team Member Bruce Granger reminded us that he and Jackie have their home for sale and will be leaving the area whenever it sells. We hope it will not be *too* soon but want to express our sincere appreciation to Bruce for his good service on behalf of the hemlocks and wish them our best for the future.

• Policy regarding lending SGH soil injectors

- We have had several requests recently from large neighborhoods wanting to borrow SGH Kioritz soil injectors for projects on which no SGH team members would be present. However, in view of the scarcity of Kioritz soil injectors and the difficulty keeping them in good repair, the team voted to adopt a policy of not lending our injectors to anyone except while one of our experienced Facilitators is on site.
- Individuals wanting to borrow an injector should be referred to the Contacts & Sources page of our web site for a list of locations that lend Kioritz or Nu-Arbor injectors.

• Policy regarding SGH charitable service projects

- We recently received requests from a couple of large neighborhoods for SGH to treat all their hemlocks on both private and communal property in exchange for a donation. The Charitable Service Projects section of our Bylaws states that we “desire to assist property owners, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to save endangered Hemlocks through charitable service projects when there is a compelling financial need and the Organization’s funds and/or manpower permit.” In these cases, we may or may not be reimbursed for the cost of chemicals, and we may or may not receive an unspecified donation; none is required or expected. The full text of the Charitable Service Projects section provides basic guidelines for the approval and conduct of such projects. (See Bylaws under Organizing Documents on About Us page of web site.)
- However, the team felt that additional guidelines would be helpful in dealing with service requests from individuals and neighborhoods where there is no compelling financial need. Therefore, the following clarifications to our policy were discussed and accepted by the team.
- Individual private properties – When there is no compelling financial need on the part of a property owner, SGH may treat or help treat their trees using chemical provided by or reimbursed at cost by the property owner.
- Neighborhoods – Since neighborhoods generally don’t qualify as having a compelling financial need, SGH may work *with* but not *for* neighborhoods to treat their hemlocks. SGH may provide project planning assistance and training. The neighborhood is expected to acquire the chemicals and enlist volunteers to do the work. SGH may also provide leadership, application equipment, and work kits for the neighborhood teams for a specified period of time on site (typically a day), after which the neighborhood should be able to continue on its own if the project requires more time to complete.

It was recommended that neighborhoods requesting large-scale project support should make a *quid pro quo* donation to SGH, with the minimum amount being based on a conservative rate for professional treatment (\$1 per diameter inch) for the trees treated while SGH is providing on-site team leadership. It was also suggested that neighborhoods be given a comparison chart to show what they would pay a typical commercial entity to treat different numbers of trees.



2015 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- **Financial Summary for FY 2015 to date** -- The Balance Sheet was reviewed, looking at planned versus actual budget. We came out ahead on net revenue. There was discussion as to appropriate uses for remaining Cox and Lake Rabun Foundation funds.
- **Results of 2014 Year-End Appeal Response** – To date, we have received 63 donations totaling \$5,230 from our year-end appeal. At this time last year, we had received 74 donations totaling \$5,380, but donations are continuing to come in steadily and are expected to surpass last year. It was suggested that each team member resend the letter to people on their individual lists that have not sent donations yet.
- **Approval of Tax Filing** -- The Board reviewed and approved our 900EZ tax form. It will be mailed on 4/14/15.
- **Financial Assistance to New Pesticide Applicators** -- SGH gave one grant to a new pesticide applicator in Floyd County. He will be serving about ten counties in the northwest part of the state.

2015 STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Fillable Quarterly Reporting Form** – Thanks to Dave for preparing this document. It should make reporting and tracking our activities much easier.
 - Leadership team members and Facilitators are asked to use the form to report their quarterly activity as of the end February, May, August, and October – corresponding with the ends of SGH fiscal quarters. Lead Facilitators are asked gather reports from the Facilitators in their “flocks.”
 - The suggestion was made and Dave agreed to add instructions for how to download and use the form. Donna and Bob will consider ways to make it conform more closely to the specific categories of activity we track.
- **Progress Report as of 4/11/15**
 - 19 HWA-infested Georgia counties now served by our Hemlock Help Program
 - Hemlock Help Line available 7 days a week with 360 calls handled to date
 - 2 Lead Facilitator Workshops with 19 participants
 - 10 Facilitator visits made to property owners
 - 3 training classes for 50 neighborhood volunteers
 - Current total of active 167 Volunteer Facilitators in Georgia and 55 in other states
 - 4 SGH presentations to community groups with 76 attendees
 - 3 festivals/events with 9 volunteers and 185 visitors/contacts
 - 4 articles/news items written by or with the assistance of SGH published in newspapers/magazines
 - 28 hemlock saplings adopted and 19 saplings donated
 - 2 hemlock rescue projects with 2 volunteers – 180 saplings rescued
 - 1 hemlock sapling planting project with 12 volunteers planting 12 saplings
 - 4 hemlock treatment projects with 31 volunteers treating 456 trees
 - 5 Kioritz soil injectors in process of being repaired/refurbished at no cost or repaired for parts cost only
 - Total of 1,202 volunteer hours logged to date
- **EDUCATION**
 - Clinics and Facilitator Workshops -- Leadership team members and Lead Facilitators are teaming up to cover the training needs for all 19 SGH program counties. Leadership team members are asked to contact their helpers schedule the training, and let Donna know as soon as possible (requested by April 18). A list of potential training locations was provided.

Hemlock Help Clinics and Facilitator Training Workshops have been scheduled for Hall, Murray, Whitfield, Pickens, Dade, Walker, Gilmer, Gordon, Dawson, and Lumpkin Counties.

Training still needs to be scheduled for Rabun, Towns, Habersham, White, Union, Fannin, Cherokee, Stephens, and Banks.

Individuals who want to attend training must pre-register to avoid the situation of a trainer traveling to a training location and now knowing how many (if any) students to expect.
 - Facilitator Refresher Training -- Donna has sent a letter to all Facilitators and Lead Facilitators explaining the new expectation/requirement for taking refresher training every 3 years.
 - Citizen Science -- She will send a letter to individuals who have signed up to help on the *Rosellinia* Needle Blight research project when it gets closer to time for seeing the fungal outbreak.

- Hemlock Lessons for Schools – Donna indicated we will probably be seeking fewer presentation opportunities in the lower grades but will continue to respond to requests for presentations and projects for high school and college groups.

- Other – Our Calendar of Events for the next 3 months includes the following:

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| Apr. 14 | SGH presentation to Blue Ridge Mountains Rotary Club in Blue Ridge |
| Apr. 19 | SGH info booth at Ecumenical Earth Day Celebration in Dalton |
| Apr. 24 | SGH education station with seedling potting at Earth Day Festival at High Meadows in Roswell |
| May 2 | SGH education station and seedling potting at Girl Scouts of North Georgia event “Go Fish 2015” sponsored by Trout Unlimited in Blue Ridge |
| May 8 | SGH brief presentation & education station w/ seedling potting for 5th graders at Blackburn Elementary’s Bear Jamboree in Dahlonega |
| May 23/24 | SGH info booth at Spring Arts in the Park Festival in Blue Ridge |
| May 24 | SGH exhibit & brief presentation at Lake Rabun Association Memorial Day Meeting in Lakemont |
| June 6 | SGH education station for Hemlock Day at Anna Ruby Falls near Helen |
| June 7 | 2015 Hemlock Camp Meeting in Ellijay |

• **SERVICE**

- Hemlock Treatment Projects with USFS – We have a Blue Ridge District project scheduled for April 18 at Blackwell Creek HCA in Union County and one on June 13 in the Noontootla HCA in Fannin County. We need to get some projects scheduled in the Chattooga River District as soon as possible.
- Hemlock Treatment Project in Rabun County – We have a project scheduled for May 9 at Camp Rainey Mountain to treat hemlocks in a different area from where we treated 2 years ago; Bob Pledger is coordinating the logistics.
- Hemlock Treatment Projects with DNR State Parks – We have a training and treatment combo scheduled for June 20 at Cloudland Canyon State Park in Dade County; John Logan is coordinating the logistics. Brian Nichols has also requested help for Fort Mountain State Park and will let us know the time frame as soon as he knows it.
- Hemlock Treatment Project with DNR Wildlife – Dave and Chris think it would be good to treat more trees along the Cartecay. The team agreed, provided DNR will supply the chemical this time. Donna will ask Chuck Waters to budget enough money for chemical to treat as many more trees as we treated in 2013.
- Report on Hemlock Treatment Project at Whitepath Golf Course in Ellijay – This multi-phase project was requested by the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, organized by Paul Berrey, and supported by SGH. During the Assessment Phase (Jan. 6 & 20), 426 trees were identified to be treated with Imidacloprid by soil injection and 36 to be treated with Safari by basal bark spray at an estimated total chemical cost of \$1,671. The hemlock treatment Phase began on March 25 with 19 volunteers receiving training and then treating 295 trees. The remaining Imidacloprid trees will be treated by local volunteers over the next few weeks, and the project is scheduled to be complete on April 22 with treatment of the Safari trees.
- Saplings -- On March 17 volunteers rescued 140 saplings that were not chosen for treatment at the Whitepath Golf Course and potted them. Some were donated for the Gilmer County Garden Club’s upcycling plant sale, and the rest will be offered for adoption by SGH. On April 28 another 100 seedlings were rescued at Whitepath to be used for educational seedling potting events for kids this spring.

• **PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

- Signage – Dave has designed and delivered 8 “SGH at Work” signs for us to use when we’re working on hemlock treatment projects. They’re beautiful – Thanks Dave! Six team members took a sign and metal stand, and Donna kept 2 to use on our Forest Service and DNR projects.
- Fernbank Presentation – Jim Breedlove with the Fernbank Museum of Natural History has invited SGH to give a presentation in conjunction with their Earth Day celebration on April 19. Fernbank’s marketing staff is handling the publicity. Bob and Donna will host an information table for 2 hours and then give our Hemlock Help Clinic presentation.
- Publicity for Training Classes – Donna will send publicity material to the north Georgia counties for our training classes – to include two weeks of Community Calendar announcement, an article or letter to the editor, and a boxed ad, as deemed appropriate for each county.

- **OUTREACH**

- Cynthia Maude has been active in speaking recently. She has presented to Trout Unlimited, Rotary, Real Estate Board, and Georgia Mountain Research Center.
- In conjunction with the upcoming presentation at Fernbank, it was suggested that we contact HOA's in Druid Hills, Ansley Park and others, also Master Gardener groups and Trees Atlanta.

2015 HEMLOCK CAMP MEETING

- **Theme** – A gathering of kindred spirits to celebrate and preserve the magnificent hemlock
- **Purposes** – * Raise awareness of the hemlock crisis
* Recognize and thank our members, volunteers, and supporters
* Learn about progress in the HWA battle, the latest research, and how we can help
- **Invitation Flyer** – Dave prepared a very attractive invitation flyer we can email or mail to our own distribution lists, post in public places, and share with other organizations. Thanks Dave!
- **Invitation List** – The attendee set we're seeking includes Facilitators and Lead Facilitators in Georgia, donors and supporters, volunteers and hemlock friends.
- **Friends Circle** – We also plan to have a "Friends Circle" of like-minded organizations that will bring displays and information to share with each other and our guests. They will not be able to bring anything to sell, and booth staff will be limited to 4 people per booth. A list of potential participating organizations was divided up among team members to contact and invite.
- **Keynote Speaker** – The team discussed particular information they hope Dr. Richard McDonald will include in his message. Donna agreed to convey their thoughts to him.
- **Task List & Time Line** – The team reviewed a list of tasks that need to be completed before HCM as well as those that need to be handled during the event and signed up for the ones they agreed to be responsible for.
- **Budget**
 - Income: There will be no charge for individuals to attend or for organizations to have an information booth. As guests arrive, we will ask them to become members or renew their membership, and we will also offer saplings for adoption. We hope to take in \$300 to \$500 in donations.
 - Expense: Our expenses will be \$50 fee for the pavilion, \$250 for the band (several members are donating their fee in exchange for a thank-you/tax receipt letter), about \$400 for Poole's barbecue, \$166 for Dr. McDonald's hotel, plus a small honorarium.
 - Raffle: There was some discussion of asking booth participants to bring an item for a raffle or door prize; 1st ticket would be free; additional tickets could be bought; winner would be announced at end of event and must be present to win. No final decision was made about this.
 - Favors – It was recommended that each guest receive a hemlock seedling to take home. Donna will provide these at no cost, time permitting.
 - Net: We expect our total out-of-pocket cost to be \$500 to \$700, a cost the team thought would be acceptable if we are able to engage 100 to 125 people.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS REQUESTED BY 4-18

- Teaching dates and locations
- Any changes to calendar
- Dates for Chattooga District treatment projects

NEXT LEADERSHIP TEAM QUARTERLY MEETING: Sunday, July 12.