

# 7-12-15 SGH Leadership Team Meeting Notes

The meeting was held at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance were Billy Johnson, Bob Pledger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Dave Teffeteller, Donna Shearer, Frank Gheesling, and Peggy Reich. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Donna Shearer. An agenda and the following supporting documents were provided for the meeting:

Progress report through 7-11-15  
Financial summary through 7-11-15

Report on Hemlock Camp Meeting  
Calendar of Events as of 7-11-15

Shared Teaching  
Beetles Save Needles Guide

## BOARD MATTERS

### \* Finding new Board Member to fill vacancy

SGH is seeking a new Board Member to fill the vacancy created when Bruce Granger moved out of state last month. The team agreed that ideally Board Members should come from the ranks of our Lead Facilitators, but this is not necessarily a requirement. The key considerations are interest, dedication, time, and best fit. Other factors, in no particular order, could include geography, age, experience, specific skills or expertise, and connectedness within the community. Several people were mentioned as possible candidates.

Team members recommended reviewing the current board member application and updating it as necessary before launching the full formal search. One suggested revision was to include information about the responsibilities and time involved. They committed to provide their input by July 31. Donna will send interest inquiries with the revised board member application to individuals who were nominated or who volunteer.

### \* Finding new Treasurer

We're still looking. Donna has not sent out the job requirements and request for volunteers but will do so shortly.

## 2015 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

### \* Progress report as of 7-11-15

We briefly reviewed the Progress Report and noted that several categories have not been updated because some Quarterly Activity Reports have not been received yet. As soon as all data are in, the report will be updated.

### \* Discussion of Quarterly Activity Reports

- **Problem:** For several years, we have tried to obtain Quarterly Activity Reports from all members of our Leadership Team, all Lead Facilitators, and all Facilitators through their Leads, but the reports have not been forthcoming. Possible reasons mentioned included no activity to report, too much information being requested, difficulty using the on-line pdf report form, or failure to recognize the importance to the organization.
- **Significance:** Donna explained that the information requested on the report is vital for preparing our annual tax filing to the IRS and the State in support of our tax-exempt status. It is also part of our public record available to current and potential members, volunteers, supporters, public agencies, and other like-minded non-profits.
- **Recommended solution:** Streamline the information requested (fewer categories, totals only, not detail), simplify the report form (Excel rather than fillable pdf), change the reporting period to calendar quarters instead of fiscal quarters, and require the report only from Leadership Team Members and Lead Facilitators. Donna will circulate a draft of the revised form for Team Member comments and will follow up with the Lead Facilitators who have not submitted their reports for end of Q2.

### \* Report on Hemlock Camp Meeting

- **What worked well:** We had 130 guests and participants. The venue, parking, music, food, guest speaker, and participation by like-minded groups all received high marks. We will send inquiries to the groups that participated in the Friends Circle to get their perspective on the event and any suggestions for improvement.



- **Cost:** We put on the event for a total out-of-pocket cost (expenses minus donations) of \$739, which translates to about \$5.68 per person, with no admission fee. This was deemed an acceptable level of expense, especially considering the level and quality of the educational content, although we hope in the future to be able to cover the cost entirely through new and renewing memberships received at the event.
- **Making it an annual event:** The team voted to continue it as an annual educational event with entertainment, food (catered or supplied main dish plus potluck covered dishes from guests), keynote speaker, and participation by like-minded groups. They recommended that it should also serve as our Annual Membership Meeting/Picnic instead of having two major events a year.
- **Suggested changes for future:**
  - Plan to hold it in May, book the venue now, invite Friends Circle participants in January, and send general invitations/publicity 6 weeks ahead of event. Venue requirements include a large covered pavilion, electricity, restrooms, room for 150 people, tables and chairs/benches, and adequate parking; a kitchen and speaker system would also be ideal.
  - Alternate the location between the eastern and western parts of the state every other year to make it accessible to more people. Suggested locations for 2016 included Hardman Farm near Helen, Tallulah, Black Rock, Unicoi, Anna Ruby, Rabun Gap Nacoochee School, somewhere in Gainesville. Buz agreed to check on Hardman Farm but found it is not available yet. Dave agreed to start checking on other possible venues.
  - Since a major emphasis will be membership, admission will be each person's or family's current, renewing, or new membership. Membership equates to financial support at any level, and current membership is based on any financial support provided at any time during the calendar year. The welcome/membership table will have a membership list with current or expired membership dates to facilitate admissions and membership building.
  - We may add a silent auction to the event and ask local vendors to donate something of value in exchange for recognizing them as supporters. Announce winners at the end of the event; winners must be present to receive their prizes.
  - We will give each group participating in the Friends Circle a short time (about 2 minutes) to speak about their organization. This could be during lunch or between lunch and the presentation. Also include a time to recognize and thank our Board Members, Lead Facilitators, and Facilitators.
  - We will continue to provide the main meat dish, a meat alternative, and drinks and ask our guests to bring potluck covered dishes for sides and dessert. We will smooth the flow of food service by having two serving lines and then smooth the flow from lunch to the presentation by having all the audio-visual set-up in place before the event starts.

### \* **Calendar of Events for remainder of year**

We briefly reviewed the Calendar of Events, taking specific note of the upcoming Annual Membership Meeting/Picnic in August, our annual Hike & Help the Hemlocks in September, three festivals in October, and one more treatment project in November. All of these except the November treatment project will take place before our next quarterly Leadership Team meeting on October 25.

It was noted that we have 3 festivals on October 3 and only 2 sets of the tall freestanding displays. Dave volunteered to create a large banner similar to the poster we took to the Alliance for Threatened Forests Symposium a couple years ago that could be used in place of the freestanding displays.

### \* **Upcoming Annual Membership Meeting 8/16/15**

- Shortly after this meeting, we learned that our keynote speaker would not be able to come. Since we just completed our Hemlock Camp Meeting only 5 weeks ago and that served as a key educational event for our membership, the team decided we did not need to schedule another one so soon, so it is canceled.
- The team also voted that going forward we will use our Hemlock Camp meeting as our Annual Membership Meeting/Picnic, and that will serve as our major educational event for the year.
- We will continue to do our annual Hike & Help the Hemlocks as our major service event for the year.

**\* Upcoming Hike & Help the Hemlocks 9/26/15**

- o **Location:** Lake Winfield Scott Campground, Suches
- o **Partner:** Benton MacKaye Trail Association. This will be the 6<sup>th</sup> year of SGH's partnership with this very proactive organization, and we appreciate them very much for helping spread the hemlock message, preserving their local hemlocks, and helping as volunteers on various treatment projects.
- o **Content:** As it has been in the past, this will continue to be primarily a service event but with some educational content. It will include a hemlock treatment project and hike in the morning, followed by a joint picnic and short messages (about 10 minutes each) from the Forest Service, BMTA, SGH, and hopefully another hemlock-related speaker. There will be no entertainment, and participants will be asked to bring the own sack lunches. We will provide drinks and dessert.

**\* Classes for remainder of year**

- o **Completed:** Classes have been held for Murray, Whitfield, Hall, Pickens, Dade, Walker, and Gilmer Counties. So far we have gained 10 new Facilitators, and 3 current Facilitators have taken refresher training.
- o **Scheduled:** Classes are scheduled for Dawson, Banks, Lumpkin, Gordon, Cherokee, and Fannin Counties.
- o **To be scheduled:**
  - Dave will combine Union with Fannin on August 29 and ask for assistance from Lead Facilitators Cynthia Maude and Wynn Mott. The invitation for this class will also be extended to Towns County.
  - Bob and Buz will schedule classes for Stephens, Habersham, and White combined and ask for assistance from Lead Facilitators Billy Johnson (who said yes) and Denzil Hall. They will also schedule classes for Towns County and ask for assistance from Lead Facilitator John Howell.
  - Bob and Buz said they believe Rabun County has been saturated with the hemlock message for now and doesn't need another round of classes this year.
- o **Special:** SGH has been asked to conduct a customized training class for a group of Americore participants in August to enable them to treat hemlocks on their own, in support of the DNR State Parks. For such projects the site, tree selection parameters, choice of treatment material and treatment method will have been pre-determined by the DNR. Donna will do the classroom segment, and Billy Johnson volunteered to do the hands-on segment.

**\* Hemlock treatment projects for remainder of year**

- o **USFS Blue Ridge District:** Lake Winfield Scott 9/26/15 and Rock Creek 11/14/15. We have a number of volunteers already signed up for each of these, Donna and local Lead Facilitators will seek more.
- o **USFS Chattooga River District:**
  - Bob is communicating with Wes Bentley about the chemical to be provided by the Forest Service.
  - Donna will work on finishing the repairs to 4 Forest Service injectors this coming week.
  - Then Bob will start scheduling projects for this fall.
- o **DNR Cartecay Tract:**
  - Donna reported that Chuck Waters committed to order 40 gallons of Imidacloprid 2F/2L for treatment of another 3500 trees (about the same number that were treated during 2012-2013) and will let us know when it arrives. Dave will pick it up and house it for easy access to the project area.
  - Dave and Chris know where the new work areas are, and Dave will prepare appropriate maps.
  - Dave also said Don Wells of the Mountain Stewards indicated they would be interested in working with us on this project starting next spring. Mountain Stewards has been an excellent long-term partner with SGH, and we are very grateful for all their good work on behalf of thousands of hemlocks.

\* **Consideration of Dr. McDonald's suggestions re SGH involvement with biological controls**

- During his presentation at our Hemlock Camp Meeting, Dr. McDonald mentioned a number of ways individuals and elaborated on them during a brief after-meeting with Leadership Team Members who were able to stay:
  - Share information about biological controls, specifically predator beetles
  - Help make beetles available to non-federal/state lands in Georgia
  - Start our own beetle insectaries
- **Fit within our mission:**
  - Sharing general information about biological controls definitely fits within our mission and is already part of the overall message we present. However, it would be good to learn more of the specifics concerning beetles, their effectiveness, cost, and availability for appropriate release sites.
  - Making beetles available to non-federal/state property owners/managers such as neighborhoods, municipalities, large recreation/hospitality areas could fit within our mission in terms of listing contact information for reliable sources on our web site as we do for chemicals. We also could become a source ourselves at some point in the future. However, the group felt we should refrain from endorsing or acting in a marketing/sales capacity for any third-party beetle supplier in the same manner as we do for chemical suppliers.
  - Starting our own beetle insectaries was a topic of great enthusiasm and hope for the group. The consensus was that this undertaking would allow us to play a tangible role in implementing a long-term biological solution while continuing to support chemical controls in the interim. However, the team also recognized the magnitude of this effort and expressed the need to do a great deal of research before deciding how to proceed.
- **Questions:** Here are some of the immediate subjects the team feels we need to understand before proceeding with a larger role in support of biological controls.
  - The specific information we should share regarding beetles, to whom, and how; also possibly info about silver flies
  - Criteria for appropriate beetles release sites, number of beetles needed, cost, and availability
  - Realistic expectations regarding the efficacy of biological controls
  - Requirements for implementing beetle insectaries – a product plan including (in no particular order) market need, personnel qualifications and training, multi-year project timeline, activities and time required, state or federal regulations, marketing efforts, cost and return on investment.
- **Doing our homework:** The team decided we should start with the following steps.
  - Put together a consolidated list of our questions – input due by August 31.
  - Discuss these questions with Dr. McDonald, Mark Dalusky, Jim Sullivan, and lots of other “people in the know,” including federal and state agencies.
  - Schedule a site visit to his operation in North Carolina (probably this fall) and a number of other sites.
  - Scope out possible insectary sites and arrangements for acquisition or long-term use of the land.
  - Take training from several reliable sources and do some understudy field work.
  - Consider any shifting of Leadership Team Member responsibilities and recruiting of additional resources that would be required.
- **One more idea:** Dr. McDonald also sent another idea by email a few days after HCM, suggesting that SGH should take the lead to organize a Southern HWA Biological Controls Symposium. This was viewed by the team as both outside the scope of our mission statement and beyond our present capacity. Such meetings are typically organized by the U. S. Forest Service, the Alliance for Threatened Forests, other large environmental or conservation organizations, and universities. However, Donna will make inquiries to see if any such meetings are planned and let them know SGH would be eager to participate or at least attend.

**2015 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**\* Financial summary for FY 2015 as of 7-11-15**

This was included on the Progress Report but was not discussed in the meeting.

**NEXT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**

1 p.m. Sunday, October 25, at 37 Woody Bend in Dahlonega