

SGH Leadership Team



Donna Shearer, Founder

Save Georgia's Hemlocks' founder Donna Shearer, passed away in June, 2024, however, her motivating presence, humor, empathy and leadership will continue to serve as the guiding principles behind the success of SGH. Learn more about Donna [here](#).

Darrell Sheffield, Chairman

Darrell Sheffield has served as a field volunteer, Instructor, Facilitator, Board Member, and now Chairman with Save Georgia's Hemlocks since 2015. Darrell is a lifelong outdoorsman with a particular interest in hiking and backpacking. It was his love for the trails in the southern Blue Ridge mountains that brought him face to face with the destruction facing the Eastern Hemlocks. His experiences on trail pushed him to get involved and ultimately to SGH. Darrell is married to Melissa and they have four children who have also volunteered with Save Georgia's Hemlocks at times. He's now retired from full time work after serving 35 years with the U.S. Social Security Administration.



Dave Teffeteller, Vice Chairman/Communications Director/Paddling for Hemlocks Coordinator

Dave Teffeteller is a life-long conservationist. He has lent his professional skills and dedication to numerous environmental non-profit organizations throughout the country. His role as a non-profit consultant in strategic planning, led to his becoming a founding member and director of Save Georgia's Hemlocks. An avid fly fisherman and outfitter, he realizes the role of healthy forests in maintaining the delicate ecosystem of our streams, rivers and lakes. His career as a designer, creative director and writer spans more than 50 years. Dave and his wife, Joanne Waddey, live in Ellijay where he serves as a director of Blackberry Mountain Association.

Chris Curtin, Board/Saplings Manager North Central Counties

Chris Curtin graduated Cum Laude from the University of Miami with a B.Mus in Music Therapy/Music Education, the University of Georgia with a MED in Special Education/Counseling, and Emory University with a PhD in Educational Leadership. She spent 30 years working in private and public schools in Georgia. Upon retirement, Chris settled into mountain life in Ellijay, where she has lived for 14 years. She was instrumental in starting the Beekeepers of Gilmer County along with being a founding member of SGH. She also has a booth in a local antique store in Ellijay, specializing in kids' toys. She enjoys life.



Jim Wentworth, Board/Treatment Manager BRRD

Jim Wentworth received his BS in Wildlife Biology from the University of Massachusetts and MS and PhD in Wildlife Biology from the University of Georgia. Jim worked for over 30 years as a Wildlife Biologist with the US Forest Service, the majority of which was on the Chattahoochee National Forest in north Georgia. During that time, he was instrumental in establishing agreements between SGH and USFS to allow SGH volunteers to treat hemlocks on the National Forest. After retiring in 2018, he joined the SGH board and is continuing to lead volunteers on hemlock treatment projects on the Blue Ridge Ranger District. He's also on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, the Union County Lions Club, the Georgia Battlefields Association, and the Community Council of UGA's Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. Jim lives in Blairsville with his wife Cindy.

Buz Stone, Board/Saplings Program Manager NE Counties

Born and raised in Atlanta, Buz attended Emory undergraduate and law school, graduating in 1970. He joined the Air Force as a JAG officer and served for 4 years. Afterwards, Buz practiced law in Atlanta for 22 years. He began a second career in rustic landscaping in 1997, eventually selling that business and retiring in 2021. He has been active in several nonprofits, serving as Chairman of the Lake Rabun Association, Director of the Lake Rabun Foundation, Chairman of Foxfire, and Chairman of Save Georgia's Hemlocks. Buz has been married to his high school sweetheart, Mary Cobb, since 1968. They have three grown children, nine grandchildren and are enjoying retirement living on Lake Rabun. Buz served as SGH's Chairman from 2021-2025.



Katherine Carey, Board Member at Large

Katherine Carey grew up in North Georgia and moved away at a young age, returning home in 2018. After being introduced to SGH founder Donna Shearer by her father, she followed in his footsteps and became an SGH Facilitator. Drawn to SGH's mission to protect the Eastern Hemlock—and the passion of its volunteers—Katherine went on to serve as the Cabin Owners' Liaison at Lake Winfield Scott and later joined the SGH Board. Outside of SGH, Katherine works as the Grant Outreach and Education Coordinator for the State, Tribal, Local, Plans & Grants division of the National Park Service. Her background in conservation and historic preservation began in Charleston, South Carolina, working with the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Rosenwald Schools Initiative. In her free time, she's happiest trail running and hiking near her cabin in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Heidi Hunter, Executive Director

Since November, 2024, Heidi has served as the Executive Director for Save Georgia's Hemlocks. Heidi brings over twenty years of experience in the nonprofit sector, previously serving as the State Director of GA Children's Lifeline Services. She holds a master's degree in administration from Liberty University.



Betty Larsen, Festivals & Special Events Manager

Todd Jackson, Treasurer

John Shearouse, Saplings Technical Advisor

Jim Heilman, Saplings Program Manager NW counties

Jimmy Stewart, Treatment Manager NW counties

Elliott Seagall, Scout Liason

Robert Patchett, Scout Liason

Jody Webb, Membership Coordinator