



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

1-13-13 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

A quarterly meeting of the Save Georgia's Hemlocks Leadership Team was held on Sunday, January 13, 2013 at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance: Bob Pledger, Dave Teffeteller, Frank & Linda Gheesling, Rose Mott, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Susan Chapman, Donna and Mark Shearer. Bruce Granger was unable to attend.

BOARD MATTERS

Welcome – The meeting began with a general welcome and introduction of new board members, officers, and friends.

Reconfirmation – All board members and officers indicated their commitment to serve throughout calendar 2013.

Acknowledgment – All board members and officers signed the annual acknowledgment confirming that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the SGH Bylaws and Policies.

Bylaws – Bylaws have been updated to reflect the following change: Only one authorized signature will be required on a SGH check.

REVIEW OF FY 2012

* Donna praised the team's excellent accomplishments in FY 2012: more counties served (12 now), more calls on the Hemlock Help Line, more Facilitators trained, more programs for schools and community groups, more trees treated on public lands, more on-site assistance to private property owners, more articles published, and more volunteer hours contributed than ever before. The final progress report for the year was presented and is posted on the About Us page of the web site.

* Receiving the 2012 Cox Conserves Heroes award was acclaimed our prime achievement, to which everyone contributed.

* Dave commented that the Cox award helped establish more credibility for SGH, and that building on the recognition, funding, and momentum the award produced, we can look forward to exciting opportunities to grow our base of dedicated members and volunteers, gain additional substantial grants, and expand our capacity to serve the community on behalf of the hemlocks.

STRATEGY PLAN FOR FY 2013

Education

* We will accomplish more education this year through Hemlock Help Clinics and presentations in each county with special outreach to boards of realtors, organization of home inspectors, POAs, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, SORBA, schools, Trout Unlimited, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and recreational/conservation groups. Donna hopes to have more volunteer teachers/presenters to share the load.

* Donna will contact Master Gardeners and ask Chris to contact Master Naturalists. Dave has ties with SORBA. Buz will talk with Mary Cobb about real estate contacts. Bruce will help with material for real estate professionals.

* The team reviewed the schedule of fairs and festivals, identified the ones we should go to, and chose some to participate in as volunteers. Trail Fest, Great Adventure Race, and Hemlock Day at Anna Ruby Falls will be new for us this year. The schedule is posted on the Schedule of Events page of our web site.

* Susan will contact the Dahlonega Chamber re Trail Fest for details about participation; will contact Diane Freer at Georgia Forest Watch about their film festival in Atlanta to see if we can put a display or materials there; will contact Kate DeLong for details about participation in the John C Campbell Folk Festival.

Education / Service

*Our annual Hike and Help the Hemlocks is scheduled to coincide with National Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 28. It will be in a SGH-USFS hemlock treatment project in Clements Branch HCA with a hike/picnic at nearby Sea Creek Falls. We hope to have participants from BMTA, Go Outdoors USA, Trout Unlimited, NGU beetle lab, and others.

Service

* Facilitators – Bob emphasized the need for more Facilitators in most of the counties we currently serve, particularly Towns, Habersham, Union, Lumpkin, Dawson, Murray, Pickens and Whitfield.

* Changes to Facilitator Program – Becoming a Facilitator will now include a service commitment to participate in one or more SGH service project or educational event per year, to contribute an average of 8 hours of other hemlock-related activity per month, and to take annual refresher training when it's offered. We also hope to re-engage any Facilitators who have been inactive and will be offering refresher training to all Facilitators who were trained more than 2 years ago and anyone else who wants to take it. All Facilitators should turn in their activity report to their Lead Facilitator or to Bob at the end of each fiscal quarter.

* Lead Facilitators – As head of the Facilitator program, Bob has designed a role called Lead Area Facilitator that will function through one or more Lead Facilitators in each county to improve communication and coordination between SGH and the communities we serve. We now have Lead Facilitator for each of our current program counties. Bob and Donna will co-chair the first Lead Facilitator Workshop on February 20 to fully implement the concept, as described in the Lead Area Facilitator Job Description on the Facilitator Page of our web site.

* Hemlock Help Program Growth – In addition to continuing to offer charitable assistance to private property owners, we will also offer to other nonprofits as our resources permit. Assistance may take the form of financial help to purchase chemicals or labor to do the work.

* Hemlock Help Program Expansion – In addition to continuing to serve our 12 current program counties, we will expand our Hemlock Help Program to 7 more counties with confirmed HWA infestations: Stephens, Banks, Hall, Cherokee, Gordon, Walker, and Dade. Implementation order and dates will be confirmed by mid-March based on input from the USFS, GFC, DNR, extension service, and others. We will need to seek sponsors, Facilitators, and Lead Facilitators in each new county.

* Facilitator Training – We will schedule a Facilitator workshop in each current county; Bob will participate in the workshop for Rabun and as many others as he can. We will also schedule a Facilitator workshop in each new county; Dave wants to participate in a regional Facilitator workshop for the northwest counties and suggested partnering with the Nature Conservancy which has goals similar to SGH's and is very active in the Cloudland Canyon area. Lead Facilitators will be requested to participate in any Facilitator training in their respective counties.

* Hemlock Treatment Projects with USFS – We now have a formal agreement with the U. S. Forest Service that allows us to treat hemlocks in designated hemlock conservation areas of the national forest, and we have 4 project scheduled in the Blue Ridge Ranger District this year and hope to schedule one or more in the Conasauga District. Donna will coordinate USFS projects.

* Hemlock Treatment Projects with DNR Wildlife Management Division – We have a similar agreement with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to treat hemlocks in wildlife management areas, and we have a huge project scheduled to begin in March in the Cartecay Tract of the Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Ellijay. The Tract includes both beetle release sites which Jim Sullivan of the Ga Forestry Commission will coordinate and chemical treatment sites for which Dave Teffeteller will be project manager. Dave indicated we will have help from the Mountain Stewards, Boy Scouts, SORBA, and others. Mark Shearer suggested seeking volunteers from neighboring communities, Go Outdoors USA, and our Facilitators on the Alabama treatment team. Dave will have volunteers working in teams of 3 people and will select and schedule them based partly on their physical capabilities relative to the difficulty of terrain to ensure everyone's safety.

* Hemlock Treatment Projects with DNR State Parks Division -- They have asked us to participate in a hemlock treatment project at Vogel State Park on February 27, after which we expect to put an agreement in place to enable us to help them at Smithgall Woods and other state parks. Donna will coordinate DNR State Parks projects.

* Accessibility – Leadership team members and Lead Facilitators will work to increase the number of retailers that carry the appropriate treatment products. This will make it easier and more convenient for property owners to get what's needed to treat their trees and hopefully will increase the number of trees being saved.

Public Communications

* Each team member will place rack cards in prominent locations in each county. Donna will order card holders for this purpose. Suggested places included Foxfire, libraries, state parks (Unicoi, Vogel, Smithgall, Fort Mountain), Mark of the Potter, Bargain Barn, REI stores, and the Chattahoochee Oconee Heritage Association. Rose volunteered to distribute cards at locations around Atlanta inside and outside the perimeter.

* Donna suggested making the rounds to various GFC offices and county extension agents to offer rack cards and other materials and get updates on local conditions and needs.

* Dave recommended checking with Pike Nurseries and Home Depot to see if we can place information there and possibly schedule workshops. He also suggested contacting Walter Reeves, host of the Ga. Outdoors TV show, to see if we might be a guest on his show.

* Dave suggests having a card or tear sheet that real estate professionals, property managers, or home inspectors could give to prospective home buyers. We could also create mixing/dosing tear sheets to place in hardware stores that carry the treatment products.

* Donna will add photos, articles, and year-end reports to web site.

Saplings

* We will continue to pot saplings to offer for adoption at various events and to give to other nonprofits such as Master Gardeners and Georgia Forest Watch. We will provide 10 saplings to GFW for their Wild and Woolly Forest Festival this spring.

* Donna needs volunteers to help with the potting.

Membership / Partnership

* We will continue to seek new members through clinics and presentations, fairs and festivals, personal outreach, and the year-end appeal.

* When new members join, we will make personal contact with them within a few weeks to learn about their interests and capabilities and explore ways to get them actively engaged with the work of SGH.

* We will seek new partnerships with other like-minded nonprofits, recreational groups, conservation organizations, and others through personal outreach.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial reports for FY 2012

* Balance Sheet – Starting the year with a balance of \$6608.66, we now have \$9,253.88 in the bank with no outstanding checks or balances.

* Income & Expense – We had total income of \$14,533.01 (including a \$1500 grant from the Lake Rabun Association). We had total expense of \$11,887.79. Out spending in 2012 was 90.5% for our educational and charitable service programs and only 9.5% for administrative expenses.

* Budget vs. Actual – For income we budgeted \$14,090.56 and actually received \$14,313.01 (103.1% of budget). For expense we budgeted \$12,769.01 and actually spent \$10,769.29 (93.1% of budget).

Year-End Appeal

* Between December 1, 2012 and January 13, 2013, we have received \$1010 as a result of our 2012 direct mail piece.

* Our expense for this campaign was \$131.

Fund Raising Activities

* Benefit Dinner – Chris shared information about a benefit dinner that has been offered to SGH by an Atlanta master chef at a fly fishing resort. The event would host 200 guests for dinner and would include music, a film on the hemlocks, a presentation by Donna, possibly a silent auction, and small gifts and educational materials for the guests. The preliminary plan is that the chef would take responsibility for finding sponsors, all planning, inviting guests, and paying up-front expenses. Dave and Bob suggested that we get more detail, a time line, references to verify experience, and a letter of

agreement before we commit to the event. The only stipulation we've been made aware of concerning the proceeds is that they must be spent on public or nonprofit lands.

- * Funds for Cartecay Project – Dave suggested an “Adopt an Acre” campaign targeted to residents of Gilmer and neighboring counties, groups that utilize the Cartecay Tract for recreation, and environmental organizations. Total project cost could range from \$12,500 to \$25,000, depending on the final treatment parameters adopted.
- * Rhapsody in Rabun – Buz shared some information about a competitive grant that Foxfire won last year, and he thinks SGH should consider applying for it this year. He will provide more detail soon.
- * Future Direct Mail Campaigns – Rose suggested that the letter should include information about SGH accomplishments and how we've spent our funds so far. We should also indicate future projects and places to be treated. Dave said 1 ½ pages is the best length. Donna indicated that we will provide preprinted letters and envelopes to leadership team members for the 2013 Year-End Appeal.
- * LRA Grant(s) – As of November 30, 2012 we had a balance of \$49.27 remaining from the \$1500 grant we received from the Lake Rabun Association on September 15, 2011 plus \$1500 from the grant we received on July 1, 2012. All funds must be spent in Rabun County, and Bob and Buz are looking out for opportunities to use it there. In January, we will use \$789.50 for chemicals to treat hemlocks at a nonprofit camp and for a full color ad in the Clayton Tribune offering our charitable assistance to churches and other nonprofits.
- * Cox Award – We received a grant of \$10,000 as part of the Cox Conserves Heroes Award. In January, we will use about \$2500 to purchase chemicals for treating hemlocks in the Cartecay Tract. We plan to use the remainder for educational and charitable service initiatives that will have a multiplying effect in terms of raising awareness about the hemlocks and enabling more property owners, nonprofits, and public land managers to save the trees.
- * Dave Teffeteller is working with another nonprofit to apply for a very large grant. He has asked Donna to provide some figures concerning chemical costs and value of contributed labor. Detail will be shared when the grant is obtained.

Preliminary Budget for FY 2013

- * We are budgeting for income of \$23,270 and expense of \$20,862.35.
- * Barring unforeseen events, we expect to maintain a spending ratio close to what it was for 2012.

Miscellaneous

- * Donna reported that HWA has spread way across the entire native hemlock range of Georgia and it is expected to spread into northern Alabama next. She indicated that Alabama had a HWA seminar in the summer of 2012 at Samford College and suggested we may want to reach out to various entities in Alabama to share the benefit of our experience.
- * Dave inquired about our financial books being maintained on accrual or costs basis. Donna said they have always been kept on accrual basis, but as our figures are actually the same by both methods, we will talk with the IRS to understand what's involved in changing to cost basis.
- * Dave inquired whether we have criteria set up for a Boy Scout merit badge for hemlock-related achievements. We do not at this point, but Bob offered to ask a contact in Rabun County about what would be required to have one.
- * All team members are requested to review the strategy plan and the preliminary budget and share any comments or questions they have on either document.
- * All team members are also requested to review the schedule of events and sign up for the ones they'd like to participate in.

Next SGH Leadership Team Meeting – Sunday, April 14 at Smithgall Woods near Helen