



# Save Georgia's Hemlocks

## 10-26-14 SGH Leadership Team Meeting Notes

The meeting was held at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance were Bruce Granger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Dave Teffeteller, Donna Shearer, Frank Gheesling, and Susan Chapman. Bob Pledger and Rose Mott were unable to attend.

### EDUCATION

#### • Education in 2014

- Donna reported that we're way ahead of last year on Clinics and Facilitator Workshops. So far in FY 2014 we've conducted 16 Hemlock Help Clinics for 136 attendees and 10 Facilitator Training Workshops which produced 51 new Facilitators in Georgia and 3 new ones in other states.
- We also gave presentations to 9 community groups with 381 attendees and conducted Hemlock Lessons to 5 high school classes with 273 students and 8 teachers.

#### • Clinics and Facilitator Workshops in 2015

- Hemlock Help Clinics and Facilitator Training Workshops will be scheduled from March through June. All Facilitators who received their initial training prior to 2013 will be asked to attend a Facilitator Workshop in 2015 as a refresher to keep their skills and knowledge current.
- Priority will be given to counties that were added to our program in 2014 and to counties where the program needs strengthening. See Attachment 1.
- Leadership Team members were asked if they would be willing to take on some of the Clinic and Facilitator teaching duties, and they indicated they would.
- We will also enlist Lead Facilitators (where available) to co-teach with the Leadership Team members.

**Action Item:** At our January meeting **all Leadership Team members** will be asked to sign up for the classes they are willing to teach. See Attachment 2.

#### • Possible expansion to other counties in 2015

- Catoosa and Chattooga Counties are not on the GFC's official HWA spread map, but those counties do have hemlocks and are likely to have adelgids now or soon. So we may want to consider expanding our Hemlock Help Program there.
- Also a credible report has been received from an Ansley Park resident in Atlanta that her hemlocks are infested. So we may want to expand our educational outreach in the Atlanta area.

**Action Item:** **Dave and Chris** have some contacts in Atlanta and offered to follow up there. **Donna** will contact Fernbank to try to schedule a presentation there.

#### • Fairs and festivals

- In 2014 SGH participated in 12 fairs and festivals (1 of which was in TN) with 1,133 visitors/contacts.
- For 2015 the Team decided to participate in the fairs and festivals listed in Attachment 3. All are in Georgia.
- We may consider participating in additional fairs and festivals if they draw a local audience and team members think they would be productive.

**Action Items:** **Susan** will check on the Science Fair in Athens, and **Donna** will get specific dates for other events.

**Action Item:** At our January meeting **all Leadership Team members** will be asked to sign up for any fairs/festivals they want to participate in.

#### • Film

- Chris reported on the progress so far. SGH wants a short film with strong emotional appeal to the heart rather than heavy emphasis on educational content or financial considerations. We want to be able to cycle it on a PC in our info booth, project it as attendees are gathering for a presentation, send it as a way of introducing SGH to other organizations, or possibly post it on YouTube. We have an outline and storyboard ready to go.
- Chris and Donna interviewed one film maker who initially offered to help us *pro bono* but in person quoted us what we thought was an unreasonable charge for a 5 minute film, did not offer any references, and wanted to take the storyboard in a different direction from our vision. So that option has been tabled.
- Several other options were proposed. Dave pointed out that there are already many videos on YouTube and suggested going back to Windstream or possibly to ETC or WSB for a short professionally produced segment. Donna shared another option of working with a middle school in Cleveland that has a full production studio and a teacher and students who do a lot of this kind of work. Susan also has a friend at Ga Tech who is active in this type of media production and offered to contact her to see if she's interested. Also the Forest Service may have a short film already made that they would allow us to use.

**Action Items:** As soon as possible **Susan** will contact her friend at Ga Tech, and **Donna** will contact Windstream, ETC, WSB, the Forest Service, and the middle school teacher in Cleveland to pursue the possibilities.

## COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- In 2014 we published 19 public service announcements and 13 articles by or about SGH in newspapers or magazines, prepared 9 new instructional materials, and placed rack cards in public locations in several counties across the state. Dave made frequent updates to our Facebook page, and Donna made frequent updates to our web site, but the photo gallery needs to have more recent pics posted.
- The Team voiced their commitment to using our communications capabilities more effectively and focusing on more community relationship building to increase awareness and action concerning the hemlock crisis in 2015. Various versions of this goals were expressed:
  - increasing awareness of the perspective, activities, resources, and needs of others who share our concern for protecting our forests and waterways
  - creating opportunities for more effective communication with and service to local communities
  - growing our corps of actively engaged volunteers and/or financial support for our mission
  - keeping our knowledge current about ongoing research and HWA management plans
- Categories for ongoing and new audiences/relationships include environmental/conservation organizations, recreational groups, high school environmental classes, college environmental clubs, churches, local government agencies, and possibly others. See Attachment 4.
- Suggestions included sending more articles accompanied by photos to newspapers and magazines, doing interviews and public service spots on radio stations, and placing rack cards in state parks, marinas, chambers of commerce, extension offices, libraries, churches, and hardware stores that sell treatment products.
- Chris asked about SGH presence in farmers markets from late spring to early fall. These are ½ day events that draw a local crowd, so our message and materials could reach a better targeted group who might care about hemlocks. No further discussion was had about this, but we can take up the idea in the spring when the market schedules are becoming known.

**Action Item:** Donna will send a supply of rack cards to everyone in the next couple of weeks and order any plexiglass racks that are needed.

**Action Item:** At our January meeting all Leadership Team members will be asked to indicate their willingness to share the responsibility for maintaining or establishing liaison with these audiences and sign up for the ones they choose. Liaison responsibilities can be divided by category, organization, geography, or any combination.

## SOIL INJECTORS

- **Thank-you to John Evans** -- A letter and a gift certificate for the Grove Park Inn in Asheville was sent to John Evans to express our sincere thanks for his generous efforts to design a new soil injector.
- **Repairs and condition of soil injectors**
  - During 2014 SGH repaired or refurbished 24 Kioritz soil injectors (in addition to our own) for parts cost only. 8 were for the Ga Forestry Commission, 1 for the U. S. Forest Service, 11 for out-of-state agencies, and 4 for POAs, individuals or professional applicators.
  - Several out-of-state agencies have discontinued using the Kioritz. The Ga Forestry Commission has indicated it will also phase out the Kioritz as they fail and has already begun deploying Nu-Arbor back-pack injectors to several counties.

**Action Item:** By November 28 Donna will distribute new laminated mixing and dosing cards that include both kinds of injectors to all GFC offices.

**Action Item:** At our January meeting Donna will report on her efforts to obtain phased-out Kioritz units as a transfer or a long-term loan from the GFC and out-of-state agencies we're currently aware of.

**Action Items:** In early spring 2015 we will advertize our repair/refurbish service across the country and will also seek additional Kioritz injectors that we can use for treatment projects, lend to property owners, or cannibalize for parts –  
**Dave prepare message?** This will require identifying the audiences in each state that should receive this notice –  
**Frank identify audiences and contact info?**
- **New unit on the market** -- We briefly reviewed a new soil injector called EZ-Ject that came on the market in August that has some good features improving on the Kioritz. Our initial thought is that it is too heavy and too expensive except possibly for professionals, but the Team is open to the idea of borrowing one for free from the manufacturer or distributor, asking Bob and Frank to evaluate it in our real usage conditions, and preparing a report on its performance.
- **Production of replacement parts** – Based on Dave's advice, the Team decided that rather than pursuing a new kind of injector, we should get a small quantity of critical replacement Kioritz parts made.

**Action Item:** As soon as possible Donna will borrow certain parts from one of Dave's "nearly new" injectors and ask Cleveland Tool and Design to provide a quote to make them.

**Action Item:** As soon as possible Dave will initiate contact with the Kioritz representative that Helena Chemical used to buy injectors from (name to be provided by Donna) to see if there are any leftover spare parts still available through Kioritz or its distributors; we have no estimate for how long this research may take.

**SERVICE**

• **Deployment of Hemlock Help Program in 2014**

- So far in 2014 we added 5 new counties – Hall, Banks, Stephens, Walker and Dade – bringing the total of counties in the program to 17 of the 19 HWA-infested counties. By the end of November we will have added 2 more – Gordon and Cherokee – so it will be active in all 19 HWA-infested counties.
- Catoosa and Chattooga have not been included yet, but we will seek Jim Sullivan’s advice for next year.

• **Report on projects in 2014**

- We participated in 12 hemlock treatment projects with 114 volunteer treating a total of 1,560 trees. Four of these projects were with the U. S. Forest Service.
- We also led or facilitated 3 hemlock planting projects with 103 volunteers planting 135 saplings.

• **Final USFS project for 2014**

- Our final hemlock treatment project with the Forest Service in 2014 is scheduled for November 8 in the Little Rock Creek HCA off Highway 60 near Suches.
- Frank and Linda Gheesling, Bruce Granger, Donna and Mark Shearer, and possibly Bob Pledger will participate. We have about a dozen Facilitators and others who have also indicated they would help.

• **Projects for 2015**

- USFS – Jim Wentworth has committed to engaging us for 4 hemlock re-treatment projects on Saturdays during 2015 and possibly 1 more on a weekday in the Blue Ridge District.

Hemlock Conservation Area	Date Previously Treated	Re-treatment Date
Blackwell Creek	2009	Saturday in early April
Noontootla	2010	Saturday in late June
Lake Winfield Scott Campground	2010	Saturday, September 26
Rock Creek	2010-2011	Saturday, November 14
Frank Gross	2010-2011	Weekday sometime during the year

- USFS – Jim Wentworth has indicated that Danny Skojac may also be interested in our help for some HCAs in the Conasauga District (northwest GA). We have not yet been contacted by John Westbrook in the Chattooga River District. A request has already been made to Donna by personnel at Anna Ruby Falls Recreation Area, which is administered by the USFS.
- DNR – Brian Nichols has indicated he would like to have our help on a few hemlock treatment projects in various state parks. A request has already been made to Donna by Cloudland Canyon for a spring project.
- DNR – Chris expressed interest in our doing one more treatment project on a 3.5-mile loop in the Cartecay tract of the Rich Mountain Wildlife Management area. Also some trees that were treated in 2013 need their follow-up treatment.
- Rabun County – We have no 2015 projects scheduled here yet but hope to, starting in the spring. Dave suggested we should have at least one project that focuses on engaging your people; Donna wondered if Rabun County wouldn’t be a good place to do it?
- Rosellinia needle blight research project – Donna reported that the fungal problem appeared later this year than last because of the long cold spring and that the severity was less but still problematic. We have about 50 people signed up as citizen scientists to scout for Rosellinia, and we will implement training for the research and reporting next spring.

**Action Items:** By our January meeting **Donna and Jim Wentworth** will establish exact dates for Blue Ridge projects. She will also contact Danny Skojac for his Conasauga project requests.

**Action Item:** By our January meeting **Donna** will contact Brian Nichols for his state parks project requests.

**Action Items:** By our January meeting **Dave** will contact Chuck Waters to see if he’s willing for us to treat additional trees in the Cartecay and if the DNR will provide the chemicals. He will also contact Don Wells to ask for any chemical leftover from what we gave them for Cartecay in 2013.

**HIKE & HELP THE HEMLOCKS**

- **Report on the event** – We had 20 hemlock helpers who re-treated 133 trees and treated 15 new ones in the Dockery Lake HCA, and BMTA had 12 participants who hiked the trail around the lake, up toward the AT, and back. After our picnic beside the Lake, special guest Robert Fuller gave us a presentation about the biological control program for HWA in the National Forest, including at Dockery Lake. Jim Wentworth updated us on how the overall HWA control program is going, and Ralph Heller shared news of the BMTA’s recent and upcoming activities.
- **Consideration of reconfiguring the Hike & Help**
  - Donna commented that she thinks the Hike & Help has become too similar to our regular treatment projects; we’re not able to accommodate as many people as want to participate; and we’re not having as much educational content as might be possible.

- It was suggested that we keep our hemlock treatment projects as they are but add a “camp meeting” similar to what we did in 2010 and hold it in the late spring when there would be less competition from sporting events. There would be no work project involved, but we would focus instead on volunteer appreciation, education, and fun as we did in 2010 when our goals were:

#### SGH Purposes

- Raising public awareness of the Hemlock crisis
- Recognizing and thanking our members, volunteers, and supporters
- Increasing our community of friends – individuals and groups – interested in saving the hemlocks

#### Auxilliary Benefits

- An opportunity for organizations with similar goals to network with each other, share ideas, and build momentum
- A chance for friends and families to enjoy and learn more about the forests in the north Georgia mountains
- It would be an all-day event sponsored jointly by SGH and our friends in the BMTA and would be held in a location with a covered pavilion, picnic tables, and access to opportunities for outdoor activities. The location suggested was the ETC pavilion in Ellijay.
- The format would include info booths and presentations by participating groups, music, a catered lunch, a raffle with prizes, and possibly some special awards. Depending on the location, outdoor activities could include a short educational hike with a naturalist, a longer recreational hike, horseback riding, fly casting or trout fishing, arts & crafts tables, and some activities for kids.

**Action Item: Donna** will contact ETC to see if we can reserve the pavilion for Saturday, May 2 or another Saturday near this time. Other possibilities that could be explored are the Sisson pavilion in Cherry Log, Lake Winfield Scott pavilion in Suches, and Frog Call in Dahlonega.

### **COX CONSERVES HEROES PROGRAM**

- On-line voting for the 2014 Atlanta Cox Conserves hero continues through November 3 at <http://www.coxconservesheroes.com/atlanta/finalists.aspx>, and the winner will be announced on November 18.
- Donna will attend the awards ceremony on behalf of SGH. No presentation is required this time.

### **HEMLOCK COST SHARE PROGRAM**

- **Background** – At our previous meeting Mark Dalusky proposed that SGH spearhead an effort to design a property owner assistance program for hemlock treatment in Georgia, somewhat similar to the existing pine beetle cost share program. The initial thoughts were that SGH would create and submit a proposal to the Ga Forestry Commission for a program that would be administered by the GFC with funding from a combination of the U. S. Forest Service, the GFC, and property owners utilizing the program.
- **Progress to date**
  - Buz and Frank have located information on Georgia’s pine beetle cost share program that can be tailored to describe the basic components, application process, and workings of a hemlock cost share program for presentation on the GFC web site.
  - Through the kindness of a contact in West Virginia, Donna has received in-depth information and documentation on their existing hemlock cost share program. She also consulted forestry commission personnel in Tennessee and Kentucky who, although they do not yet have such a program of their own, shared valuable insights on how one could work effectively.
  - She has had initial discussions with Jim Wentworth of the USFS; Scott Griffin, Lynn Womack, and Jim Sullivan of the GFC; Don Wells of Mountain Stewards; and Georgia Senator Steve Gooch to get their perspective and advice on how to design and propose the program. She has also spoken further with Mark Dalusky on the subject and has a draft proposal mostly completed.
- **Discussion**
  - The team had many detailed questions about the application process, eligibility to participate, where the funding would come from, how it would be obtained, how it would be used, the rate of compensation to the property owner, how and when it would be paid, compensation limits, quality assurance, who would make the initial site visits, how trees would be selected, what chemical(s) and/or application method(s) would be covered by the program, who would perform the actual treatment, and whether a follow-up/confirmation site visit would be necessary.
  - There were also questions about how West Virginia promoted their program and what the utilization has been. Donna will get answers for these questions.
  - There was general agreement that the proposed program should be simple and streamlined and to the extent possible minimize undue additional workload on GFC personnel.
  - There was discussion about the role(s) SGH could play. The consensus was that SGH could best help by 1) doing as much of the preparation of the program proposal and grant proposal as possible for the GFC with the expectation that they would revise it as they see fit to make it workable; 2) publicizing and explaining the program to property owners; and 3) offering hemlock-specific training to GFC personnel would be making the initial site visits.

- We would not utilize our Facilitators to make any site visits or do any treatment on a charitable basis under this program. We could, however, let our Facilitators (and possibly volunteers from other organizations) know of the opportunity to be certified as Technical Service Providers who could then offer their service to the GFC as paid contractors to make site visits.

**Action Items:** As soon as possible **Dave** is asked to contact the 3 north Georgia Regional Commissions, and **Bob** is asked to contact several chapters of Trout Unlimited, to get their perspective and advice on the program.

**Action Item: Donna** will complete the draft proposal and circulate it to the Leadership Team and the individuals named above for their review and then incorporate their suggestions before presentation to Chip Bates of the GFC.

## YEAR-END APPEAL CAMPAIGN

- **Last year** – Leadership Team members sent out about 25 appeal letters apiece to personal friends and family, and letters were sent to all Facilitators and donors from prior years. We received 76 responses totaling \$5,490.
- **This year** – Dave has prepared two year-end appeal letters and two donation/membership forms. One set is for friends and family, and the other is for corporations or organizations. Dave, thanks so much!
- **Schedule for sending out** – The corporate/organization letter should go out immediately after Thanksgiving. The friends and family letter should go out in December.

**Action Item BEFORE sending letters out: All Leadership Team members** are asked to do the following:

- By Nov. 2 – Do a printer test of both letters and both forms to ensure they print properly on the page. If spacing or fonts are a problem, let Dave or Donna know so adjustments can be made.
- By Nov. 9 – Send Donna the names of your intended addressees so they can be cross-checked for duplication.
- When you send your letters, please write your initials at the bottom of the membership form, customer/personalize each letter as needed and write a brief personal note on it, and hand-address the envelopes.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

- **Cox funds** – So far we have used about half of our 2012 Cox award of \$10,000 for chemicals to treat trees on the Cartecay, a tree planting project at West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, professionally produced educational display materials for our info booth and presentations, and a donation to the UGA beetle lab. We will be considering how to use the remaining funds most productively.

**Action Item: All Leadership Team members** are asked to bring their ideas for using the remaining Cox funds to our January meeting.

- **Lake Rabun Foundation funds** – Buz told us the Lake Rabun Foundation has graciously offered us another grant for projects benefiting Rabun County in 2015, but as we still have some LRA funds remaining from the previous one, the team decided to delay acceptance until the funds on hand are exhausted.

**Action Items: Buz and Bob** will be on the lookout for hemlock projects in Rabun County. They will also let us know about the need to re-treat trees we originally treated around Lake Rabun in 2011 and 2012.

- **Financials** – Rose was not present to provide the full set of financial reports, so Donna presented the “bottom line” information. See Attachment 5.

## OTHER BUSINESS

- Several members asked for additional business cards. Donna will print and send these in the next couple of weeks.
- Susan and Rose have let Donna know that they will not be continuing next year in their respective roles as Secretary and Treasurer but will remain actively involved with SGH. We want to express our sincere appreciation to them both for their service in 2012 – 2014 and look forward to their continued participation in our educational and/or service activities. Now we have the daunting task of identifying two more wonderful individuals who share our passion for saving the hemlocks and can fill these positions on our Leadership Team. Notice of our search will be posted on our web site, and all Leadership Team members are asked to be on the lookout for two special people to join the team.

## NEXT SGH LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING – SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, DAHLONEGA