

11-5-17 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

The meeting was held at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance were Bob Pledger, Dave Teffeteller, Frank Gheesling, Chris Curtin, Darrell Sheffield, John Shearouse, and Donna Shearer. Buz Stone, Kim Wood, and Derrick Morris were unable to attend.

BOARD MATTERS

- * **Status of Treasurer position** – Sarah Heath has confirmed that she will serve as SGH Treasurer beginning in the new year. We look forward to her joining our Leadership Team.
- * **Quarterly reports** – Team members were reminded that timeliness in turning in their quarterly reports is important. Quarterly Activity Reports may be turned in via email or paper copy.
- * **Intent of team members to continue in 2018?** – All team members present indicated their intent to continue in their current roles during 2018; Buz Stone and Kim Wood also indicated the same. Still need to hear from Derrick Morris.
- * **Need to adjust team member responsibilities?** – Several team members indicated they will have time constraints during certain parts of the year, so we will find flexible ways to share or redistribute activities as the need arises.
- * **What's working or not working?** – Consensus is that the distributed operating model we've been using this year has been working well. Special thanks were expressed to Kim Wood for her diligence in recruiting volunteers for projects and communicating with people who sign up for training classes. Great appreciation was also expressed to Dave Teffeteller for his consistently beautiful work on our Facebook page and special signage at Tammen Creek Park in Blue Ridge.

2017 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

* Review of accomplishments as of 11/1/17

- All 19 HWA-infested Georgia counties in native hemlock range now served by our Hemlock Help Program
- Hemlock Help Line available 7 days a week with 1,262 calls handled to date
- 9 SGH Hemlock Help Clinics & Facilitator Training Workshops with 51 attendees – 45 new Facilitators trained, 6 Facilitators refreshed. Current total of 278 Facilitators in Georgia and 56 in other states.
 - Lumpkin & Dawson 2/25/17
 - Hall & White 3/4/17
 - Pickens 3/25/17
 - Gilmer 4/22/17
 - Union 5/6/17
 - Murray & Whitfield 5/20/17
 - Rabun & Towns 6/10/17
 - Habersham 8/26/17
 - White 9/23/17
- 234 Facilitator visits made with charitable treatment of 2,740 trees
- 7 customized training classes for 95 civic/community volunteers
 - Sapling tutorial for SGH volunteers 1/20/17
 - Treatment training for Smithgall Woods 2/24/17
 - Treatment training for Temple Park, TN 4/15/17
 - Treatment training for Fairyland Club 4/29/17
 - Treatment training for Achasta 5/31/17
 - Treatment training for Boy Scouts 6/19/17
 - Treatment training for Americorps 10/30/17



- 14 presentations to civic/community groups with 489 attendees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elachee Nature Center 12/15/16 Trout Unlimited Tailwater 1/17/17 Trout Unlimited Gold Rush 2/7/17 Fannin Master Naturalists 3/29/17 Dahlonega City Council 4/1/17 UNG Environmental Issues class 4/6/17 Georgia Mountains Master Gardeners 4/20/17 Reece Farm Earth Day Celebration 5/6/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LRA Memorial Day Meeting 5/28/17 Over-the-Hill Hikers 7/13/17 NE GA Boy Scouts Hornaday Weekend 7/28/17 Hamilton Gardens 8/4/17 LRA Labor Day Meeting 9/3/17 Yonah Mountain Pickleball Club 9/29/17 Outside World, Dawsonville 10/17/17
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- 2 Hemlock Lessons for 130 students – West Fannin Elementary 12/14/16 and 2/16/17

- 11 festivals with 64 volunteers and 1,615 visitors/contacts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TU Tailwater Spring Fling 4/1/17 UNG Earth Day Celebration 4/17/17 Bear on the Square 4/22/17 Trout Fest 4/29/17 Reece Farm Earth Day Celebration 5/6/17 Blue Ridge Arts Festival 5/27/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hemlock Day at Anna Ruby Falls 6/3/17 Trail Fest 9/9/17 & 9/10/17 Foxfire Mountaineer Festival 10/7/17 Marble Festival 10/7/17 Nacoochee Valley Festival 10/14/17
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- 45 articles/news items written by, with the assistance of, or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines

- 13 hemlock rescue projects with 15 volunteers, 763 saplings / seedlings rescued and potted for future adoption

- 206 hemlock saplings adopted; 16 large saplings donated to municipalities / nonprofits; 71 small, 32 medium, and 5 large saplings currently available for adoption

- 1 hemlock field insectary project with 26 volunteers planting 24 large saplings – UNG 12/8/17

- 6 other hemlock sapling planting projects with 15 volunteers planting 18 large saplings

- 1 hemlock restoration project on a trout stream with 31 volunteers planting 42 large saplings

- 34 hemlock treatment projects with 332 volunteers treating/retreating 4,470 trees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tallulah Gorge 12/20/16 Upper Toccoa River 1/4/17, 2/2/17, 2/8/17, 3/24/17, 3/30/17, 4/4/17, 6/6/17, 8/1/17 West Fannin Elementary School 2/6/17 Lookout Mountain 2/16/17 Smithgall Woods 3/11/17 Lookout Highlands 3/28/17 UNG Epworth Campus 3/29/17 Lake Rabun 4/4/17 Rabun Recreation Area 4/15/17, 5/6/17, 5/7/17, 5/11/17, 5/14/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassy Mountain 4/25/17 Achasta 5/31/17 Copper Ridge 6/10/17 Heart Chan 6/18/17 Sarah's Creek 7/15/17 Warwoman Dell 7/29/17, 9/27/17 Cherry Log 9/14/17, 9/23/17, 9/26/17 Tallulah Gorge 9/30/17 Rock Creek 10/20/17 Willis Knob Horse Camp 10/31/17
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- 31 soil injectors repaired/refurbished

- Total of 6,112 volunteer hours logged to date

* Reports on special events

- Hike & Help the Hemlocks 9/14/17 – On Thursday, September 14, 2017, Save Georgia's Hemlocks and the Benton MacKaye Trail Association were joined by Trout Unlimited for our annual Hike and Help the Hemlocks, an education and service event to save the hemlocks on some of our beautiful shared lands. The outing took place on the Benton MacKaye Trail in Cherry Log, Gilmer County. The site was chosen because of its situation in a beautiful community, on a great trail that is used by many hikers, and along a trout stream that needs protection for the shade canopy.

Following a short orientation, 26 volunteers worked together in small teams to treat (or re-treat) 303 hemlocks along the trail to protect them against the hemlock woolly adelgid, the invasive insect that's killing them all across north Georgia. Participants not only helped to save trees in the forest, but those who were new to the process also learned how to treat their own hemlocks.

We paused at midday for a delicious picnic lunch beside Indian Lake and a time to get to know other good folks who share a love of the outdoors. After lunch there were some interesting lunch-and-learn presentations from Ralph Heller of BMTA and Jim Reich of Trout Unlimited. Donna Shearer of SGH gave an update on SGH activities, shared some recent learnings about trees in the forest, and provided a suggested reading list for nature lovers. Jim Reich, David and Cindy Wasileski, Bob Koop, Jim Heilman, Ray Lorenzi, Frank and Linda Gheesling received special recognition for the many Facilitator visits and tree treatments they've done on their own this year.

During the event Jim Reich presented a substantial donation to SGH from TU, and Ralph Heller delivered one from the Sisson Company; BMTA had already given SGH a generous donation earlier in the year. We are very grateful to these wonderful partners and their support on behalf of the hemlocks.

- Hemlock Restoration on Rock Creek in Murray County 10/20/17 – Thirty-one volunteers joined forces to plant 42 large hemlock saplings along a 1,500' section of Rock Creek on the National Forest in Murray County. Using funds from a grant received from the North Georgia EMC for the purpose of restoring the shade canopy on trout streams, the project was planned and managed by Americorps intern Colin Crofts in partnership with SGH, Trout Unlimited, the U. S. Forest Service, and the Nature Conservancy. Volunteers also came from the Georgia Forestry Commission, Dalton State College, and other local organizations as well as the community at large. At midday, participants enjoyed a picnic lunch beside the trout stream, had time to visit with old friends, and get to know some new ones too.

As part of the project, adelgid treatment was applied to 126 existing large hemlocks on the site to ensure they'll continue to thrive alongside their new neighbors. Also, since this site is used by the USFS and TU for kids' fishing events, a major clean-up was done to remove fallen trees, branches and other debris to make the area safer and more attractive.

- Holly Creek Preserve Treatment Project 11/4/17 – This project in Murray County was sponsored by our partner The Nature Conservancy and focused primarily on protecting the hemlocks along the trout stream that runs through the area. It covered land owned by TNC, the U. S. Forest Service, and two streamside property owners who granted permission to treat. Fourteen volunteers worked on terrain ranging from gentle to really challenging as well as across the stream to give first-time adelgid treatment to a whopping 503 trees!

SGH and The Nature Conservancy plan to continue this partnership with additional treatment projects in other parts of the Preserve some time in 2018. Stay tuned!

* Soil Injectors

Status of EZject-Lite soil injector, status of GFC injectors

– We have been testing a prototype of the new EZ-Ject Lite soil injector from Arbor systems recently and found that while it requires a slightly different operating technique from the Kioritz, the EZ-Ject Lite model that has a piston-lock feature should be a satisfactory device for treating hemlocks on the kinds of terrain we typically encounter. Arbor Systems has been an excellent company to work with in terms of soliciting our feedback and acting on it, and they tell us that the new units are now ready to ship.

We will purchase one with the piston lock feature and will begin posting information about the units on our web site and in an upcoming newsletter.

– The GFC Kioritz injector shared by Pickens and Gilmer has become non-functional because of a split injection tube. The GFC has decided to retire it and retain any remaining useful parts to do their own repairs.

SCHEDULED EVENTS FOR FUTURE

Sat., Nov. 11, 2017	Sapling rescue project at Smithgall Woods., 61 Tsalaki Trail, Helen. Buz leading.
Sun., Nov. 12, 2017	Sapling potting at Buz's workshop, 9612 Old Highway 441 South, Lakemont. Buz leading.
Fri., Nov. 17, 2017	Hemlock Lesson and sapling planting for 8 th graders at Chestatee Middle School, Gainesville. Donna leading.
Sat., Dec. 2, 2017	Eagle Scout project to treat trees in Old Clarkesville Cemetery. Bob leading.
Sat., Dec. 2, 2017	Kris Kringle Mountain Market in Blairsville. Kim leading.
Wed., Dec. 6, 2017	Hemlock treatment project at Panther Creek South. Bob leading.
Thurs., Dec. 7, 2017	The Nature Conservancy's Holly Creek Conservation Meeting, Hearing Room at 121 N 4th Ave in Chatsworth. Frank & Linda representing SGH.
Sat., Mar. 18, 2018	Presentation at Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia (EEA) at Unicoi. Our topic will be "Engaging young people to save endangered hemlocks." Donna presenting.
Wed., Mar. 14, 2018	Presentation to Achasta Garden Club at Achasta Clubhouse in Dahlonega. Donna teaching.
Weekend of Mar. 16-18, 2018	BSA Spring Fellowship Meeting - hemlock treatment at Camp Rainey Mountain. Bob leading.

OTHER PLANS/DECISIONS FOR FUTURE

* Education

– Clinics & Facilitator Training: Classes were not held this year in Fannin, Cherokee, Gordon, Dade/Walker, and Banks/Stephens Counties either because of a failure of newspaper publicity or because there were no sign-ups for the classes. We will schedule classes for those counties early in 2018. It is likely that we will offer stand-alone Clinics in some counties and the combo Clinic-Facilitator Training in others, depending on the level of need / interest in various counties. We will probably need to add two more instructors – one for east and one for west.

– Facilitator Refresher Training: It was suggested that we put a recertification course on-line to make it easier for Facilitators to keep their knowledge up to date.

– Festivals: The group recommended we focus on the most productive events, including Bear on the Square (April in Dahlonega), Trout Fest (April in Blue Ridge), Blue Ridge Arts Festival (May in Blue Ridge), Trail Fest (September in Dahlonega), Foxfire Mountaineer Festival (October in Clayton), and Marble Festival (October in Jasper). We will consider continuing Hemlock Day at Anna Ruby Falls (June in Helen) and possibly adding Plumb Nellie Festival (May in Dade County).

– Hemlock Camp Meeting: We will hold our annual Hemlock Camp Meeting again next year, probably some time in June. Chris will contact ETC to reserve the pavilion. We'll try to get a speaker who can bring a message on several aspects of new research (other than beetles) and also volunteer coordination efforts that are working in their communities. Kim suggested we contact several of the Friends Circle participants and non-participants to get suggestions on how to improve that aspect of the event.

– Newsletters: Donna will resume quarterly publication in December 2017.

– Other: Suggestions were made to research existing instructional YouTube videos on hemlock treatment, sapling rescue, planting, or other subjects. It was also suggested that we consider making educational signage targeted at City/County Development Authorities and their constituents. No action planned on these yet, but please be thinking.

* Service

– Treatment Projects: Bob & Frank will continue their responsibilities for planning and managing treatment projects in eastern and western counties respectively. See Miscellaneous Follow-ups & Action Items.

Rainey Mountain will be a huge undertaking in the spring. We will need at least a dozen experienced Facilitators; will also need to get a core group of Boy Scouts and their leaders trained in advance. Cloudland Canyon will likely be on the schedule for summer. Camp High Harbour is due for retreatment in the fall.

Other possibilities mentioned were Camp Ramadan and Hambidge Center, both in Rabun County.

2017 FINANCIAL MATTERS

* Income & expense report as of 11/1/17

Current: Fiscal 2017*

Dec. 1, 2016 – November 1, 2017

Total Contributions	Educational Spending	Charitable Service Spending	Administrative Expense	Membership/Fundraising	Total Expenses	Cash on Hand
\$26,373.58	\$11,853.47	\$13,286.80	\$1,415.66	\$56.20	\$26,612.13	\$25,620.12
	44.54%	49.93%	5.32%	0.21%		

Cumulative: Fiscal 2009 – 2017

July 1, 2009 – November 1, 2017

Total Contributions	Educational Spending	Charitable Service Spending	Administrative Expense	Membership Fundraising	Total Expenses
\$162,652.42	\$62,192.72	\$63,343.70	\$9,475.00	\$2,020.88	\$137,032.30
	45.39%	46.23%	6.91%	1.47%	

Total Spending in FY 2017 to date: 94.47% for educational & charitable service programs.
5.53% for administrative, membership & fund raising.

Cumulative Spending FY 2009-2017: 91.61% for educational & charitable service programs.
8.39% for administrative, membership & fund raising.

*** Remaining funds in various grants**

Cox	\$1,951.93 (unrestricted)
Lake Rabun Foundation	\$ 891.23 (Rabun County only)
Northwest Georgia EMC	\$1,601.82 (hemlock restoration on trout streams in northwest GA counties)
Norcross Wildlife Foundation	\$1,200.00 (Rabun County only)
Laurel Ridge donations	<u>\$ 636.66</u> (continuation of Laurel Ridge treatment project)
Total dedicated funds	\$6,281.64

* **Outside World / Gold Rush Jeeps fall campaign to benefit SGH** – During late October and early November these two retailers have been conducting a marketing campaign featuring a raffle for great hiking, camping, boating and other outdoor gear as part of their Jeep or Treat | Hike with Bigfoot. Determined to give back to the community, they placed little hemlock saplings in their stores for adoption, invited us to give an in-store presentation, and made our rack cards available to their customers. They plan to donate the proceeds of the raffle (\$400) to SGH for the benefit of the hemlocks in late November.

* **Status of tax receipt / thank-you letters** – Donna reported that thank-you / tax receipt letters have gone out for about half of the donations received so far in 2017. The remaining half will go out by the end of the year.

* **Marketing of silver hemlock cone pendants** – We have approximately 45 of the solid sterling silver hemlock cone pendants remaining. In an effort to get most of them “adopted” between now and Christmas, Dave will take a good photo and place a promo on our Facebook page; Donna will post it on our web site and include it in the upcoming newsletter; and we will show them at the Kris Kringle Mountain Market in early December.

* **Preparing for annual membership appeal** – The group decided to conduct our annual membership appeal as we did last year, connecting it with Arbor Day in February, rather than competing with all the other solicitations that come during the Christmas holiday season. Donna reported that that approach in early 2017 produced more new and renewing memberships – in terms of both numbers and amount – than the previous campaign that was conducted at year-end 2015.

MISCELLANEOUS FOLLOW-UPS & ACTION ITEMS

The goal for the items below is to complete as many of them as possible before our next Leadership Team meeting in January so we can incorporate the results as we make our plans for FY 2018.

- * **BOB** will contact Ryan Foote and Griz McGaughey concerning USFS 2018 hemlock treatment projects in the eastern counties: Union, Towns, Rabun, Lumpkin, White, Habersham, White, Stephens, Dawson, Hall, and Banks.
FRANK will contact Jeff Gardner and Griz McGaughey for USFS 2018 projects in the western counties: Fannin, Gilmer, Pickens, Cherokee, Murray, Gordon, Whitfield, Walker, and Dade. Note that the Blue Ridge District includes both eastern and western counties.
- * **BUZ** and **DAVE** are asked to follow up with Barry Stiles on the signage for our treatment project at Foxfire Heritage Center and Museum and with County Manager Darrin Giles for the Bleckley Hemlocks in downtown Clayton. Suggested theme = tree presentation.
- * **CHRIS** is asked to contact 4 property owners who have offered to let us rescue hemlock saplings; 3 of these are places where we've rescued saplings before, and 1 is new.
- * **CHRIS & DONNA** will return to Rock Creek to tag the large hemlocks that were treated on 10/20/17 and will prepare a treatment log for the USFS Conasauga office.
- * **DARRELL** will follow up with his son Mason regarding a presentation and / or project for his FFA organization.
- * **DARRELL & DERRICK** are asked to start planning the schedule for Clinics and Facilitator Workshops and let Kim know so she can book meeting space. Priorities are the counties we didn't reach in 2017.
- * **DAVE** showed us a beautiful Christmas card he designed featuring a hemlock tree and offered to order quantities for us. He will design a notice advertising our solid sterling silver hemlock cone pendants that can be posted on Facebook, our web site, and upcoming newsletter in time for holiday giving season. He will also have additional SGH directional signs and SGH-at-work signs printed some time in November.
- * **DAVE, FRANK & CHRIS** are asked to plan a restart of the Cartecay hemlock treatment project for which we already have the chemical on hand. We need to obtain definitive information from Jim Sullivan of the GFC concerning the location(s) of beetle releases in the area and also determine whether Mountain Stewards or any other organizations (possibly scouts or bike group) are willing to partner with us.
- * **DAVE** will contact Gilmer County Chamber re day of service in spring, and **DONNA** will contact Gretchen Lughart re Dalton College day of service in October.
- * **DERRICK** is asked to contact the client who gave a donation for the Laurel Ridge treatment project in November 2016 and has requested help to treat own trees as well. He is also asked to start planning for the continuation of the Laurel Ridge project in spring 2018.
- * **JOHN** agreed to contact Christmas tree growers associations regarding possible sources for Carolina hemlocks and container-grown eastern hemlocks. **DONNA** will contact Anne Margaret Braham at NC State and Bud Mayfield at USFS North Carolina re the same. We also need to schedule a day for repotting the baby Carolinas that Donna grew from seed and plant more Carolina seeds.
- * **JOHN** also volunteered to contact Foy Todd and Donna Kaplan with the Boy Scouts to explore possibilities for scouts to engage in environmental work with us and earn credits/awards.
- * **KIM** is asked to start planning and booking festivals for 2018 and just keep doing what she's been doing with recruiting volunteers for events, tracking sign-ups for classes, and all the other good stuff that keeps us running smoothly!

THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR. YOU ARE WONDERFUL HUMAN BEINGS – LET IT BE WRITTEN! BEST WISHES FOR THE THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS SEASON.

NEXT MEETING DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 AT DONNA'S HOUSE