



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

4-14-13 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

A quarterly meeting of the Save Georgia's Hemlocks Leadership Team was held on Sunday, April 14, 2013 at the Smithgall Woods Education Cabin near Helen. In attendance: Bob Pledger, Bruce Granger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Dave Teffeteller, Donna Shearer, Frank Gheesling, Rose Mott, Susan Chapman, and John Erbele.

Meeting began with introductions and general welcome.

FY 2012 TAX FILING

The group reviewed and approved the 2012 annual tax form 990 EZ, including Schedule A and Schedule O, prepared by Donna and reviewed by Rose. Significant mentions included:

- FY 2013 was our third *full* year as a 501(c)(3). These filing documents will be public record.
- We chose to use the 990 EZ form instead of the post card because it allows us to present our good story about SGH to potential members, donors, and grantors.
- Our annual income for FY 2012 was \$14,533, compared with \$13,435 for the previous year; our annual expense for FY 2012 was \$11,888, compared with \$12,141 for the previous year.
- We have no “revenue” as the IRS defines it because we don’t charge for anything we do. We only accept donations and grants.
- 75% of our income is from public sources as defined by the IRS.
- Our spending in FY 2012 was 90.5% for programs (education and charitable service), 2.2% for membership and fund raising, and 7.3% for administration.

FINANCIAL UPDATE THROUGH APRIL 1 AND FORECAST

Financial Reports:

- Rose presented the Balance Sheet and the P&L through end of fiscal 1st quarter, and the group approved them. She reported funds on hand at end of Q1 were \$17,037; as of this meeting date, funds on hand are \$16,586.
- Rose asked whether we are on track re memberships/donations. Donna said we are a little behind on these at present but should be more than caught up by end of May when schedule of clinics and festivals has started.

Budget:

- Donna indicated the budget for FY 2013 is very close to what it needs to be, may need slight tweaking based on our increased efforts on public lands and our plans to expand into 7 new counties. She will also add commentary indicating the basis for each budget category.

Gift to UGA:

- Donna thanked the team for approving a \$250 gift to the UGA Entomology Lab, made earlier in April.
- This gift is in line with our mission statement and goals and was given in support of UGA’s biological control efforts for the hemlocks and in recognition of the tremendous help the university and Mark Dalusky in particular have given to SGH in terms of information and advice.

LRA Funds:

- Bob and Buz presented a report indicating that we have received three \$1,500 grants from LRA so far. Two are completed, and the third has \$947 remaining. All funds spent so far have been for projects benefitting Rabun County. The remaining funds in grant 3 will likely go toward treating trees at High Harbor, Athens Y Camp, and private properties in Rabun County. For projects at the two camps, Buz suggested getting volunteers from camp personnel and other locals who know the sites. Not sure if background checks will be required for SGH personnel, but probably not.

- Donna thanked Bob and Buz for their assistance in applying for an additional \$1,000 LRA grant through Steve Raeber, submitted at the end of March. If it is awarded, it will be used and tracked similarly to the other LRA grants.

Other Grants / Fundraising:

- Dave reported that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife grant we were planning to apply for through the Nature Conservancy is on hold due to the federal sequester; this would have been for environmental/conservation projects benefitting fish and wildlife.
- We are applying for a small Community Impact Grant (\$1,500-\$3,000) from the North Georgia Community Foundation, due June 15, for the purpose of treating trees along waterfall trails in the national forest in counties served by NGCF.
- Dave suggested we should also apply for grants from Ga Power (Five Star grants and Family & Friends grants), TVA, Toyota, and other companies with environmental mission statements. Bob mentioned that some grants fund the use of heavy equipment for lake area projects.
- Donna mentioned that Georgia Pacific, Home Depot, Sony, and Coca-cola may also have environmental/conservation grants we can apply for.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

- From December 1 to this meeting date, we have received 50 new or renewing memberships totaling \$4,476; the year-end direct mail campaign was responsible for \$3,225 of this amount.
- From now on, when we have new or potential members, we will make every effort to contact them by phone or e-mail within a week to explore their interests and get them involved as soon as possible. This will mainly fall to Susan as part of her Secretary role, but Donna and others will help depending on the nature of the connection or type of volunteer activity an individual is interested in. Dave cited the Georgia River Network as a good example of new member outreach; they send personal notes or form letters plus an interest inventory to new or potential members.
- We will put more focus this year on partnerships and shared projects with other like-minded non-profits, not to siphon off members but to combine the enthusiasm and team work of multiple groups.

STRATEGY UPDATE AND FORECAST

Donna presented the progress report for Q1 and reminded team members they need to report their activities, Facilitator visits, and hours each quarter. Bob reviewed the strategy document and asked for updates through April 1.

Education and Outreach:

- Donna and Bruce have been actively working in schools, recently presenting Hemlock Lessons to Clear Creek's 7th grades and carrying out a sapling planting project on campus.
- Donna needs more support for Hemlock Lessons in other counties.
- She and Frank are scheduled to give a presentation to Canoe House POA on April 27, hopefully in preparation of getting a neighborhood hemlock treatment project started. Bob will make a presentation to Falling Waters on May 4.
- Chris shared ideas to boost enthusiasm and recognition for SGH, including going forward with a preparation of a short hemlock film that would use Dawn Davis' pieces, would incorporate the voices of a young children's chorus, and would be recorded in a studio for high quality.
- Chris also called for discussion on getting the public more involved and cited the example of programming at the Ellijay Library. Susan suggested getting various Friends groups involved at targeted state parks. Bob is continuing his work with presentations and contacts through the Rotary Club and local scouting groups. Buz reminded us of the Garden Clubs
- Donna suggested getting local artists involved with SGH, maybe included some quality art work at our information booths and/or at our Hike & Help the Hemlocks event. Susan will check with Ellen Graham at Unicoi for the name of the Georgia State University contact who helped the park with graphic design work.

- Bob recommended acquiring “real estate type signs” to put up when service projects are underway. Example: “This area is being treated by Save Georgia’s Hemlocks.” This would increase visibility for SGH. We also should wear vests or hats with our logo on them.
- There is general agreement that outreach to special audiences (POAs, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, real estate, etc.) should be continued. Should also utilize our contacts in SORBA, Trout Unlimited, Scouts, Extension Service.

Service:

- Bob thanks all for attending the Lead Facilitator Training in Cleveland in early February. It was a successful educational program. He emphasized that it is important for Lead Facilitators to periodically canvas the Facilitators in their county to gauge their true interests and desired activity level. The new service component of the Facilitator position should be emphasized to both new and veteran Facilitators as a major part of this role and should be consistently encouraged.
- The DNR has expressed thanks to SGH for our assistance with the treatment project at Vogel State Park in February. We are expecting to be contacted again soon about projects at Smithgall Woods and other state parks. Need to put MOU in place.
- Dave reported on the 4 DNR Cartecay treatment projects completed in March and indicated that continuing dates have not been set yet but will be soon, probably in May.
- Donna shared that we have a hemlock treatment project coming up May 11 in Dick’s Creek HCA.
- Bob is continuing talks with scout troupe leaders in Rabun and contiguous counties regarding partnerships on future service projects.
- Susan was asked to check with Habersham Hardware about carrying chemicals. Local hardware store accessibility of treatment products is very helpful to homeowners and a good idea to compile that information across counties for Facilitators to share.
- Donna confirmed that we plan to implement our Hemlock Help Program in 7 more counties, hopefully this year. Dade and Walker will be first since Dave indicated they are particularly eager for it.

Soil Injectors:

- Frank continues to work on finding a competent individual or company to help with injector repairs. Dave shared that Kathleen Tokuda (SORBA) is a PhD engineering student at Georgia Tech and has offered to help Frank with this effort.
- Frank is also preparing a schematic and spreadsheet with parts numbered and photographed for reference.

MISCELLANEOUS

- There is general concern amongst the group that quite a few unlicensed, uninsured individuals and companies are treating hemlocks. And several of them are using the stem injection method. Donna reported that she is preparing a 4-part series of articles for publication in north Georgia newspapers next month. One of them is called “Hemlock Facts and Fiction” and will include information on why stem injection is a bad idea.
- Frank showed us several kinds of safety vests that would provide more visibility for volunteers during treatment projects. Everyone agreed that vests should be heavy enough not to tear in the woods but not so heavy as to be hot in the summer; there was also consensus that the vests should have pockets and our logo on them. Dave offered a wholesale connection for the bright yellow-green vest with pockets; the price was estimated at \$16 each.
- The group briefly discussed standardizing the design and logos for our publicity and educational materials. Dave and Donna will work together to standardize everything, except that Facilitator materials should have their own look and feel.
- Dave has taken on updating our Facebook page with announcements about upcoming events and reports on completed events. He also suggested establishing an inventory of consistent materials that could feed into the site periodically to keep it refreshed.

Next SGH Leadership Team Meeting and Annual Meeting/Members Picnic –

Sunday, July 14 at Lake Winfield Scott