

Meeting Notes for 4-26-2021 for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

This quarterly Leadership Team meeting was held virtually via ZOOM, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Participants were Bob Pledger, Buz Stone, Chris Curtin, Darrell Sheffield, Dave Teffeteller, Jim Wentworth, Jim Heilman, Jon Jones, Kat Carey, Derrick Morris, Todd Jackson, and Donna Shearer. Ray Lorenzi, John Shearouse, Billy Johnson, Wynn Mott, Jimmy Stewart, Dara Sinclair, Elliott and Brenda Segall, and Jeanette Rader were unable to attend.

BOARD MATTERS

Dear friends,

As some of you know, I've been dealing with a serious health issue lately and will continue to do so for the next year or so, but all in all, I'm doing very well, fighting hard, and expecting to make full recovery on the sunny side of the dirt! I deeply appreciate all your prayers and other considerations and count myself most blessed for your warm and unfailing friendship.

Now partly to deal with my personal situation but mostly to achieve better alignment of SGH functions and ensure strong organization continuity, our Board has approved the following changes and continuations.

I am stepping off the Board as Chairman to become Executive Director, which is an Officer position, and will begin transferring some of the activities I've been doing to other very capable hands. Buz Stone has graciously agreed to serve as Board Chairman for the next two years and will also continue his role as Saplings Program Manager for eastern counties.

Bob Pledger, who has served as Board Vice Chairman since 2009 as well as Treatment Program Manager for the Chattooga River Ranger District, will step out of that position and become Board Member *Emeritus*. This will allow him to be free of the large set of duties he has been shouldering while continuing to give the Leadership Team access to his valuable experience and counsel. Dave Teffeteller has kindly agreed to serve as Board Vice Chairman for the next two years and will also continue his role as Communications Director.

Jim Wentworth will continue as Board Member and Treatment Program Manager for the Blue Ridge Ranger District, and Jon Jones is joining as a Board Member and Treatment Program Manager for the Chattooga River Ranger District.

Chris Curtin will continue as Board Member and Saplings Program Manager for western counties. Darrell Sheffield will continue as Board Member at Large. Derrick Morris is joining as a Board Member and Education Program Manager for western counties.

In addition, we've been fortunate to be able to fill three Officer positions. Todd Jackson begins his role as Treasurer this month. Betty Larsen will serve as Secretary for special events such as festivals, sapling rescues, and planting projects. And Holly Cochran will serve as Recording Secretary for our Leadership Team meetings.

In the near future, we hope to identify an individual to be our Education Program Manager for eastern counties and one to fill the role of Facilitator Program Manager. So if any of you would be interested or know of any well qualified person you'd like to recommend, please let me know.

In the meantime, thank you all for the good work you're doing. Please take care of yourselves and each other, and keep in touch. It will be good to see you again soon!

Blessings to all,
Donna

ACTIVITY REVIEW Q1 2021

* **THANKS** for a productive first quarter. Activity reports were received from all Board Members (YEA!!!), but we're still missing a few from other Leadership Team members. Please remember they're due within a week after the end of each calendar quarter.



*** Progress Report as of 3/31/21**

- 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 294 calls handled as of 3/31/21.
- **4 Facilitator Training Workshops** with total of 19 new Facilitators trained as of 3/31/21.
Total active Facilitators = 422 in Georgia and 88 in other states.
- **1 Hemlock Lesson** for 12 youth & adults:
- **2 customized training sessions** for 7 volunteers and public land managers:
- **2 articles / news items written** by, with the assistance of, or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines.
- **37 Facilitator visits** made with charitable treatment of 123 trees.
- **4 hemlock treatment projects** with 27 volunteers treating/retreating 527trees:
- **7 hemlock rescue projects** with 12 volunteers, 283 saplings rescued and potted for use in educational / service activities or future adoption:
- **126 hemlock saplings adopted.**
- **22 hemlock saplings donated** to schools, churches, nonprofits.
- **4 hemlock sapling planting projects** with 43 volunteers planting 36 saplings and 40 other trees/shrubs
- **3 Kioritz soil injectors** repaired/refurbished
- Total of 1,235 **volunteer hours** logged.

FINANCIAL REVIEW Q1 2021

*** Financial Summary as of 3/31/21**

INCOME	Contrib Indiv	Contrib Member	Contrib Found	Contrib Non Profit	Contrib In Kind Goods	Contrib In Kind Svc	Contrib Corp
In by Source	\$0.00	\$12,750.36	\$1,352.15	\$250.00	\$741.00	\$720.00	\$748.35
Total Income	\$16,561.86						

EXPENSE	11 Educ Hemlock Clinics	12 Educ Facil Trng	13 Educ Comm Progs	16 Public Comm	14 Saplings	15 Treatment	51 Gen Admin	52 Memb & Fund Raising
Exp by Category	\$0.00	\$547.34	\$13.02	\$1,246.15	\$1,899.90	\$1,253.66	\$794.56	\$946.88
Total Exp	\$6,701.51							
Ckg Acct Bal	\$65,293.85							

*** Dedicated funds:**

- Lake Burton (Pattillo) \$5,000
- Lake Burton Civic Assoc \$1,000
- Lake Rabun Foundation \$1,000
- Laurel Ridge \$391

*** Grants to colleges**

- North Georgia Technical College – \$5,000 scholarship
- University of Georgia –\$5,000 scholarship
- Young Harris College – \$1,000 unrestricted gift to beetle lab
- University of North Georgia – \$1,000 unrestricted gift to beetle lab

*** Annual membership appeal** as of 4/26/21:

66 donations totaling \$8,480

CHANGES TO BUSINESS MODEL

* **New SGH Intern** – As we have grown as an organization and increased the scope of our education and service activities, we have developed a great need for help with some of our newer initiatives as well as certain administrative tasks. So it looked like perfect timing when Dr. Jonathan Micancin, Biology Professor at Young Harris College contacted us about the possibility of have a summer intern. He assisted us in posting the position on YHC’s on-line bulletin board and recommended a most excellent candidate.

Brianna Ross is a rising senior at YHC with a double major in Biology and Environmental Science and minor in Chemistry. She has done extra course work in native flora of north Georgia, ecology, and conservation biology and has also participated in a couple of SGH hemlock treatment projects on the Young Harris campus.

Following the Board’s initial approval and an interview with Dave Teffeteller and Chris Curtin, we have final approval for Brianna to join us from early May and continuing to mid-August. After completing our Volunteer Facilitator Training Workshop, she will be working an average of 15 – 20 hours a week as a contractor compensated at \$10 an hour. With flexibility being key, she will work with Donna and various Board Members on a wide variety of activities.

* **New Option for getting treatment projects done** – On rare occasions SGH is asked (or we offer) to do a large project, but despite all our good faith efforts to recruit project leadership and enough volunteers, especially for a project that may extend over several days or even weeks, we come up short. So rather than abandon the project or delay it unreasonably, the Board was asked to consider changing our Bylaws to allow us to put such projects out for a labor-only competitive bid among professional pesticide applicators, specifically excluding Hemlock Doctor or any other company with a personal tie to SGH to avoid conflict of interest.

The reasoning behind this request relates primarily to the fact that donors give us their money to help save the trees, and we believe they don’t particularly care how it gets done as long as the trees are saved. Jim Wentworth and Dave Teffeteller offered to help prepare the bid documents for two projects we’re currently aware of that might require this kind of arrangement – one on Lake Burton in Rabun County and one on the Cartecay Tract in Gilmer County.

The Board approved this new arrangement to be used if and when it is deemed absolutely necessary, and our Bylaws will be amended accordingly. It is expected that the first bid request will go out some time in June.

* **Activities to cut back or discontinue** – During this time of transition and reorganization, the Board was asked to consider whether there are any activities we’ve been doing that are beyond the scope of our core mission and that we should consider either cutting back or discontinuing. Feedback will be requested at our summer meeting.

UPCOMING PROJECTS IN 2021

* **Hemlock treatment projects for USFS** -- Our contract with the U. S. Forest Service has been updated, approved, and signed.

Upcoming USFS treatment projects on **Blue Ridge RD:**

- Noontootla/Three Forks HCA 88: Chester Creek, Upper Noontootla, & Long Creek Sat., 6/12/21
- Swallows Creek HCA 42 & Falls Branch HCA 122 & maybe Scataway HCA 40. Wed., 6/23/21

Upcoming USFS treatment projects on **Chattooga River RD:**

- Upper Chattahoochee River Campground HCA 59..... Sat., 7/10/21
(This date is likely to change.)
- Wildcat Creek Recreation Area HCA 600..... Sat., 10/23/21

* **Hemlock treatment projects with GATC** -- Eight new HCAs on the Appalachian Trail have been approved by the USFS. We are waiting for the GATC to begin scheduling work days on Wednesdays, with Sundays being rain dates. Donna will coordinate with Pete Buak and Darleen Jarman.

*** Hemlock treatment projects – other**

- Lake Burton unleased properties
- Foxfire
- YMCA Camp High Harbour
- SGH-DNR Cloudland Canyon - Sittons Gulch.
- Project Chimps (if they want our help)
- SGH-DNR Cartecay Tract

*** Paddlers for Hemlocks** – This subject was not discussed but will be on the agenda for our summer meeting.

SERVICE - SAPLINGS

*** Sapling nurseries**

- We need another saplings nursery in one of our western counties. Any volunteers to serve as a nursery host?
- Donna still has a limited number of small trees and plans to transfer her nursery to a Facilitator who has expressed an interest in hosting one in Blue Ridge.

*** Sapling rescues**

- Total of 250 large and 300 small saplings are needed for private adoptions, public plantings, hemlock restoration projects, and festivals we’ll participate in this summer and fall.
- Chris and Buz are asked to proceed independently to schedule rescue/potting projects over the summer and fall, involving Facilitators who have expressed interest. Brianna Ross is available to participate and also to help recruit volunteers.
- Project Chimps – Chris is asked with Christy Jellerts and Ryan Kennedy to determine if they want our help on this. If so, the time frame will be this fall.

*** Sapling adoptions**

- When a saplings nursery host is contacted by someone wanting to adopt saplings, the host should let the client know how our adoption program works, send the client the Adoptions Program document, and explain that the client should be prepared to make their donation by cash or check at the time of adoption.
- The client should be asked to fill out our membership form at the time of adoption, including the amount of donation and number of saplings adopted.

*** Hemlock restoration** – This was not discussed but will be on the agenda for our summer meeting. Time frame for planting projects will be this fall.

- Tbd – Toccoa Bend with TU Blue Ridge
- Tbd – with TU Savannah River

*** Other sapling planting** – The goal is to plant 300 - 500 trees this year. Upcoming projects as of 3/31/21 include:

- Arbor Day planting at Lee Newton Park in Jasper
- Riparian zone planting at Hurricane Creek Research Station
- Memorial garden in Suches
- Memorial garden in Cleveland

SERVICE - OTHER

*** EZ-Ject soil injectors to lend:** SGH has 5 of these injectors to lend. All units have a standard output of ¼ ounce of liquid per pump, and a mixing/dosing card is attached to each. They’re hosted by:

Buz Stone in Rabun County	Jimmy Stewart in Dade County
Jim Wentworth in Union County	Donna in Lumpkin County
Derrick Morris in Gilmer County	

If someone wants to borrow an EZ-Ject, the host will obtain a \$250 deposit check payable to SGH and the borrower’s contact information, indicate whether there is any time limit on the borrowing, and provide usage / maintenance instruction. When the unit is returned and before the deposit check is given back to the borrower, the host will check the unit for any damage and proper functioning.

*** Repair of Kioritz soil injectors:** Two kinds of metal parts are needed to be manufactured to repair a couple of injectors currently on our work bench. The Board asked Donna to obtain an estimate of the cost. She will check with Cleveland Tool & Design and present the quote for approval.

*** Chemicals to share:**

- Anyone needing chemical for charitable use is asked to contact Donna and she will order it.
- Because of the increase in the cost of chemicals, Donna requests that the one-time purchase limit be increased from \$300 to \$500 and the Bylaws amended accordingly.
- When a Facilitator does a **charitable service project** (based on a true financial need as defined in our Bylaws) to help a client get their trees treated using chemical provided by SGH, there is the expectation that the client will participate in the partnership in some way and do *something* to help the cause; however, there is no expectation that the client provide reimbursement for the cost of the chemicals used.
- When a Facilitator does a **neighborly service project** (where there is no true financial need as defined in our Bylaws) to help a client get their trees treated using chemical provided by SGH, there is the expectation that the client will reimburse SGH for at least the cost of the chemicals used. Check with Donna for the chemical costs. Such reimbursement should be made at the time of service by cash or check, accompanied by a completed membership form, and forwarded to Donna at the end of the month. Recipients of neighborly service projects may also make an additional donation by mail or Paypal at any time if they are so inclined.

*** Annual Hike & Help the Hemlocks:** This was not discussed but will be on the agenda for our summer meeting.

EDUCATION

*** Facilitator Training schedule – via ZOOM or FreeConferenceCall**

Whitfield & Murray	Sat., May 8
Dade & Walker	Fri., June 4
Rabun, Towns & Habersham	Sat., July 17
Fannin, Gilmer & White	Fri., Aug. 27
Gordon & Pickens	Sat., Sept. 18
Union, Lumpkin & Hall	Fri., Sept. 24
Fannin, Gilmer & Towns	Sat., Oct. 16

*** Fairs & festivals**

LRA Memorial Day Meeting	Sun., May 30	Lakemont
Hemlock Day at Anna Ruby Falls	Sat., June 5	Helen
LRA Labor Day Meeting	Sun., Sept. 5	Lakemont
Trail Fest	Sat., Sept 11 & Sun., Sept. 12	Dahlonega
Foxfire Mountaineer Festival	Sat., Oct. 2	Clayton
Marble Festival	Sat., Oct. 2 & Sun Oct. 3	Jasper
Georgia Mountains Beer Fest	Sat., Oct 16	Jasper
Hornaday Weekend	Fri., Nov. 12 – Sun., Nov. 14	Blairsville

*** Public Communications**

- Signage – This was not discussed but will be on the agenda for our summer meeting.
- Presentation / materials targeted to Atlanta audience
- YouTube videos for sapling rescue, potting, and planting
- YouTube videos for hemlock treatment by 5 application methods

HEMLOCK CAMP MEETING / ANNUAL MEETING – This was not discussed but will be on the agenda for our summer meeting.

FUTURE 2021 MEETING DATES

Currently scheduled for July 11 (2nd Sunday) and October 17 (3rd Sunday). However, the group indicated they’re open to weekday evenings for virtual meetings. Proposed new date are Thursday, July 8 and Thursday, October 14 from 7 to 9 p.m.