



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

8-3-14 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

The meeting was held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the home of Donna Shearer in Dahlonega. In attendance were Chris Curtin, Frank Gheesling, Bruce Granger, Bob Pledger, Donna Shearer, Buz Stone, Dave Teffeteller, and special guest Mark Dalusky. Rose Mott and Susan Chapman were unable to attend.

PROPERTY OWNER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mark Dalusky, recently retired UGA Beetle Lab Director and forest entomologist, will share some ideas with us about our potential role in helping to establish a property owner assistance program for saving hemlocks on private property. He provided the following information.

- * Loss of the hemlock would be a worse environmental disaster than the loss of the American Chestnut. Quite a few people know the hemlocks are important to trout streams, but fewer people understand their importance to migratory birds, forest animals, and overall biodiversity. Plus there are still many people who are either unaware of the hemlock problem or believe there's nothing that can be done about it.
- * The beetle program is entering a new phase in which new biological control sites may be identified that are adjacent to chemical control sites. Two beetles that are relatively new to the eastern U. S. are showing good promise for controlling adelgids, but several key funding sources for beetle programs are cutting back or going away completely.
- * Since a large portion of the hemlocks in north Georgia are on private land, chemical treatment by property owners will become increasingly important. However, the main reason property owners say they cannot save more trees is the cost. Therefore Mark presented the idea that Save Georgia's Hemlocks is uniquely positioned to play a key role in helping to get a program established in Georgia that would provide direct financial assistance to property owners to save their hemlocks. It could be similar to the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Programs administered through the Georgia Forestry Commission for dealing with pests such as the gypsy moth and the pine beetle.
- * He suggested that we do several things to get the ball rolling. (1) Review the pine beetle program and develop a similar document for a HWA program. (2) Contact Scott Griffin to get his perspective and advice on such a program. (3) Check with other states to see what kinds of assistance programs they have. (4) Contact the 3 Regional Development Commissions in north Georgia, Mountain Stewards, and several chapters of Trout Unlimited to get their support for the idea. (5) When ready, contact our representatives in the State Legislature and their environmental liaisons to petition for the program. Mark Dalusky and Jim Sullivan will be key resources.
- * Once the program is established, SGH's role would mostly consist of publicizing and promoting the program. It could also include helping to identify and persuade the owners of key hemlock stands that need saving, or possibly getting trained by the GFC to serve as auxiliary assessors for property owners' applications.

Action Items:

- * **BUZ** will find a copy of the pine beetle program and forward it to the team.
- * **FRANK** will propose modifications to turn it into a HWA program and forward those to the team.
- * **DONNA** will contact Scott Griffin, Jim Sullivan, and other states and forward information from these sources to the team.
- * **DAVE**, will you contact the 3 Regional Development Commissions and the Mountain Stewards?
- * **BOB**, will you contact Trout Unlimited – Rabun, Blue Ridge, and Gold Rush chapters?
- * **MARK D** will advise us throughout the process.
- * Anything else we should be doing immediately???

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- * We reviewed our calendar for the remainder of FY 2014 and updated our list of leadership team volunteers for each event.

EDUCATION

- * Regarding educational strategy for next year, the consensus was that in the middle and eastern counties we should consolidate and hold training for 2 or 3 contiguous counties at a time. For the western counties we will try to schedule at least one training event per program county.
- * It was also agreed that we need to refresh our message, make our publicity more effective, and reach out to additional audiences such as trail clubs, horseback and paddling clubs, Audubon Society, real estate professionals, etc.

Action Item:

- * **CHRIS AND BRUCE**, will you undertake to identify the groups we should try to partner with and gather their key contact info?

SERVICE

USFS – SGH: We have 3 treatment projects with the U. S. Forest Service between now and the end of the year. The one on Sept. 27 is our annual Hike and Help the Hemlocks, which will again be a joint outing with BMTA and will take place in the Little Rock Creek HCA this year. We need to discuss other partner group we'd like to engage and begin making plans.

Action Items for Hike and Help the Hemlocks:

* **DONNA** will contact Jim Wentworth about the nature of the Rock Creek HCA, number of trees to be treated or retreated, optimal number of treaters. She will also contact Marge Heller concerning publicity.

THE TEAM will suggest other partner groups to invite to participate – such as Go Outdoors USA, Trout Unlimited, Georgia Forest Watch, others?

BRUCE, will you please contact Ralph Heller of BMTA and arrange a time to jointly pre-scout a hiking trail and picnic site near with work sites?

DNR Wildlife Mgt – SGH: We have no scheduled treatment projects with any branch of the GA DNR, but we need to prepare a report for Chuck Waters on our accomplishments (including those of our partner, the Mountain Stewards) for the Cartecay project. We should also discuss whether we want to do anything further on that site.

Action Items for DNR Wildlife:

* **DONNA** will forward her treatment records for the Cartecay project to Dave, who will use them to augment his master records and send to Chuck Waters.

* **CHRIS** will tell or show Dave the additional area she'd like to see us treat on the Cartecay.

* **DAVE** will talk with Chuck Waters about the DNR providing the chemical if we decide to treat that or any other additional area.

DNR State Parks: By the week of Aug. 4, we should be receiving the MOU that will establish a formal relationship between SGH and the State Parks and Historic Sites Division of the DNR similar to those with the DNR Wildlife Management Division and the U. S Forest Service.

Action Items for DNR State Parks:

* **DONNA** will forward the MOU (when received) to the team for approval.

* **TEAM**, will you please let me know your thoughts within a week of seeing the document?

* **DONNA** will work with Brian Nichols and Friends of the Park to schedule a Facilitator Training Workshop followed immediately by a treatment project in Cloudland Canyon. **Anyone else interested?**

Injector Repair:

* We began our Kioritz soil injector repair service in 2012, providing the service for free and charging only reimbursement for the actual cost of parts. So far the following injectors have been repaired/refurbished:

2012 – 10 injectors r/r with the help of Klaus Dern

2013 – 3 injectors r/r with the help of Frank and Cleveland Tool and Design

2014 – 21 injectors r/r with the help of Frank, Donna, Bob, and Cleveland Tool and Design

* The suggestion was made and accepted that we should advertise our service widely in Georgia and other states. This would not only help the people who treat trees, but might also help SGH find malfunctioning injectors the owners would donate or unused working injectors the owners would sell for a modest fee.

Action Item for Injector Repair:

* **DONNA** will start the process of identifying pesticide applicators and public agencies and their contact information.

* **DAVE**, will you draft an appeal of some kind (flyer, letter?) that can be sent out across the country by email?

OTHER BUSINESS

Composter:

* While SGH greatly appreciates the generosity of The Friends of Unicoi State Park in offering the Earth Tub composter to us, we have no satisfactory place to house it, nor the “band width” to manage the input, processing, and output operations, particularly if the device is shared with other groups. However, having it situated so that multiple users could benefit from it would be good if manageable.

* The team decided that the best tack would be to try to find a good home for it where the maximum benefit could be derived. Otherwise, it would be best for us to decline the Friends' offer and allow them to redirect their gift.

Action Items for Composter:

* **BUZ** will contact two parties that he believes might be interested and suggest that they get in touch with Donna.

* **DONNA** will study the web site for the device and make a spec sheet for installation, operation, and maintenance to share with anyone who is interested in adopting the Earth Tub.

Evans Injector: We are grateful to Dave for leading the discussion about the feasibility of getting the device to market.

Sadly, the bottom line is that when all expenses were tallied, the product would cost much more than the market would bear. Based on the spreadsheets provided by John Evans for an initial quantity of 100, it appears there is about \$9000 in known cost for purchased and manufactured parts, making of 2 prototypes, and assembly of the remaining 98. Then we would have the following steps and associated expenses, including but not limited to the following:

- * Business Plan – Establish and capitalize a separate subchapter S company if we want to produce, market, and sell a product. We would need to obtain an Employer Identification Number, register with the Secretary of State and get the required business license, set up a separate bank account, obtain a letter of credit, apply for a manufacturer code, and possibly use the services of an accountant, lawyer, or other professional.
- * Product Development – Decide on a product name, create branding, design and produce packaging, prepare an instruction manual in English and Spanish, prepare and disseminate collateral materials, and set up marketing channels.
- * Service/Support and Other Provisions – Warehousing the stock, spare parts, a dedicated phone number for service/support, someone to handle order fulfillment, and shipping.
- * Financial Considerations – Insurance on warehoused stock, product liability insurance, warranty insurance if we offer a warranty, and interest on debt if we borrow any money.

Action Item for Evans Injector:

We will find an appropriate and meaningful way to show our great appreciation to John Evans, who used his considerable talent and expertise to do all the design work and spreadsheet research on his own initiative and pro bono, just because he has a serious heart for the hemlocks.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Donna presented a summary financial report through July 31, 2014. There was no discussion.

NEXT SGH LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, DAHLONEGA