

Notes for 1/7/24 SGH Leadership Team Meeting

Internal

This quarterly Leadership Team meeting for Board Members, Officers, Program Manager, and Lead Facilitators was held at Dahlonega Chamber of Commerce, 342 Hill St., Dahlonega, GA, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Participants were Chris Curtin, Jonathan Micancin, Holly Cochran, Jim Wentworth, Buz Stone, Donna Shearer, Betty Larsen, Dave Teffeteller, Darrell Sheffield, John Shearouse, Jody Webb, John Shearouse, and Ray Lorenzi. Derrick Morris, Todd Jackson, Renee Gracon, Jimmy Stewart, Dara Sinclair, Nick Gardener, Kim Wood, Robert Patchett, Elliott Segall, Lee Higgins, Jim Heilman, Cary Allen, Bob Pledger, Jim Heilman, Alan Barnes, Kat Carey, Jon Jones and Al Battle were unable to attend.

Board Matters:

Buz Stone called the meeting to order and took roll. Meeting notes from the 11/5/23 meeting were approved. The agenda for the 1/7/24 meeting was approved.

Final progress report for 2023: still waiting on final Q4 project report from all to finish final report. Final will be included with meeting notes.

Donna received the Georgia Arborist Association White Oak Award in recognition of

Financial summary: SGH has (2) 20k high interest CDs with Fidelity Bank. One matured in October, and is in a money market account. Buz requested discussion on what to do with the matured CD, which earned \$705 in interest. The second CD matures in May.

Holly stated we currently have \$20,747 in the checking account. Buz said we have the existing account with Fidelity, so it would be best to keep with them. Initially, the board discussed splitting the amount and keeping \$10,000 out. SGH ran the annual appeal in conjunction with the scholarship drive, so it was noted that may be the reason for the decrease in general fund donations. Buz motioned to reinvest the full amount in a 13 mo CD, all approved.

BUDGET:

Admin (51) increasing by \$500. That amount will be more than ample to cover admin costs (fees, etc.). Most of billed hours were in treatment and education programs. Increases are noted there.

Dave requested information on income 139. These donations are result of school, festival and neighborhood events (not including saplings).

Jim requested information on proposed expense for Hemlock Camp Meeting and the membership meeting. We are hoping for a Spring membership event. Jim noted the projected income is far lower than proposed expense. Buz noted we had a deficit in treatment and saplings income. Facilitator visit reimbursement may not be reported, or chemical reimbursement may not be sent in following. It was discussed that we need to collect chemical reimbursement up front, when the treatment is completed. SGH labor is free, but we need to request chemical reimbursement the day of treatment. Projected income for general appeal was \$20,000 which is a typical ballpark amount for the usual appeal.

Restoration- Hurricane Creek was in 2022. Buz stated a developer has some property near Wildcat Creek- downstream is private land. The developer wants to restore those stream banks on private property. We could have a scout group do this project in Spring. The owner helped on Billy Goat Island, and wants to be more involved. Chris suggested we make sure it won't wash out with heavy rains. Chris and Buz suggested we should increase restoration amount an additional \$400 bringing the total to \$800. There is also an HCA above Wildcat Creek that SGH has treated several times.

Income related to clinics/facilitator-Donna noted it's important to get a list about all clinics/fac participants. We only trained 3 facilitators outside of the YHC class. We're not garnering interest with the split courses. Holly requested we condense the course and have clinic/fac training set up 1-2 months prior to an advertised treatment. We originally broke Clinic/Fac by area of the state, but each Fac training in 2023 had participants from far outside of the advertised range.



Insectary expense: We talked about setting up an insectary at YHC. Buz asked if we wanted to include some expense for the field insectary. Donna suggested she talk to Paul Arnold and see if he wants to do something at Young Harris. Chris noted we may want to budget for UNG as well. Donna mentioned the 2022 Hurricane Creek- initial plan was that it transition to an insectary, and we may need to see if they've been treated. Chris stated we should budget for that. Previously, last November, SGH donated \$2,000. All agreed to budget \$1,000 for 146 (YHC) and \$1,000 for 147 (UNG).

Line 148- budgeted for Fernbank and proposed Spring planting in Dahlonega. That amends the budget to \$66,900.

Dave noted we need more income. We've not historically sought grant funding. Donna and Dave worked on community grants previously, but we should continue that effort. Kat has extensive grant experience, and is willing to help with these opportunities.

Chris requested input on column 165-marketing. The biggest expense in 2023 was the \$500 promotional video. Mailchimp is the second biggest expense in that column. Holly noted there are other programs (Mailerlite) that are cheaper. Mailchimp charges based on sends, mailerlite charges a flat rate based on contacts. Dave noted if we're getting any income off the newsletter, it's worth the expense because it's an avenue for volunteer interest. We need to have a direct drive on the newsletter. Chris noted it may be best to send the paper appeal separately. Buz noted we can send the newsletter in January. Donna noted we can send Mailchimp to the generated lists (20 contacts per list), but that wouldn't provide the data functions of MC. All agreed we could create revenue with the newsletter. Donna mentioned we could do the printed appeal in late March and do the newsletter appeal in January.

Buz requested input on approving a negative budget. Dave noted most NP use the budget as a guideline, rather than a hard and fast rule. Holly noted that we historically have never spent over \$45,000 (and only \$33,000 not including scholarship in 2023) so the proposed budget expense is a gross overestimate/worst case scenario. Buz motioned to approve the amended budget based on discussion. All approved.

Donna noted we could do better in income from clinics (i.e. groups), and if we do fac trainings ahead of projects and connect with sponsored groups in that project they could help us bring in more interest. Holly noted corporate sponsorship- many larger companies match employee amounts. Donna and Holly met with Heather Waringa in Dec. Companies give their employees a day off to volunteer (national volunteer day Dec 5, volunteer week April 21-27th) we could schedule planting or digging projects in conjunction with SGH project.

Darrel suggested we move the paypal link to the front of the website. The majority of our current donations come from check. He suggested we look at Venmo, Zelle. Paypal charges 2%, and the others are a similar charge.

Scholarship: Application to begin this Spring. Ashlee is the contact there, and \$1,000 will be awarded the first year. Board discussed the RISE campaign. UNG was to send acknowledgement to those donations. Dave said they had not. Buz stated we needed to keep our general operations high. Dave requested input on what to do with the form this year- should we leave it as a check box on the donation card? Holly noted the Frank Gheesling scholarship is still a check box option. All agreed to leave it on the card, and donations received will be classified as restricted 529 and moved to the scholarship at the end of the year.

Annual appeal: Buz requested discussion on when to send out annual appeal. Donation letter/stationary is undated and we can use it again this year. Holly asked if we should add information on the appeal about the Chattooga project. Dave suggested we spread out some of our fundraising. Jim W requested information regarding FS reimbursement for Chattooga project. Holly noted GA FS provided chemical for past treatment, but has not specified how much will be available for FY 24. SC FS has not reimbursed chemical for the '23 treatment. Holly to follow up with Victor Wyant to determine when we can expect reimbursement and what will be available for FY '24. Dave stated a campaign advertising the work would get people excited about the work we're doing. Jonathan noted that offering the option to volunteer on a raft project would be a huge drive.

Other:

We discussed moving the County Business License from Lumpkin to Gilmer since that is our new address. Holly will move the business license to Gilmer County. The corporate registration is done online. The live plant license has been renewed for 2024.

Video: Dave stated we need to release it, but to get the biggest bang we need to advertise volunteer opportunities with it. Dave will place the video on our YouTube channel, and Holly will embed the video in the newsletter. Donna will link the video to the website. Betty suggested we can run the video on loop at festivals. She stated they have an inverter and screen. Festivals allow the option of power hook up, but they do charge. Marine batteries don't offer many hours of power hook up, so we may want to charge extra. She stated the video on loop would be a huge draw. Dave stated we could use a smaller TV on thumbdrive. Power hook up is \$10-15 at festivals. Dave and Buz suggested we could use laptop where power is not provided (4-6 hrs battery life).

Treatment 2024:

Jim and Holly to meet FS on Wednesday. Jim and Jon usually do 4 treatments each. Holly will do at least 1 treatment on the Conasagua RD. Dave noted SGH had done a project with Nature Conservancy in that area. Donna mentioned we should reach back out to the Nature Conservancy for partnership. Jim mentioned Fannin Middle- the teachers are still interested if we can get approval from the School Board/information on whether that area will be developed later. Donna mentioned Meeks Park- Jim said those have been treated, but he can check their schedule but it seems they have been maintained.

Member, Russell, brought up the possibility of doing projects at Veteran Cemeteries. If there are VCs with hemlocks, we could partner with them to treat. Dave mentioned Jim Walters, who will be our contact for projects of this nature. Saluting Branches is the 501(c)(3) associated with these projects.

John S mentioned treating city parks, and including the cemeteries in city parks. Donna has planted hemlocks in the Dahlenega city park.

After Jim and Holly meet with FS, treatment dates can be set for Chattooga treatments. Raft trips will fill in the areas we miss on hike in treatments. Holly has a scout troop interested in treating Raven Rock on the GA side. John S knows a troop in Seneca SC that would be interested in treating SC after a presentation explaining the work. Betty has a contact who is Dean of Student Activities at Clemson, who will work on involving groups to bring in hike in treatments on SC. John Shearouse mentioned Trout Unlimited in SC might be interested in helping at the SC sites. Jim noted Trout Unlimited Rabun has an active membership. Buz noted this section isn't stocked, but we should attend the TU annual meeting in Rabun next Saturday to garner interest. He stated Beaver Skull is very accessible with 100 trees and would be perfect for a scout group.

Education/Fairs/Festivals:

Current trainings are scheduled in conjunction with a specific event. We will gauge success of this approach and schedule more where applicable. Fair/Festival schedule to remain similar to 2023. Blairsville Farmers market was added 2023 and will remain on the schedule for 2024 (July 6th). Chris noted there isn't anything on the schedule for Ellijay. She mentioned Apple Blossom Festival, Fainting Goat Festival- mostly local, and wineries. We should reach out to local wineries or the cidery to have a SGH event. Donna mentioned the festival in NW GA we will get details on. We need to work on increasing our volunteer pool for festivals. Blue Ridge Arts fest will remain in Fall. The Spring Arts in the Park is on Memorial Day, and too close to Trout Fest.

Saplings:

Scout group we hoped would dig at Verner property is coming from Buford and requested a closer project. We need to recruit another volunteer group to dig in Rabun.

Buz requested information for sapling feed, John S stated that when we have early warm spells, nitrogen goes up the tree too much then a hard freeze hurts them. He recommended not fertilizing until after April 5th. Based on professional experience, he recommends only using osmocote 14-14-14 time release 3-4 month. This times perfectly with the growing season and a once yearly application about mid April is it. Other nutrients may be needed as per soil test, pH or EC, but should not be on most trees. Holly will order for each nursery to share along with compost, soil moist, etc.

Consult:

Free consult was provided by a local business re. social media, email newsletter, outlook, etc. Recommended dropshipping- we have existing links to products through CafePress. Horizontal partnerships were recommended with

other NP (in the works currently). He mentioned WordPress website, which is more creator friendly. Per Dave and Donna, with the volume we have on our website, it would be incredibly difficult.

NEXT MEETING DATE: SUNDAY APRIL 14TH 1:00PM AT DAHLONEGA CHAMBER

REVIEW OF FY 2023 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

*** Progress Report THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST:**

- **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 477 calls handled to date.
- **4 Hemlock Help Clinics** with total of **30** attendees.
- **3 Facilitator Training Workshops** with total of **17** new Facilitators trained.
Total active Facilitators = 447 in Georgia and 21 in other states.
- **8 Presentations** for **150** adults
- **1 Hemlock Lesson** for **222** students and **2** adults
- **1 Customized training sessions** for **11** volunteers and public land managers
- **14 Festivals** with **88** volunteers and estimated **3598** visitors:
- **5 Articles / news items** written by, with the assistance of, or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines
- **68 Facilitator visits** made with charitable treatment of **7,600** trees
- **17 hemlock treatment projects** with 275 volunteers treating **8,462** trees:
- **2 sapling rescue projects** with 12 volunteers, 125 saplings rescued and potted for use in educational / service activities or future adoption:
- **141 hemlock saplings adopted.**
- **68 saplings donated** to schools, churches, nonprofits
- **5 hemlock sapling planting projects** with 22 volunteers planting donated hemlocks:
- **7 soil injectors repaired/refurbished**
- Total of **5,327 volunteer hours** logged.

Fairs/Festivals

UNG Volunteer Fair	March 2023	40 visitors, 2 volunteers, 8 combined volunteer hrs
Bear-on-the-Square	Sat., Apr. 15 & Sun., Apr. 16	480 visitors, 25 trees adopted, 12 volunteers combined 87 volunteer hours
UNG Gainesville Earth Day	Wed., Apr. 19	89 visitors, 2 volunteers, 16 combined volunteer hrs
Trout & Outdoor Adventures	Sat., Apr. 29	370 visitors, 12 trees adopted, 10 volunteers, 45 combined volunteer hours
LRA Memorial Day Meeting	Sun., May 28	visitors, 6 trees adopted, 1 volunteer, 3 hours

Etowah Meadery	Sat., Jun 17	40 visitors, 6 trees adopted, 2 volunteers, 8 combined volunteer hours
Blairsville Farmers Market	Sat., June 3, Sat., July 1	200 visitors, 13 trees adopted, 4 volunteers, 24 combined volunteer hours
LRA Labor Day Meeting	Sun., Sept. 3	100 visitors, 3 trees adopted, 1 volunteer, 10 combined volunteer hours
Elachee Wildlife Festival	Sat., Sept 9	200 visitors, 1 volunteer, 9 volunteer hours
Trail Fest	Sat., Sept 16	150 visitors, 6 trees adopted, 6 volunteers, 38 volunteer hours
Foxfire Mountaineer Festival	Sat., Oct 7	150 visitors, _ trees adopted, 4 volunteers, combined 26 volunteer hours
Marble Festival	Sat., Oct 7 & Sun., Oct 8	400 visitors, 18 trees adopted, 10 volunteers, combined 56 volunteer hours
Blue Ridge Arts in the Park	Sat., Oct 14 & Sun., Oct 15	250 visitors, 16 trees adopted, 12 volunteers, combined 74 volunteer hours
Scout Camp (Blairsville)	Nov. 11	250 visitors, 2 volunteers, combined 10 vol hours

Education

Clinic	Sat. Feb 25 th	Fannin, Gilmer, Union RESCHEDULED
Facilitator Training	Sat. March 25 th	Fannin, Gilmer, Union RESCHEDULED
Clinic	Sat. Apr. 15	Towns, Rabun Habersham (1 attendee)
Clinic	Sat., June 17 th	Pickens, Cherokee, Dawson(4 attendees)
Facilitator Training	Sat., July 15 th	Pickens, Cherokee, Dawson (3 attendees)
Clinic	Sat., Aug 19 th	Lumpkin, White, Hall (7 attendees)
Facilitator Training	Tues., Sept 5 th	YHC (13 attendees)
Facilitator Training	Sat., Sept 23 rd	Lumpkin, White, Hall (1 attendee)
Clinic	Sun., Oct 29 st	Dahlonega Property- 12 attendees, 4 trees treated
Facilitator Training	Sat., Nov 11 th	postponed

PRESENTATIONS

DATE	CONTACT	EVENT
2/7/23	Rasmussen, Margaret	SGH presentation for Redbud Project in Gainesville -- Donna
3/9/23	McKee, Jacquelin	UNG Peaks Program in Blue Ridge -- Holly
3/14/23-3/16/23	Arp, Tori tarp@fannin.k12.ga.us	Hemlock Lesson & treatment project with Fannin 6th Grade Exploratory students in Blue Ridge -- Donna, J. T. Kieffer, Buz, Jim, Holly
3/24/23	Lesley Hanson	Customized training for GA/Alabama Land Trust--Holly
July	TU Goldrush	Presentation by Dave
8/15/23	Mountain Ivy Garden Club	Presentation by Buz
8/29/23	Sam Fricks	Elachee Center's Science Night at TapIt! Brewery in Gainesville (12 attendees)-- Holly
TBD	Kelly, Patrick	Customized training & treatment project for Lula Lake staff in Lookout Mountain, GA -- Donna, Holly, Jimmy Stewart- POSTPONED

Treatment

Signal Mtn TN	Jan 1-Jan 9	Grandview Area (1387 trees)	ALLY
Rock Creek	Sun. Mar 5	Walker County (170 trees)	JIMMY S
Boyscout Project	Sat. Feb 18	Lake Rabun Beach (154 trees)	HOLLY
Signal Mtn TN	Sat. Mar 11	Green Gorge (612 trees)	DAN/ALLY
Fannin Middle	Thurs. Mar 15	FMS Campus (25 trees)	JIM W/BUZ
Signal Mtn TN	Jan. 1-Mar 23	Signal Mtn Tn (4653 trees)	DAN R
YHC Ecology Class	Fri. March 24&31	YHC Campus (56 trees)	JONATHAN
CRRD	Sun., Mar 26	Tate Branch/Sandy Bottom(308 trees)	JON
Woodruff final trtmt	Sat., Apr 22 nd	Blairsville(120trees)	JIM W/HOLLY
BRRD treatment	Sat., Jun 17	Clements Branch (144 trees)	JIM W
Conasagua RD treatment	Sat., Jun 24	Bear Creek (311 trees)	HOLLY
YHC	Sept. 12	YHC (13+ trees)	JONATHAN
YHC	Sept. 17	YHC (24+trees)	JONATHAN
BRRD Treatment	Fri., Sept 22 nd	Ivy Log	JIM W/JONATHAN
BRRD Treatment	Sat., Sept. 30 th	Dockery Lake(165 trees)	JIM
Chattooga River RD	Sat., Oct 21 st	Raft treatment GA/SC Woodall launch (173 trees)	
BRRD Treatment	Postponed	Fodder Creek/Hog Creek	JIM W
Conasagua RD treatment	TBD	Bear Creek complete-may shift to Chattooga	
CRRD	Sat., Dec 9 th	Camp Creek (w/ Boy Scouts)	JON J/BUZ/HOLLY (82 trees)

Saplings/Planting Projects

Dig at Tom Deal's w/ GNPS	Sat., March 4	Chris C- 60 saplings rescued
Sapling Planting at Billy Goat Island	Sat., April 29	Buz- 48 saplings planted
Dig at John Edgar's	May	Donna- 65 saplings rescued
Sapling Planting at Woodruff Scout Camp	Sat., May 27	Holly-5 saplings planted
Sapling Planting Whitepath Golf Course (In Memory of Paul Berry)	Wed., Nov 7	Holly/Chris-3 trees
Sapling planting- Scout Camp Trail	Sat., Nov 11	Holly-5 trees w/ 25+ scout volunteers

