

# 11-3-19 Notes for SGH Leadership Team Meeting

This quarterly Leadership Team meeting was held at the home of Donna Shearer, 37 Woody Bend, Dahlonega, beginning at 1:00 p.m. In attendance were Brenda & Elliott Segall, Chris Curtin, Darrell Sheffield, Dave Teffeteller, Jen Houts, Jim Heilman, Jim Wentworth, John Shearouse, Mike DeVincentis, and Donna Shearer. Bob Pledger, Buz Stone, Kim Wood, and Derrick Morris were unable to attend.

## BOARD MATTERS

\* **Introduction of new Board Member** – We are delighted to announce that **Jim Wentworth**, who recently retired as a Wildlife Biologist with the U. S. Forest Service, received unanimous confirmation to join the SGH Board. Jim has been a good friend to SGH for many years and played a key role in helping us secure the Cost Share Agreement with the USFS in 2012 that enables us to treat the hemlocks on designated hemlock conservation areas on the national forest. We are blessed with his wealth of knowledge, experience, and community relationships and look forward to his leadership and guidance on many aspects of our activities.

\* **Open positions** – We are still looking to fill the positions of Treasurer, Secretary for service events, and Training Instructor for our eastern program counties. Nominations and volunteers are welcome!

## REVIEW OF 2019 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

\* **Quarterly Activity Reports** – Donna reminded all team members to put on their calendars to send their reports to her within a week following the end of each calendar quarter.

### \* **Progress Report**

- 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 692 calls handled.
- 12 Hemlock Help Clinics with total of 64 attendees:
- 12 Facilitator Training Workshops with total of 61 new Facilitators trained.  
Total active Facilitator corps = 354 in Georgia and 83 in other states.
- 2 customized training classes for 8 volunteers and public land managers.
- 7 presentations to civic/community groups with 263 attendees.
- 2 Hemlock Lessons for 25 students and teachers.
- 9 festivals / public events with info booth & saplings for adoption – 61 volunteers and 1,654 visitors / contacts.
- 20 articles / news items written by, with the assistance of, or about SGH published in newspapers/magazines.
- 59 Facilitator visits made with charitable treatment of 823 trees.
- 13 hemlock treatment projects with 230 volunteers treating/retreating 2,535 trees.
- 9 hemlock rescue projects with 18 volunteers, 430 saplings rescued and potted for use in educational/service activities or future adoption:
- 225 hemlock saplings adopted; 8 saplings donated to municipalities / schools / nonprofits.
- 5 hemlock sapling planting projects with 59 volunteers planting 76 saplings.
- 15 soil injectors repaired/refurbished.
- Total of 4,671 volunteer hours logged.



**REVIEW OF 2019 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

\* Current: Fiscal 2019

Dec. 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

Total Contributions	Educational Spending	Charitable Service Spending	Administrative Expense	Membership/Fundraising	Total Expenses	Cash on Hand
\$27,955.34	\$8,234.20	\$5,804.05	\$1,628.48	\$677.96	\$16,344.69	\$46,706.70
	50.38%	35.51%	9.96%	4.15%		

\* Cumulative: Fiscal 2009 – 2019

July 1, 2009 – September 30, 2019

Total Contributions	Educational Spending	Charitable Service Spending	Administrative Expense	Membership Fundraising	Total Expenses
\$223,117.12	\$81,710.42	\$79,287.83	\$12,393.96	\$3,018.21	\$173,059.29
	46.32%	44.95%	7.03%	1.71%	

\* Total Spending through Q3 of FY 2019: 85.89% for educational & charitable service programs.  
14.11% for administrative, membership & fund raising.

\* Cumulative Spending FY 2009-2019: 90.82% for educational & charitable service programs.  
8.74% for administrative, membership & fund raising.

**2019 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES – PARTNERSHIPS**

\* Partnership with Yonah Mountain Pickleball Club – Thanks to the leadership of Billy Johnson and funding provided by the Yonah Mountain Pickleball Club in White County, SGH has conducted two Facilitator Training Workshops in White County -- March 2018 and January 2019 -- and conducted three hemlock treatment projects in the Yonah Preserve, a White County recreational property -- March 2018, April 2018, and October 2019. During the most recent one, we also planted 24 large saplings at the two main entrances and along the roads within the park. Plans for future projects have not been discussed yet, but we expect the partnership to continue.

\* Partnership with Trout Unlimited Blue Ridge Chapter and The Nature Conservancy – Following a 2016 pilot project with TU Blue Ridge to restore hemlocks along the Toccoa River, SGH has completed two more similar projects on trout streams with TU Blue Ridge and The Nature Conservancy. We planted forty-two medium-sized hemlock saplings along Rock Creek in Murray County on October 20, 2017. And then on March 2, 2019 we planted sixty large saplings along Mill Creek in Murray County. Jim and Peggy Reich, Jen Houts, and Alex Lamle have been wonderful leaders from TU and TNC.

This coming year we will partner with TNC and TU for another hemlock restoration project on a trout stream to be identified shortly, using the remaining funds from the North Georgia EMC Foundation grant.

In late winter or early spring 2020 we hope to partner with The Nature Conservancy to treat the hemlocks at Tallulah High School in Rabun County.

\* Partnership with Trout Unlimited Savannah River Chapter – Thanks to the relationship-building skills of John Shearouse, SGH was invited to conduct a Facilitator Training Workshop March 2019 in which 6 Hart County Facilitators were trained. Since then, several of their TU members have helped on treatment projects.

They have requested to partner with SGH to treat the hemlocks along some of their favorite fishing streams where permission can be obtained. They also want to plant more hemlock saplings to increase the shade canopy on stream segments where it’s needed. These activities will likely begin in early spring 2020.

\* Partnership with Project Chimps in Morganton – Thanks to connections initiated by Gordon Hewett, Chris Curtin and Jim & Peggy Reich, SGH met with PC staff and their bee keepers in April to give an introductory presentation on the feasibility and safety of treating hemlocks at PC. At that meeting opportunities for partnership were discussed, including one or more treatment projects for the hemlocks on their campus, sapling rescue and potting, sapling planting/transplanting, and possibly the establishment of a sapling nursery there.

To date SGH has made a Facilitator visit to scout the property for hemlock treatment sites in July, conducted Facilitator training for 4 PC staff and volunteers in September, and had an information booth at PC’s Discovery Days

in September. In October we conducted a joint hemlock treatment project with 5 SGH team leaders and 13 PC staff and volunteers to treat 376 trees in 5 sections of the sanctuary. All equipment and chemicals were provided by SGH on a charitable basis.

PC hopes to do another project in later this year or early spring 2020 to treat the remaining hemlocks and then move on to some projects for sapling rescue/potting and sapling planting on their campus. We'll be looking for lots of SGH volunteers to help with these activities.

- \* **Partnership with Georgia Appalachian Trail Club** – The USFS, SGH, and GATC are in the process of working out an agreement that will allow us to sponsor GATC for treating hemlocks in USFS-approved areas within a 300-foot corridor on either side of the Appalachian Trail, including wilderness areas of the national forest. So as not to cause any undue impact on SGH volunteers' time for hemlocking activities, only Mark and Donna Shearer have committed to participate with GAFW as our time allows; however, there is no intent to exclude any SGH member, and anyone interested in supporting or participating in GAFW's efforts would be most welcome.

Per our GATC contact Denny Rhodes, they have already secured a grant for this undertaking and hope to begin HWA treatment along the trail soon after the beginning of 2020. They will be responsible for inventorying the desired treatment areas, obtaining USFS approval, recruiting volunteers and/or contracting with professional applicators, and bearing all expenses. SGH will provide the necessary training and oversight and *may* allow the use of our injectors under our direct supervision.

- \* **Partnership with GA Canoeing Association** – At our most recent Hemlock Camp Meeting we were privileged to hear from Alex Harvey about an exciting new service activity of the Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI) and the Paddlers for Hemlock Health Action Taskforce (PHHAT) to treat hemlocks that are accessible from canoes or kayaks on the Green River. As there was a great deal of interest in exploring the possibility of applying the concept here in Georgia, SGH Board Member Dave Teffeteller, PHHAT leader Alex Harvey, and GCA River Protection Chair Dan MacIntyre have been working to get it going.

So here is the vision. Rather than trying to train experienced hemlockers to become whitewater paddlers, we will jointly conduct an initial training class in early February 2020 to teach expert whitewater paddlers how to treat hemlocks and follow up with a pilot project on the Cartecay River in Ellijay as soon in the spring as feasible. The treatment will be done by inserting CoreTect Imidacloprid tablets around the base of the trees to avoid the difficulties and hazards of trying to carry soil injectors and liquid chemical in boats on the river.

Future areas to be treated by paddlers will be chosen by Dave, Alex, and Dan and will be limited primarily to DNR property. DNR will supply the chemical; GCA will vet the paddlers, who will provide their own boats and paddling equipment; and SGH will provide hemlock-related supplies. All will be done in compliance with GCA-approved safety practices and standard SGH treatment protocols.

**2019 STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES – OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES** so far this year not specifically related to partnerships include:

- \* **Facilitator visits** – 59 visits reported with charitable treatment of 823 trees. There are probably more that have not been reported.
- \* **Hemlock treatment projects** – 13 projects with 230 volunteers treating/retreating 2,535 trees. 6 were on USFS land, 3 on DNR land, 2 on school campuses, and 2 on other properties.
- \* **Sapling rescue projects** – 9 projects with 18 volunteers, 430 saplings rescued and potted for use in educational/service activities or future adoption.
- \* **Sapling planting** – 5 projects with 59 volunteers planting 76 saplings.
- \* **Kioritz soil injectors** – 15 repaired.

## **OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES FOR REMAINDER OF 2019**

- \* **EZ-Ject soil injectors** – Based on feedback received from Donna’s email asking for everyone’s thoughts on the subject, we have ordered 3 EZ-Ject Lite soil injectors (1/4 ounce output with piston lock feature) from Arbor Systems, and they are expected to be delivered within the next week or so.

These new injectors will be placed with 3 experienced SGH Facilitators who will serve as hosts for them in Pickens, Dade, and Fannin Counties to supplement those available through the Georgia Forestry Commission for lending to the general public. Injector hosts will be responsible for checking the devices out to borrowers, providing care and use instructions, holding deposit checks during the borrowing period, inspecting the devices upon return, and doing routine maintenance.

- \* **Hike & Help the Hemlocks** on November 16, 2019 – Our annual H&H event will be held at Long Creek Falls near Three Forks with our traditional partner the Benton MacKaye Trail Association plus Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited, Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, and The Nature Conservancy. The publicity has gone out, and as we expecting anywhere from 30 to 50 volunteers to participate, we’ve obtained USFS permission to treat in 3 sites in the Long Creek Falls HCA and 2 sites in the nearby Chester Creek HCA. Lunch will be catered, and we’ll get updates and news from all the participating organizations during the picnic.

## **EDUCATION**

- \* **Training** – We have conducted Facilitator training in 15 or our 19 program counties during the first 3 quarters of 2019. Training was also offered in 3 more counties but there were no sign-ups. The final class will be in Gilmer County on November 9.
- \* **Festivals** – We have participated in 9 festivals and public events during the first 3 quarter of 2019 and plan to participate in 5 more before the end of the year: Foxfire Mountaineer Festival, Indian Summer Festival, Georgia Marble Festival, Beer Fest, and the BSA Hornaday Conservation Weekend.

Based on a review of the productivity of each event as measured primarily by the number of interested visitors to our booth, we will decide which ones to continue and which to remove from next year’s schedule. We are also open to suggestions for other events to participate in, with priority given to those held in counties that have a reasonable population of hemlocks and/or that attract visitors from such areas.

- \* **Outreach to Atlanta** – At our previous meeting we discussed the need to expand our awareness-raising and educational efforts to the Atlanta area. While it is technically outside the native hemlock range, hemlocks have been used heavily for landscape purposes in some parts of the city, and the HWA is now present there. However, due to other demands on our time, we have taken no formal action yet. During the winter Donna will seek contacts and opportunities, and Dave will work on a presentation and some printed materials.

## **2020 MEETING DATES**

- \* January 12 (2nd Sunday)
- \* April 12 (2nd Sunday)
- \* July 12 (2nd Sunday)
- \* November 1 or 8 (TBD)