

Hemlock Help Program Description

I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

North Georgia's hemlocks are in danger of almost total extinction due to a rapidly spreading infestation by the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), an invasive insect from Asia with no local natural predator. The valiant efforts by the U. S. Forest Service, GA Forestry Commission, and GA Department of Natural Resources to save hemlocks in designated Hemlock Conservation Areas and by the three Georgia labs to raise and release predatory beetles on public lands are constrained by insufficient resources against a problem of enormous scope and dire consequences. On private lands, property owners have the option to save as many hemlocks as they desire, but organized efforts to raise awareness, promote action, and provide practical assistance have historically been very limited and are much needed in affected areas. Therefore, Save Georgia's Hemlocks implemented the Hemlock Help Program to address this urgent need.

II. MISSION AND VISION

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 100% volunteer, nonprofit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to saving endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service. Our vision is that through our efforts of preservation, conservation, and restoration, there will be a healthy population of hemlocks in Georgia for future generations.

III. PROGRAM GOALS

- **Educate** -- Enhance public awareness of the hemlock woolly adelgid crisis, current practical options and emerging control technologies, and the aesthetic, economic and environmental reasons to take timely and effective action to save the hemlocks.
- **Enable** -- Ensure easy access to sound hemlock-specific instruction, advice on economical solutions, and availability of necessary resources.
- **Engage** -- Enlist our volunteers to provide direct assistance to property owners, nonprofits, and public land managers.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Do all for the benefit of property owners and their hemlocks with no benefit accruing to any participant.
- Operate in the most efficient, cost-effective manner adhering to nonprofit best practices and standards of excellence.
- Do all with simplicity, transparency, and the spirit of charitable service.

V. SERVICES OFFERED

- **Hemlock Help Line**SM 706-429-8010 to address callers' questions and concerns, share information and advice, coordinate requests for on-site assistance, and maintain records of reported infestations.
- **Research-based web site** containing libraries of current articles and scientific reports, HWA spread maps, treatment instructions, educational materials and presentations, photo gallery, and lists of sources to acquire treatment products, borrow or purchase application equipment, and locate qualified local professionals who specialize in saving hemlocks.
- **Hemlock Help Clinics**, presentations, educational materials, and publicity to raise awareness of the HWA problem and control solutions with special outreach to schools, civic/community groups, and property owner associations.
- **Volunteer Facilitators** to help property owners assess the HWA problem, evaluate options, and implement solutions.
- **Neighborhood hemlock help planning** to help communities plan their hemlock projects efficiently and effectively.
- **Volunteer service projects** including hemlock treatment on public and private land, sapling rescue, and hemlock restoration on trout streams.
- **Healthy hemlock saplings** available for adoption and donation.
- **Soil injector repair** to restore injectors to good working order (available to individuals, professionals, and public agencies).
- **Support for biological controls** through educational materials and creation/augmentation of beetle insectaries.

VI. SCOPE

- Our primary focus is to serve private property owners and public land managers in all north Georgia counties within the hemlock-HWA range. We also provide educational support to other nonprofit organizations in Georgia and other states as our time and resources allow.
- Launched in July 2009, the Program is now available in all 19 counties with confirmed HWA infestations: Banks, Cherokee, Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White, and Whitfield Counties. We will continue expanding into other counties as the HWA problem spreads.

VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. Our budget targets are to use 80% or more of our resources for education and charitable service and 20% or less for administrative expense, with current spending averaging 90% for programs and 10% for overhead. . There are no paid officers or staff. Our books are open for public inspection on request.

