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**Save The Hemlocks**  
**By Dan MacIntyre**

GCA is more than just a paddling club. We must also be responsible stewards of the rivers that we paddle. If we do not take care of them, who will? The Hemlocks that grace the banks of our north Georgia rivers desperately need our help. It is literally a matter of life or death.

GCA is partnering with Save Georgia's Hemlocks and Paddlers for Hemlock Health Action Team (PHHAT) to save Hemlocks along Georgia's rivers. Our mission is to treat Hemlocks along the river banks that are difficult to reach by land. Our first endeavor will be on the Cartecay River on March 7. We will meet at Blackberry at 10:00 to organize our tree saving paddle. We need every GCA member who is comfortable paddling the Cartecay (including with portages around the major rapids) to turn out and help the club treat the Hem-

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locks. We have trained a group of treatment leaders who will guide you in how to do this.

**WHY DO WE NEED TO DO THIS?** The Hemlocks are considered by most paddlers to be the most beautiful trees on the river. They are huge and green. Not only are they beautiful, they are also essential to the health of the river. They are the primary shade tree that keeps the waters cool for trout and all of the smaller creatures who inhabit the rivers. They also provide shade for smaller riverine plants, stabilize river banks with their massive root systems and provide food and shelter for dozens of species of animals. Without our Hemlocks, Georgia's rivers and river banks will not be the same.

**WE HAVE BEEN INVADED** by the Hemlock wooly adelgid. This is a very small but very prolific insect that feeds on the Hemlocks' needles and causes them to fall off. This, of course, kills the tree. The tree then falls in the river and becomes a strainer. Every tree that is not treated will die.

**THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE THE HEMLOCKS.** Each tree must be treated, one tree at a time. That is why we need a massive turn out.

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**WHY ARE WE DOING THIS SO EARLY IN THE YEAR?** We will apply a lifesaving chemical to the tree's roots. The tree then takes the chemical to the needles with its circulatory system. That circulatory system is most active in the early spring when the new needles are forming, so that is when the treatment is most effective. If you are not used to cold weather paddling, talk to someone who is about how to prepare. Rule number one is no cotton. You will likely get your feet wet, so buy or borrow some shoes or socks that act like wet suits. Bring a towel and some dry clothes in the boat with you. There will be lots of safety boats with us who will be prepared to help you. If you get cold tell someone immediately.

**WHAT IS MY REWARD FOR DOING THIS?** You get to continue to experience all of the joy that the Hemlocks give us as we paddle down the river. You also get the satisfaction of knowing that you have given back to the rivers that have given so much to you.

**PADDLE FOR THE HEMLOCKS – Cartecay;** Meet at Blackberry at 10:00 on March 7 for a paddle to save the Hemlocks. We will be in and out of our boats treating Hemlocks. Come prepared to get your feet wet and for the weather in general. All of the Hemlocks in Georgia have been infected by the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Unless we treat them, they will all die. They must be treated one tree at a time, so we need a big turnout. We have 20 trained treatment leaders. Not all of them are

comfortable leading a paddling trip. We need ten paddlers who are willing to lead a group on the Cartecay. Please send me an email or give me a call if you are willing to do this. We also need three strong paddlers with swift water rescue skills to run sweep. We may have several paddlers who are at their limits on the Cartecay, and the weather may be problematic. Please send me an email or give me a call if you are willing to do this.

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