



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Contact: Donna Shearer
706-429-8010
donnat@savegeorgiashemlocks.org

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Hemlocks Planted in Lee Newton Park as Part of Long-Range Partnership

On Friday, February 21 in celebration of Arbor Day 2020 in Georgia, the City of Jasper partnered with Save Georgia's Hemlocks (SGH) to plant several hemlock saplings along Town Creek in Lee Newton Park. The little trees are the first installment of a larger project conceived by local citizen Donnie R. Low to plant more of these beautiful evergreens to enhance the enjoyment of visitors to the park and draw attention to the plight of the hemlocks.

During a brief ceremony attended by Jasper Mayor Steve Lawrence, City Manager Brandon Douglas, City Council Members Kirk Raffield and Sonny Proctor, and others, SGH Chairman Donna Shearer explained that hemlocks, a keystone species of our southern Appalachian forests, are dying by the millions due to a tiny but lethal invasive insect called hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) that was accidentally introduced to the eastern U. S. from Japan seven decades ago. She also shared that the SGH Hemlock Help Line (706-429-8010) can provide information on how property owners and volunteers can save these valuable trees on public and private lands.



Following these remarks, Donnie Low and Jim Heilman, both of whom are trained SGH Facilitators in Pickens County, assisted City personnel in planting one hemlock sapling donated by Mr. Low and two more donated by SGH. The long-range plan is that between now and December 31 citizens will be invited to symbolically adopt additional saplings for planting in the park on Arbor Day 2021. One tree will be planted for each donation received.

Adoption donation forms can be obtained from Jasper City Hall (706-692-9100), Save Georgia's Hemlocks (706-429-8010), or the How You Can Help page at www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org. Donors who fill out the form may indicate whether they wish to be recognized in the newspaper in conjunction with next year's planting event. Pickens County is within the native hemlock range, and anyone wanting to learn more about saving the trees or to adopt hemlock saplings for their own property is encouraged to call Save Georgia's Hemlocks at 706-429-8010.

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 100% volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to preserving, conserving, and restoring endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service.

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