

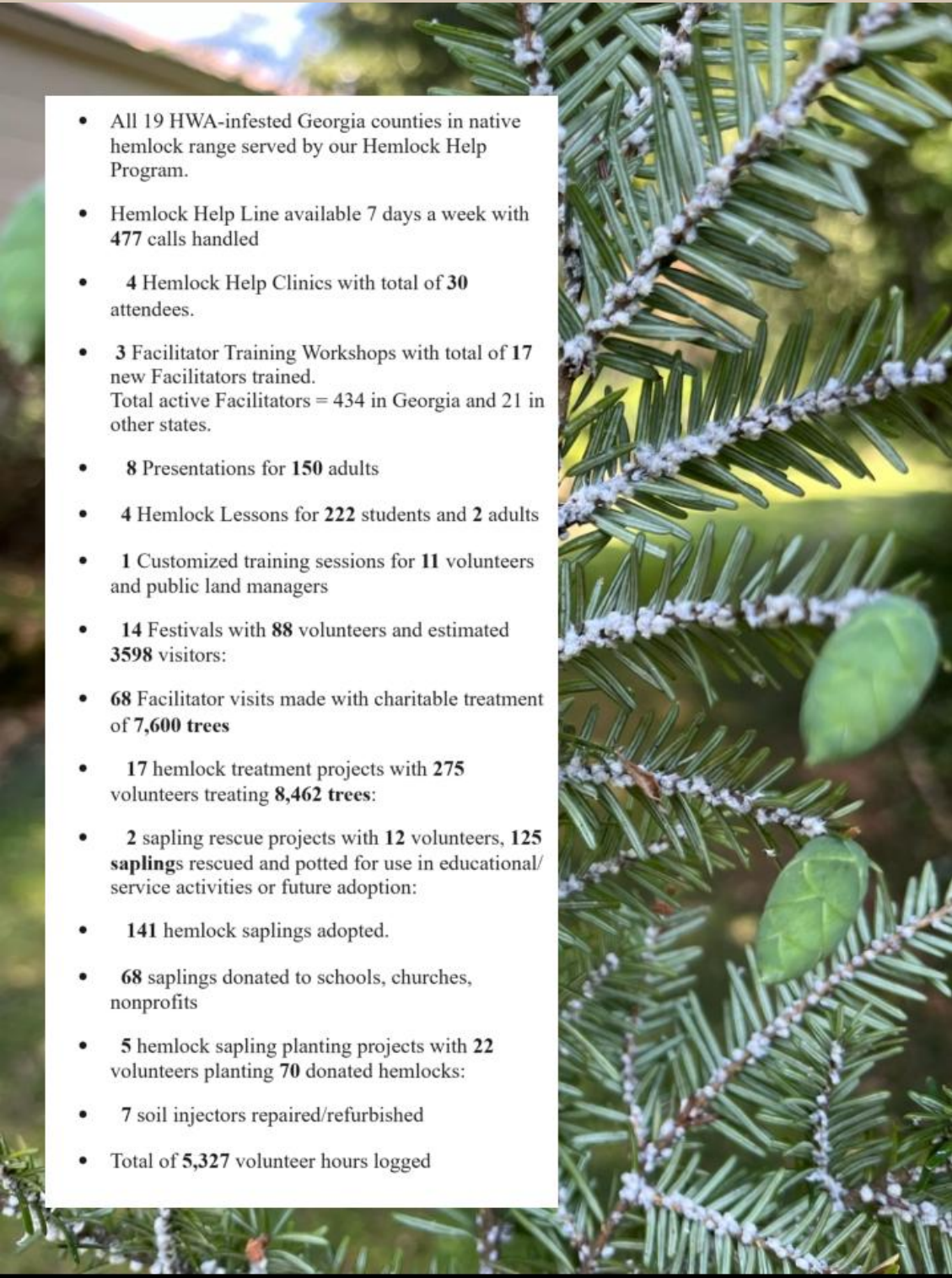
<https://mailchi.mp/fbf682a066b9/report-from-sgh?e=e8f9dbb9eb>

[View this email in your browser](#)



## **HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM SGH**

Thanks for being part of the journey in 2023! Major projects this year included: planting 50 saplings on Billy Goat Island, assisting our friends in NW GA and TN in their efforts to begin treatment on the Cumberland Trail, tackling a multipronged treatment project along the Chattooga River in GA and SC, and establishing a fully endowed scholarship at the University of North Georgia in honor of SGH founder, Donna Shearer.

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- All 19 HWA-infested Georgia counties in native hemlock range served by our Hemlock Help Program.
  - Hemlock Help Line available 7 days a week with **477** calls handled
  - **4** Hemlock Help Clinics with total of **30** attendees.
  - **3** Facilitator Training Workshops with total of **17** new Facilitators trained.  
Total active Facilitators = 434 in Georgia and 21 in other states.
  - **8** Presentations for **150** adults
  - **4** Hemlock Lessons 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:
  - **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 **70** donated hemlocks:
  - **7** soil injectors repaired/refurbished
  - Total of **5,327** volunteer hours logged

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**GET INVOLVED IN 2024:**

## **JANUARY EVENTS:**

**Saturday, January 27th-** Hemlock Clinic/Facilitator training at Gilmer County Library 9:30AM-  
Email [holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org](mailto:holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org) with subject line "edu" to register

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE SPRING 2024 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE**

*Volunteer your time or stop by to adopt a sapling:*

**Bear-on-the-Square** Sat. Apr. 20 & Sun. Apr. 21

**UNG Gainesville Earth Day** Wed. Apr. 17th

**Trout & Outdoor Adventures** Sat. Apr. 27th

**LRA Memorial Day Meeting** Sun., May 26th

## **SPRING 2024 TREATMENT SCHEDULE:**

*Join us in the forest to save hemlocks on your favorite public lands:*

**Jacks River-** TBD email [holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org](mailto:holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org) to register

**Hog/Fodder Creek** Sat. Apr. 13 email Jim at [wentwrth@windstream.net](mailto:wentwrth@windstream.net) to register

**Raven Rock (Chattooga site)-** TBD with local Boyscout Troop

**Bowers Cove-** Sat. Jun 22 email Jim at [wentwrth@windstream.net](mailto:wentwrth@windstream.net) to register

**Beaver Skull (Chattooga site)-** TBD with local Boyscout Troop



## **Donate used gear/equipment to SGH:**

We're currently in need of **handheld GPS devices**. Spread the word to help us get equipped for our next river treatment project. Used shovels, mattocks, and pulaskis also appreciated! Of course, if you've come across a Kioritz soil injector in need of a new home- please let us know about that as well!

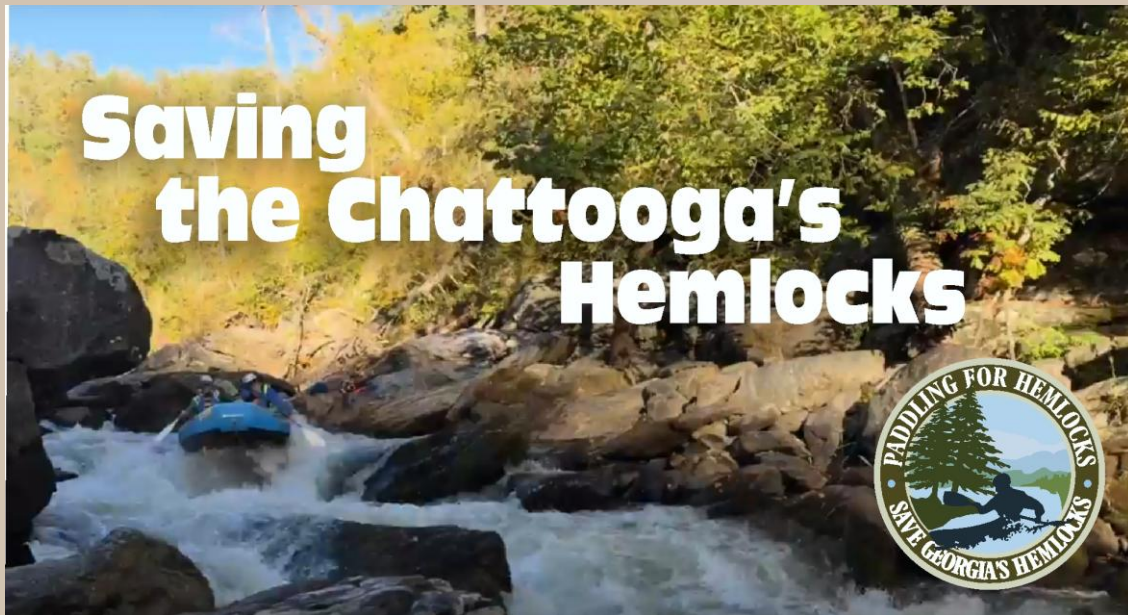
Email [holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org](mailto:holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org) if you or someone you know can donate these items.

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# **SGH BRAVES RAPIDS TO SAVE**



# HEMLOCKS ON THE CHATTOOGA RIVER



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

## **There are still viable Hemlocks in the Chattooga River corridor!**

Article by Buz Stone

The Chattooga River corridor is the place where the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) first entered Georgia some 20 years ago before slowly spreading west to infest the entire Chattahoochee National Forest. In September, Wildwater Rafting Co took SGH down Section IV in rafts. What they discovered was that while many trees had succumbed to the insect, there were hundreds of severely infested trees that were nevertheless viable enough to be saved.

The following month, a rafting/kayaking party of 30 people floated from Woodall Shoals all the way to Lake Tugaloo. Hemlocks were treated in predetermined sections of shoreline with Coretect tablets, which were inserted into the soil around the base of each tree. This systemic approach is a method approved by the Forest Service on both the Georgia and South Carolina sides of the river. Left untreated, these large and significant trees will die and start falling into the river, causing enormous environmental impact and clogging the river for recreational use. SGH and partners treated 178 hemlocks during the inaugural rafting treatment. In December, a Rabun County Boy Scout troop joined SGH to treat 82 hemlocks for the first "hike-in" portion of the project.

The fun is just getting started! There are several more miles of shoreline left to treat on both sides, most of which are accessible by trail.

**If you would like to volunteer, or know trail crews/hiking organizations that would like to partner for trail treatments in this area- Please email [holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org](mailto:holly@savegeorgiashemlocks.org)**



A posse of hemlock enthusiasts from Save Georgia's Hemlocks, Wildwater Rafting, Hemlock Restoration Initiative, GA Canoe Association, and Paddlers for Hemlock Health Action Team rally to treat trees on October 21, 2023. *Photo by Al Battle*



PHHAT kayakers prepare for treatment. *Photo by Al Battle*





A little cold weather and rain didn't stop these Rabun County scouts from saving the hemlocks. The group joined forces with SGH on December 9th to treat 82 trees for the first "hike-in" segment of the project.

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**GEORGIA ARBORIST ASSOCIATION HONORS  
DONNA SHEARER/SAVE GEORGIA'S**

# HEMLOCKS



Donna Shearer accepted the White Oak Award at the GAA awards banquet at Amicalola Lodge on January 6th, 2024. The White Oak Award is reserved for an individual/company/association demonstrating leadership, commitment, innovation, impact & sustainability in arborist professions.

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## RESEARCH BRIEF:

### **Silver Flies—New Insect on the Hemlock Scene**

BY BRIANNA ROSS

A promising biological control is joining the front lines of the fight against hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Two species of silver flies native to the Pacific Northwest—*Leucotaraxis piniperda* and *Leucotaraxis argenticollis*—are showing promise as an HWA predator during research efforts conducted through state and university partnerships with the US Forest Service (USFS).

Silver flies are a predatory insect in the Chamaemyiids family. There are several species of silver fly native to different regions of the United States, including the East Coast. However, the silver flies native to the East Coast do not prey on HWA. These two species from the Northwest have been found to specialize on HWA as prey, contributing to adelgid control within the silver flies' native ranges.

Silver flies will not be replacing the current biological control—the *Laricobius* beetle. Instead, it is hoped these insects will work in tandem by targeting different portions of the HWA lifecycle. Adult silver flies are released in spring, when their larvae can prey on the eggs of the HWA throughout

its spring-laying season. Adult Laricobius beetles are released in the fall when they can prey on developing and adult HWA. Together, these biological controls have the potential to significantly impact adelgid populations.

In 2015, the USFS released batches of silver flies in one Tennessee and two New York locations. Prior to these releases, which were permitted by USDA-APHIS, extensive research was done to ensure there would be no significant ecological ramifications caused by introducing these silver fly species. Sixty-five total releases up and down the east coast have occurred with believed success since 2015. On going monitoring is still being conducted, but hopes are high even while results remain inconclusive.

One sign of success is the recovery of silver flies in or near their release locations in years following the releases. These recoveries mean the silver flies are reproducing on their own in the wild, making them a viable biological control. Recovery occurred in Virginia in 2022 when silver flies were caught and found to have DNA matching those released in 2020. Early 2023 saw a similar event in a different area of Virginia when silver fly offspring from a 2021 release were recovered.

Currently, the process for rearing and releasing silver flies is extensive. They must be shipped overnight from their native habitat in the northwest, then quarantined to prevent the spread of unwanted diseases, pests, and fungal spores that may have also been unintentionally shipped. These methods are under further development with the goal of streamlining the process.

Silver fly research in relation to hemlock woolly adelgid and hemlock trees is still ongoing, but there is hope for these insects' future role in the control of HWA. Labs around the country are working to better understand these insects and how we can use them to our advantage.

#### Sources:

1. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/sustain/predatory-flies-offer-new-hope-hemlock-forests#:~:text=Researchers%20have%20identified%20two%20silver,of%20the%20hemlock%20woolly%20adelgid.>
2. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/66595>
3. <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/biocontrol-program/leucopis-silver-flies/>

## **MORE 2023 HWA NEWS- RECENTLY PUBLISHED**

**NC STATE SUMMARY OF RECENT CANOPY GAP STUDY**

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## **SUPPORT THE EFFORT:**

Attend an educational event, join us in the forest for a treatment project, or help your neighbors



by becoming a volunteer facilitator.

Make a gift from your IRA. If you are 70½ or older, you can transfer any amount up to \$100,000 annually directly from your IRA. The transfer doesn't generate taxable income or a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your tax deductions.

Renew your membership or become a member today!

[\*\*RENEW MEMBERSHIP/BECOME A MEMBER\*\*](#)

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## **2024 SGH LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Buz Stone**, Chairman/ Saplings Program Manager NE counties  
**Dave Teffeteller**, Vice Chairman/Communications Director/Paddling for Hemlocks  
**Jon Jones**, Board/Treatment Manager CRRD  
**Jim Wentworth**, Board/Treatment Manager BRRD  
**Chris Curtin**, Board/Saplings Manager North Central  
**Derrick Morris**, Board/ Education Program Manager  
**Darrell Sheffield**, Board Member at Large  
**Katherine Carey**, Board Member at Large  
**Jonathan Micancin**, Board Member at Large  
**Bob Pledger**, Board *Emeritus*  
**Donna Shearer**, Founder/Executive Director *Emeritus*  
**Holly Cochran**, Executive Director  
**Todd Jackson**, Treasurer  
**Betty Larsen**, Festivals & Special Events Manager  
**John Shearouse**, Technical Advisor  
**Jim Heilman**, Saplings Program Manager NW counties  
**Jimmy Stewart**, Treatment Manager NW counties  
**Elliott Segall**, Scout Liason  
**Robert Patchett**, Scout Liason  
**Jody Webb**, Membership Coordinator

### **Share your talents with SGH:**

We currently have openings for the following:

Officer-Recording Secretary

Officer-Webmaster

Officer-Instructor for Facilitator Training



Beautiful hemlocks adorn the entrance of a little brown church in Signal Mountain, TN. These gorgeous trees were treated two years ago by SGH member, Dan Reynolds. Thanks to all Save Georgia's Hemlocks members and supporters for helping us preserve our favorite evergreen beauties. *Photo by Dan Reynolds Photography.*



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