



Save Georgia's Hemlocks

4/1/12 Meeting Notes

The meeting was held Sunday, April 1, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Donna Shearer, 37 Woody Bend, Dahlonega. In attendance: Bob Pledger, Dave Teffeteller, Frank and Linda Gheesling, Bruce Granger, Donna Shearer, and guest Daniel Rhiner, a student from Kennesaw State College. Doug Richey and Bonnie Mandel were unable to attend.

STRATEGY PLAN UPDATE

Each board member reported on the status of the strategy items which they are responsible for or involved in, as well as any other activities/accomplishments for the first quarter of 2012. Here are the highlights of the first quarter plus the month of March:

- * 327 calls handled by the Hemlock Help Line
- * 1 Hemlock Help Clinic with 23 attendees
- * 5 SGH presentations to community groups with 171 attendees
- * 3 Facilitator Training Workshops for 25 new Facilitators
- * 28 Facilitator visits to inspect hemlocks and advise property owners on saving their trees
- * 5 charitable hemlock treatment projects for 7 properties
- * 1 *Hemlock Happenings* newsletter published
- * 8 newspaper/magazine articles published
- * 15 hemlock saplings donated for awareness-raising and 20 for a reforestation project
- * 1,032 volunteer hours logged

FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR Q1 2012

Income – As of the end of Q1, total contributions have been \$5,383, of which \$2,755 came from the year-end direct mail membership appeal.

Expenses – As of the end of Q1, total expenses have been \$2,323, of which 10% was for fund raising, membership, and other administrative activities and 90% was for educational and charitable service programs.

Cash on hand – As of the end of Q1, there was a total of \$9,669 in the bank account.

Update through end of March – Total income \$5,963.23; total expenses \$3,699.96; cash on hand \$8,871.93.

NEWS AND NEEDS

Education - Rack cards – Dave Teffeteller showed us his designs for a 4” x 9” rack card featuring photos and key hemlock facts. The cards will be used to make awareness-raising information available in selected public places such as county extension offices, chambers, libraries, and possibly the education section of outdoor outfitters such as REI. A quantity of 5,000 was approved pending cost analysis.

Education - Tabletop displays – Dave also designed two 10” x 14” posters to be used on our information tables to provide an immediate visual message communicating key hemlock and adelgid facts for participants/visitors at various educational programs and events. Production of 3 sets was approved, and they’ll be placed with board members in several counties.

Education - Freestanding displays – Dave is working on three 2’ x 6’ designs for professional-looking pull-up displays on stands to replace the photo posters we’ve been using in our education station tent at public events.

They will serve to raise awareness, provide information, and encourage action on the part of visitors to our education booth.

Education - Foxfire sign – Donna and Dave are working on photographic and textual content for a 24” x 36” outdoor sign to be placed at Foxfire Heritage Museum describing the hemlock problem, the treatment project that was undertaken by SGH and the Boy Scouts there, and actions property owners can take to save their own trees.

Education - Volunteer help for programs and events – Thanks to all who have volunteered for one or more educational programs, festivals, and other events so far. A full calendar of events is posted on the Hemlock Help page of our web site, and additional volunteers are still needed. Anyone wishing to help is invited to call the Hemlock Help Line to volunteer.

Education - Bugzilla – Bruce Granger wowed us with a humongous adelgid model he built as an educational prop and attention-getter for our education stations, info booths, school presentations, and other public programs. We named him Bugzilla. Thanks to his research and creativity, it’s anatomically correct and very scary looking. Bruce, what talent! He also found and obtained permission to use a colorful educational poster featuring Bugzilla and a predator beetle, prepared by the University of Tennessee, the National Park Service, and the U. S. Forest Service.

Service - Helping hemlocks on federal lands – A limited agreement has been finalized between the U. S. Forest Service and SGH to allow SGH Facilitators and other trained volunteers to treat hemlocks in designated hemlock conservation areas of the national forest. Bob Pledger was instrumental in crafting the agreement, and we thank him very much. The initial treatment project is scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 14 in the Wolf Creek area, and we still have room for a few more good helpers on the team. Anyone who would like to volunteer is invited to call the Hemlock Help Line.

Service - Helping hemlocks on state lands – A similar agreement is being developed between the Georgia DNR and SGH for Facilitators to treat hemlocks in state parks, wildlife management areas, and other state owned or managed property. Dave Teffeteller expressed his interest in helping develop the agreement, and it is hoped that it will be finalized during the spring quarter.

Service - Partnership with other groups – Several environmental organizations have contacted us to express their desire to participate in our hemlock helping efforts. We have already trained 14 members of Go Outdoors USA as Facilitators. We will be in touch with two other interested organizations shortly to offer the required training for their volunteers and then incorporate them into SGH work teams as service projects are scheduled.

Service – Lake Rabun project – Bob Pledger reported on a large hemlock help project he organized and managed to treat some severely infested hemlocks along the unoccupied shoreline of Lake Rabun property belonging to Georgia Power. Thanks to his persistence over a 3-year period, he was able to secure their permission to do so. Volunteers from the lake community and several SGH-trained Facilitators worked under his leadership to clear access points on very difficult terrain and treated 121 trees with a total of 1,331 diameter inches. Starting on November 9 and 10, continuing on March 24, and finishing on April 2, eighteen participants contributed a total of 186 hours of service on this project. Bob, congratulations on a job well done!

Service - Rollout in Dawson & Pickens Counties – The Hemlock Help Program will be implemented in Pickens and Dawson Counties during the next 6 weeks. The rollout will include:

- * newspaper ads and articles in each county and surrounding areas;
- * announcements disseminated through Master Gardeners, County Extension Service, Forestry Commission offices, and other organizations;
- * a Hemlock Help Clinic in each county to present a general overview of the hemlock problem, actions property owners can take, and free help available through SGH;
- * and a Facilitator Training Workshop in each county to equip a local corps of volunteers to serve as hemlock advocates and advisers in their communities.

Service - Repair of soil injectors – Frank Gheesling has put in a lot of hours disassembling malfunctioning Kioritz soil injectors from around the state to diagnose their problems, give them a thorough cleaning, try to find replacement or substitute parts, and reassemble them for return to their owners. In some cases, due to the unavailability of replacement parts, an injector’s performance could not be mechanically corrected and the user will need to compensate by adjusting either the number of pumps per inch or the concentration of the solution. Anyone needing clarification on making these adjustments is invited to call the Hemlock Help Line.

Service - Grants for Professional Pesticide Applicator Trainees – A draft proposal was presented by Bruce Granger concerning the possibility of providing a modest stipend or grant to a few well qualified individuals who want to obtain a commercial and/or contractor pesticide applicator license with the stipulation that they would provide certain service to SGH for a period of time. Commercial licenses would be sufficient to enable additional SGH treatment teams to work on public lands, and contractor licenses would serve to ensure an adequate service level to the general public across north Georgia. There are currently only 5 professionals in north Georgia who are properly licensed and insured, specialize in helping hemlocks, offer treatment methods other than stem injection, and charge reasonable rates.

Board members are requested to give additional thought to this idea and the logistics. And anyone who is interested in pursuing a pesticide license may inquire about the status through the Hemlock Help Line.

SGH EVENTS

Summer Board Meeting and Annual Membership Meeting – The date will be Sunday, July 8. Location will be Unicoi State Park, picnic shelter #7 beside Lake Unicoi. There are charcoal grills, picnic tables and benches, running water, and restrooms nearby.

Hike & Help for the Hemlocks – The date is tentatively set for Saturday, September 29. Location will be the Long Creek Falls area. As was the case last year, we hope to partner with the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, and possibly other groups such as Go Outdoors USA, the Appalachian Trail Club, and more, and will combine hiking, treating hemlocks along the trail, a picnic, and some educational content.

Fall Board Meeting – The original date was set for Sunday, October 14, but as this conflicts with the Ellijay Apple Festival where we will have a booth, board members are requested to express their preference for either October 7 or 21.

TOOLS AND TECHNICAL TIPS

New Quick Reference Infestation Card – Donna presented a half-page laminated card that shows photos of tree branches and whole trees in 4 stages of infestation and provides treatment recommendations for each stage. It’s designed to assist Facilitators explain the condition of trees and the related recommendations when making Facilitator visits to property owners and will be distributed to all current Facilitators within the next few weeks. It can also be downloaded from the Facilitators page of our web site if anyone wants to make their own, or they can call the Hemlock Help Line and one will be mailed to them for free.

New treatment product recommendation – An Imidacloprid treatment product that has been around for a while but has only recently come to our attention as a recommended alternative to the 75 WSP formulation. Amtide Imidacloprid 2F is a flowable liquid that is sold by the gallon for the same price as a case of Imidacloprid 75 WSP but contains 40% more grams of active ingredient. Besides reducing the chemical cost by 40%, it also has the advantage of better mixing, less falling out of suspension, and therefore less likelihood of clogging an injector.

Note that the concentration for Amtide is 22.6%, which might suggest that it is less effective or lasts for a shorter residual protection period. However, when mixed with the proper amount of water (as indicated on the product label and in our dosing instructions), it yields *exactly* the same concentration as for the 75 WSP formulation and therefore is equally effective for an equal residual protection period.

New Chemical Calculator – A new tool has been developed to assist Facilitators and do-it-yourselfers in calculating the amount of treatment product needed and the cost for a treatment project. It's an Excel spreadsheet containing separate work sheets for 2 Dinotefuran products (Safari and Transtect) and 3 formulations of Imidacloprid (water soluble powder, tablets, and flowable liquid). To use the tool, choose the appropriate work sheet, enter the number of trees of certain sizes, and press Enter. It will give you the amount of product and the cost, based on your input. The Chemical Calculator can be downloaded from the Facilitators page of our web site.

New dosing instructions for Nu-Arbor soil injector – New instructions have been developed and will shortly be posted on the Resources page to the Nu-Arbor soil injector. This device dispenses a standard quarter ounce of solution per stroke and therefore requires different mixing proportions and different stroke counts from the Kioritz soil injector. Frank and Dave offered to check out the Nu-Arbor injector to evaluate its performance for the kinds of terrain we typically deal with on charitable service treatment projects.

Information updates – Because new information is continually being developed and treatment options and recommendations change frequently, our web site is updated at least once a week. Facilitators and anyone else wanting the most up-to-date information about hemlocks, adelgids, and treatments should always go to the Resources and/or Facilitators page and download the newest material. The latest revision date is shown for each document.

Volunteer/project tracking – Board members, Facilitators and other volunteers are requested to keep an estimate of their Facilitator visits, treatment projects, and other volunteer time by means of the Volunteer Project Report that's posted on the Facilitators page. The information should be sent to Donna at the end of each quarter for consolidated reporting of activity levels and participation. These reports also enable us to track the approximate numbers of trees and acres treated and the amount of chemicals used, in case we should be asked for that information by any regulatory agency.

NEXT BOARD MEETING –

Scheduled for Sunday, July 8, this will also be our annual membership meeting. Location tbd.