



Newsletter
Second Quarter 2011

Hemlock Happenings

A Publication of
Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Hemlock Happenings is an e-newsletter for members, facilitators and other volunteers, donors, and friends of Save Georgia's Hemlocks to share hemlock news, educational information, service opportunities, and announcements. If you'd like to submit an article, please send it to the e-mail address below. Readers' feedback is always welcome.

News from the front

The following is excerpted from the "HWA Update 2011 from UGA: the good, the bad, and the ugly" prepared by Mark Dalusky, Project Director. To read the full report, please visit our [Biological Controls](#) page.

Over the past 6 years, the State has seen a devastating blow to our hemlock resource in the interim. Fully 90% of the hemlocks are infested at some level, and from Ellijay and Blue Ridge back to the Chattooga River the hemlocks are in severe decline with significant mortality.... Several nice stands south of Hwy 52 near Ft. Mountain State Park as well as the Park itself remain in good shape, but from Lake Conasauga north to the confluence of the Jacks and Conasauga River, the infestation is spreading rapidly.

The last 2 years saw great growing conditions for hemlocks in N. Georgia, and the trees responded with abundant recovery growth both in 2010 and this year. Encouraged, we revisited a dozen or so of these hemlock stands which had been through the initial decline phase and were now showing good new growth. Even though the HWA level in most of these stands was ultra low, much of the recovery growth already had been reinfested during the first generation, and by the second generation the new growth was again densely colonized. These trees will likely not survive the year. There were encouraging signs at 6 sites within 4 of the larger Hemlock Conservation Areas that we visited. Most of the positive results were from areas immediately adjacent to groups of soil-injected hemlock trees....

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Annual Meeting and Membership Picnic

Save Georgia's Hemlock held its Annual Meeting and Membership Picnic on Sunday, July 10 at the Fishcamp Pavilion of Smithgall Woods near Helen. We had a wonderful group of members, facilitators, volunteers, and friends who joined us for an afternoon of information, good food, and great fellowship in a beautiful and relaxing setting. The meeting included updates about the hemlocks, a progress report on SGH accomplishments and financial condition, and discussion of future plans for educational outreach and charitable service.



We also shared information about the new "lead facilitator" positions being established in each county (article below), technical updates on hemlock treatment protocols and equipment (page 2), and upcoming events and volunteer opportunities (page 2).

Annual elections were held confirming continuing Board Members and Officers Donna Shearer, Bob Pledger, Dave Teffeteller, Donna Moorlag, and Bonnie Mandel. Newly elected Board Members are Frank Gheesling, Bruce Granger, and Doug Richey. Congratulations and thanks to all for their dedicated service.

To read a full report on the meeting and information that was presented, please visit our [About Us](#) page and click on the 7-10-11 Meeting Notes.

Volunteer Hemlock Facilitator Program – We Need You!

Save Georgia's Hemlocks developed its Volunteer Hemlock Facilitator Program early in its formation to provide direct assistance to property owners. To date, there are over 60 trained Facilitators active in north Georgia counties.

Facilitators receive special training and become the primary vehicle for directly assisting other property owners by providing on-site hemlock assessments and explaining the available controls and treatment methods so people can make informed decisions regarding their hemlocks. They also help to expand awareness about the hemlock woolly adelgid infestation in their communities.



Due to the anticipated growth of the Facilitator Program, Save Georgia's Hemlocks is developing a "Lead Facilitator" role to ensure: coordination within each community, consistency of message to the property owner public, and availability of current, accurate information for other Facilitators. These leaders will also recruit additional Facilitators, identify and maintain local community information regarding resources and needs, and serve as the local face or point person in their community to help increase awareness.

Many more Facilitators are needed to expand Save Georgia's Hemlocks presence in the 9 counties where the program is active and to create a presence in the other infested counties where a program is badly needed. We will be scheduling one or more Facilitator training classes during the late summer and fall.

If you or someone you know may be interested in becoming a trained Facilitator and/or taking a leadership role in your community, please contact our Hemlock Help Line at 706-429-8010.

For more on the roles of Facilitators and Lead Facilitators and a great deal of useful information, please visit our [Facilitators](#) page.

CALENDAR — Fall Event

Continuing the theme of last year's Hemlock Camp Meeting, "a gathering of kindred spirits to celebrate and preserve the magnificent hemlock," this year we've decided to have a **Hike for the Hemlocks** in conjunction with our good friends in the Benton MacKaye Trail Association.



When: Saturday, October 1

Where: BMT in Cherry Log Mountain

What: A family-friendly hike through some beautiful woods, a picnic, time for a bit of learning, plenty of time to get to know other folks, and a chance to help some hemlocks.

Why: To increase awareness of the hemlock crisis, build synergy among groups and individuals who care, and have a good time together in the great outdoors.

Info: Details will be on our [Home](#) page soon.

Hemlock Documentary DVD

"Saving Georgia's Hemlocks," the half-hour documentary developed by SGH and broadcast on Windstream Cable TV, is available on DVD. Call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010 to request a free copy, and then please share it with your friends.

Technical Tips

Mark Dalusky has kindly provided **updated recommendations** for choosing the most appropriate treatment product in "Using Imidacloprid and Dinotefuran."

Imidacloprid foliar spray instructions have been added to the "Imidacloprid Dosing Instructions" and "Treating Hemlocks with Imidacloprid." These instructions and recommendations are posted on our [Resources](#) page.

A **laminated quick reference pocket card** showing Imidacloprid information on one side and Safari on the other is now available (free). Call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010 to request one. They're free.

We've had word that a **new soil injector** has been developed by Nu-Arbor and should be available some time in August. It consists of a back-pack tank and long metal probe. We'll let you know when we get more detail.

Communities Take Action

Several communities and volunteer groups have taken action to save their hemlocks, and we hope others will be inspired to do so. Here are a few examples, and we'd be glad to receive and share reports from others too.

Buckhorn Estates: From spring 2010 to spring 2011, this large subdivision of several hundred acres treated 2,500+ trees. About 60% of the work was done by volunteers, and the rest was completed by professionals.

Spruce Creek: Community volunteers have treated 800+ trees so far on both private and common property in their 500-acre neighborhood and report good results. The project began in 2006 and is ongoing.

Big Canoe: In this 8,100-acre gated development, professional applicators treated 12,667 trees in late 2009. The community has a detailed follow-up plan of ongoing monitoring and future treatment as needed.



Wildcat Creek Tract WMA in Dawson State Forest

The Mountain Stewards and other volunteers working under direction of the Georgia Forestry Commission began a project in spring 2011 to treat about 500 acres, with 80 acres of that parcel being set aside for beetle release. Three predatory beetle species were released by the GFC in spring 2011, and volunteers have chemically treated 9,918 trees so far. Phases 2 and 3 are scheduled for fall 2011 and spring 2012.

Smithgall Woods: Staff members of this 5,664-acre state park treated 1,700+ trees in 2009-2011, and the GFC released predatory beetles in one section. Additional trees have been marked for future treatment.

SGH Board Opportunity

We have one open Board position and are seeking just the right person with a heart for the hemlocks, a commitment to the spirit of charitable service, a no-nonsense approach to getting things done, and a willingness to share your skills and talents to enhance our outreach and effectiveness.

If you're interested or have a recommendation, please call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010.

News from the front, continued

The Southern Consortium of labs participating in this biocontrol project consists of Clemson University, Young Harris College, University of Georgia and North Georgia College and State University. Together we have implemented a coherent, well-considered strategy for releasing 3 species of predator beetles in areas with infested hemlocks. This strategy consists of characterizing the HWA infestation in any particular area, and only making initial releases of beetles into hemlock stands that will likely provide food and habitat for our predators for at least 3 years.... Our release season runs from the last week in February until mid-June where we end up at the highest elevations (ca. 3300 feet) for our final releases....

Currently, we have 90 distinct sites, ranging in size from 1 to 40 acres each, on the Chattahoochee NF and state lands where we have released all 3 species of predators available for use. These are multi-season, multi-year, multi-phenology (eggs or adults) efforts which we feel gives the predators the best shot at reproducing in the field, establishing and spreading to new areas. For the third year in a row, we have recovered predators from about 75% of the areas sampled... thanks in large part to the efforts of Cera Jones, a grad student here at UGA and Director of the NGCSU predator beetle lab. I can also say that almost all (90% plus) of our predator release areas have very little mortality ... and it appears that a treatment effect may be in evidence.... I'll keep you posted.



Finally, there is a perfect storm of adelgids brewing in our hemlock stands right now due to the last 2 years of nice new growth and our unusually warm weather.... [Adelgid reproduction] this year was massive!, and I fear we may see a jump in tree mortality by the end of 2011....

Dalusky: "The next 2-3 years will be critical for conservation of functional hemlock stands in Georgia. Please find it in your heart – or should I say budget – to donate to this very worthwhile cause. It's fully tax-deductible."

For information on donating to the UGA predator lab and other ways to help on public lands, see our [Biological Controls](#) page.