

SGH Leadership Team



Donna Shearer, Founder

Donna passed away in June, 2024, however, her motivating presence, humor, empathy and leadership will continue to serve as the guiding principles behind the success of Save Georgia's Hemlocks. Learn more about Donna [here](#).

Buz Stone, Chairman, Saplings Program Manager, NE counties

Born and raised in Atlanta, Buz attended Emory undergraduate and law school, graduating in 1970. He joined the Air Force as a JAG officer and served for 4 years. Afterwards, Buz practiced law in Atlanta for 22 years. He began a second career in rustic landscaping in 1997, eventually selling that business and retiring in 2021. He has been active in several nonprofits, serving as Chairman of the Lake Rabun Association, Director of the Lake Rabun Foundation, Chairman of Foxfire, and Chairman of Save Georgia's Hemlocks. Buz has been married to his high school sweetheart, Mary Cobb, since 1968. They have three grown children, nine grandchildren and are enjoying retirement living on Lake Rabun.



Dave Teffeteller, Co-Chairman/Communications Director/Paddling for Hemlocks Coordinator

Dave Teffeteller is a life-long conservationist. He has lent his professional skills and dedication to numerous environmental non-profit organizations throughout the country. His role as a non-profit consultant in strategic planning, led to his becoming a founding member and director of Save Georgia's Hemlocks. An avid fly fisherman and outfitter, he realizes the role of healthy forests in maintaining the delicate ecosystem of our streams, rivers and lakes. His career as a designer, creative director and writer spans more than 50 years. Dave and his wife, Joanne Waddey, live in Ellijay where he serves as a director of Blackberry Mountain Association.

Chris Curtin, Board/Saplings Manager North Central

Chris Curtin graduated Cum Laude from the University of Miami with a B.Mus in Music Therapy/Music Education, the University of Georgia with a MED in Special Education/Counseling, and Emory University with a PhD in Educational Leadership. She spent 30 years working in private and public schools in Georgia. Upon retirement, Chris settled into mountain life in Ellijay, where she has lived for 14 years. She was instrumental in starting the Beekeepers of Gilmer County along with being a founding member of SGH. She also has a booth in a local antique store in Ellijay, specializing in kids' toys. She enjoys life.



Jim Wentworth, Board/Treatment Manager BRRD

Jim Wentworth received his BS in Wildlife Biology from the University of Massachusetts and MS and PhD in Wildlife Biology from the University of Georgia. Jim worked for over 30 years as a Wildlife Biologist with the US Forest Service, the majority of which was on the Chattahoochee National Forest in north Georgia. During that time, he was instrumental in establishing agreements between SGH and USFS to allow SGH volunteers to treat hemlocks on the National Forest. After retiring in 2018, he joined the SGH board and is continuing to lead volunteers on hemlock treatment projects on the Blue Ridge Ranger District. He's also on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, the Union County Lions Club, the Georgia Battlefields Association, and the Community Council of UGA's Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. Jim lives in Blairsville with his wife Cindy.

Darrell Sheffield, Board Member at Large

Darrell Sheffield has served as a field volunteer, Instructor, Facilitator, and Board Member with Save Georgia's Hemlocks since 2015. Darrell is a lifelong outdoorsman with a particular interest in hiking and backpacking. It was his love for the trails in the southern Blue Ridge mountains that brought him face to face with the destruction facing the Eastern Hemlocks. His experiences on trail pushed him to get involved and ultimately to SGH. Darrell is married to Melissa and they have four children who have also volunteered with Save Georgia's Hemlocks at times. In his full time work, Darrell has over 30 years service with the U.S. Social Security Administration where he continues to serve.



Jon Jones, Board/Treatment Manager CRRD

Jon Jones was born and raised in Illinois. He retired in 2018, and moved to Rabun County. He earned a BA, Biology from Illinois Wesleyan University 1977 and a MS, Forestry from Southern Illinois University 1980. He worked as a Forestry Aide for Clemson University at the Baruch Forest Science Research Institute in Georgetown, SC ; and a Soil Scientist for the USDA, Soil Conservation Service in Statesboro. Jon's military service includes serving in the Georgia Army National Guard, Statesboro; On Active-Duty he served in the United States Army 4 years as an Artillery Officer and 16 years as a Special Forces Officer. He also served in the Civil Service, Department of the Army at Fort Bragg, NC as a civilian. Jon was a Community Service Volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America, and currently Jon volunteers as Save Georgia's Hemlocks, SGH, NE GA Project Coordinator. He serves as Quartermaster with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW Post 4570, Clayton. He also is a member of the American Legion, Post 220, Mountain City, and the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 15, Cornelia. He is an Honor Guard Member, Cornelia and a Board Member, Avalon Condo Association in Clayton.

Holly Cochran, Interim Executive Director

Since 2022, Holly has served as the interim Executive Director for Save Georgia's Hemlocks. A north Georgia native with a BS in Biology, her passion for connecting people to nature began during her work with the Greening Youth Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. Through various conservation "hitch" projects, Holly developed a strong foundation in outdoor stewardship and community engagement.

With over a decade of experience in community public health, Holly is committed to advancing environmental health initiatives. As a hiker, mountain biker, gardener, beekeeper, and native plant advocate, she is also dedicated to preserving the natural world and inspiring others to appreciate and protect it.



Derrick Morris, Board/Education Program Manager

Katherine Carey, Board Member at Large

Jonathan Micancin, Board Member at Large

Bob Pledger, Board Member Emeritus

Betty Larsen, Festivals & Special Events Manager

Todd Jackson, Treasurer

John Shearouse, Saplings Technical Advisor

Jim Heilman, Saplings Program Manager NW counties

Jimmy Stewart, Treatment Manager NW counties

Elliott Seagall, Scout Liason

Robert Patchett, Scout Liason

Jody Webb, Membership Coordinator