



# Chinsegut Volunteer

Celebrating volunteers  
and the Chinsegut Nature Center



*Sharing the Chinsegut Experience*

Spring 2008

## Director's Message

*By Kristin Wood, FWC Chinsegut Nature Center, Director*

Spring is dashing through here in its usual Florida fashion. As I write this, I have been listening to some of our recently arrived bird migrants: the great crested flycatcher, ruby-throated hummingbirds, summer tanager, prairie warbler, swallow-tailed kite and chuck will's widow.

Attendance is up at the nature center as many folks are enjoying the great weather. Make sure you include a visit as well, to catch a sighting of any of our returning avian visitors. May's Prairie is particularly beautiful and



full of life this time of year.

The Chinsegut Birding and Wildlife Festival on April 11 and 12 was a great success with 395 participants enjoying bird walks, bird talks, dung beetles, bird house building, burrowing owl trips and bird calling, just to name a few. We appreciate and thank the support of our great team of volunteers who woke up early to make the festival fantastic.

Thank you all for all you do behind the scenes and in the scenes!



Nancy Douglass/FWC

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Visit our web site for program schedules and general information at [www.MyFWC.com/Chinsegut](http://www.MyFWC.com/Chinsegut).

# Sandhill Species Highlight

## Florida gopher frog

By FWC staff

The gopher frog is a stout-bodied frog from two to four inches long found throughout most of the Florida peninsula. It is cream to brown colored, with irregular dark spots on their back and side.

Gopher frogs will travel great distances, as much as a mile or more, to breed in temporary ponds year-round, laying eggs in shallow water. As adults, they hop into surrounding uplands, where they find a home in the active burrow of a gopher tortoise. They may also use a stump hole or the abandoned burrow of a small rodent.

They are nocturnal and seldom range far from their daytime retreat. You may be able to glimpse one by sneaking up on a gopher tortoise burrow very early in the morning.

The male's call is a deep guttural snore, and heavy rains at any season may stimulate choruses, many of them calling at once. Sometimes they call from underwater, so as not to attract predators, a noise that must be detected by hydrophone.

Because of habitat destruction, the gopher frog is very rare in its traditional southern range. It is listed as a species of special concern in Florida.

*For more fact sheets on Florida species please visit <http://MyFWC.com/viewing/species/index.htm>*



## Program Schedule

*View descriptions and times of all programs on the web:*

[www.MyFWC.com/Chinsegut](http://www.MyFWC.com/Chinsegut)

*Please RSVP by calling*

*352-754-6722*

### April

22 Tropical Soda Apple  
Work Day

### May

6 Butterfly walk

13 Florida's  
hummingbirds

24 Map and compass

### June

3 Project Wild/Aquatic  
Wild Workshop

20 Night walk

21 Intro to Archery

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Ginny Edwards

By Becky Brown, FWC

The Bishops were one of the first landowners and pioneers of Chinsegut. You are taken back to how life was lived in the late 1800s whenever Ginny Edwards portrays Mrs. Bishop. Ginny, a native to Brooksville, remembers her mother gathering, storing and preparing food just like Ms. Bishop did in the early years. Ginny has been sharing their stories at Chinsegut for many years and is one of the few volunteers who have received their **500 hour** pin.

Not only does Ginny volunteer here at the Center, she is also deeply involved with the Florida Trail Association where she has volunteered for over 30 years.



Becky Brown/FWC

While she and her husband, Charles, are in North Carolina for the summer, she also volunteers as a Master Gardener at the Macon County Cooperative Extension office.

Chinsegut is very lucky to have a dedicated volunteer like Ginny as part of our team, educating the public and school groups on how we can conserve our resources, just like the pioneers.

## 2008 Volunteer Highlights

### January—March

- ◆ **96 Weekend Warrior** hours greeting 220 visitors
- ◆ **17 public programs** teaching 365 adults and 87 children
- ◆ **5 school programs** with volunteers contributing more than 16 hours teaching 154 children and 26 adults.
- ◆ **33 bags of trash** picked up with eight Adopt a Road volunteers with more than **40 hours**.
- ◆ **130 runners and 20** walkers making \$750 with the support of **21 volunteers** contributing more than 60 hours at the 5K Run and Fun Walk.
- ◆ **12 inches of water** recorded in May's Prairie in March by Lakewatch volunteers contributing more than 20 hours since January.



Geoff Brown/FWC

*Registration volunteers at 5k Run and Fun Walk, Feb. 16.*

# Biologist Spotlight

## Chad Allison

*FWC wildlife biologist*

### *Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area*

Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area (WMA) recently came under management from a new supervisor. Chad Allison is a Southwest Louisiana native who moved to Southwest Florida to be closer to his family.

When asked about his choice of profession, he said he chose to become a biologist / land manager based on his desire to work outdoors, improve nature-based recreation, and to “restore that which I feel has been neglected by the fast pace and urban sprawl that today’s world exerts on everyone.”

Prior to becoming a Floridian, Chad worked in

various natural resource capacities at Fort Polk in Central Louisiana. These included environmental compliance, upland game management and imperiled species management. Fort Polk adjoins the Kisatchie National Forest, an area known for its vast amount of longleaf pine ecosystems, not unlike that found along the Nature Coast.

“ I look forward to long-term management opportunities at Chassahowitzka and Chinsegut in hopes of reclaiming portions of sandhill and scrub in need of active management. I am honored to be able to work alongside like- minded individuals tasked with overseeing such a diverse and unique area.” Chad said.

...And we are looking forward to working with him! Please join us in welcoming Chad Allison to our community.

## One step closer to a new friendship....

*By Geoff Brown*

The Chinsegut Nature Center is one step closer to developing a “Friends of Chinsegut” group. On Friday, March 14, FWC staff from the Office of Recreation Services and the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management area met with representatives from various local stakeholders for a full day to brainstorm strategic goals and to draft mission and vision statements for the nature center. As a result, a steering committee is being formed to complete the necessary groundwork to get a friends group started.

The purpose of the friends group is three-fold: to generate support for educational and volunteer programs and to give those who cannot otherwise volunteer a means of getting involved by supporting programs and contributing financially.

If you have any questions about the friends group, please contact Geoff at 850-921-1047 or Kristin at 352-754-6722. Watch for updates here in the volunteer newsletter.

Becky Brown/FWC



# Women go nuts for Incredible Edibles

By Jill Svoboda, Chinsegut Volunteer

Twenty willing women armed with hammers and nut picks gathered on the evening of Thursday, Jan. 31 in the dining hall at the Division of Forestry's Tillis Hill Recreation Area for the Old Fashioned Women's Nut Crackin' Party and potluck social. Their task was to prepare enough nut meats for the Chinsegut Nature Center's Incredible Edibles program.

Following a potluck supper that would have fed a gathering twice as large, the women sat down at long tables and drew their weapons as the nature center's director, Kristin Wood

and Sid Taylor heaped piles of cracked hickory nuts in front of them. One table got the even more difficult task of picking out acorn meats and pine nuts.

From about 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., the women chatted with old friends and made new ones as they coaxed every tiny bit of nut meat from the stubborn shells. The group soon discovered that dental picks are made to order for the task, thanks to Joan Lemos, who brought in several of the delicate tools.

Thank you so much to all hands that picked and prodded the nuts out of their shells.



Forgy Smith/CNC Volunteer

Right: Jill Svoboda, Joan Lemos and Mary Dowdell. Left: Linda Vanderveen and Becky Brown.

# Out and About

## April

- 19 **Birds and Breakfast at Ahhochee Hill**  
9 a.m. Call Christie Anderberg at 352-797-3545.
- 19 **Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale** at 9 am— noon Hernando County Cooperative Extension call Jim Moll at 352-754-4433
- 24 **Audubon Picnic** at Pine Island Park 6 pm Call Linda Vanderveen at 352-754-9436 or 352-428-2629 (cell)
- 27 **Doo-Wop & Twist Benefit** for Fine Arts Council and Bandshell Bash concerts call 352-754-4788 or visit [www.hernandoarts.org](http://www.hernandoarts.org)

## May

- 3 **Environmentally Sensitive Lands Clean-Up at Cypress Lakes** Call Jim King (Hernando Co. Planning Dep.) at 352-754-4057 ext 28020
- 14—18 **Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference** at Manatee Convention Center, Palmetto, Fl. For more info visit <http://www.fnps.org/>.

Thank you to two of our partners: Hernando Audubon Society (<http://www.hernandoaudubon.org/>) and the Hernando Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (<http://hernando.fnpschapters.org/>) for always helping us with our programs through staffing and financial assistance.

# Our Partner: RSVP

*By Linda Graves, RSVP Project Coordinator*

Are you 55 years of age or older? Are you currently volunteering for Chinsegut Nature Center? Would you like to join this unique volunteer organization, without committing to any additional hours of service? If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are eligible to become a member of RSVP.

The **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**, better known as RSVP, is a program of the National Senior Services Corp, sponsored by Mid Florida Community Services. The only requirement to belong to RSVP is that volunteers be 55-years-old or older. Our program is here to help serve our RSVP volunteers and our partner agencies, such as Chinsegut Nature Center. RSVP volunteers serve at over 80 different public and non-profit organizations within Hernando County.

Last year alone RSVP volunteers gave over 74,000 hours of their time and talents to provide much needed services to Hernando County residents. Some of the areas in which RSVP volunteers provide services are: mentoring school children, delivering hot meals to homebound elderly,

community beautification projects, caregiver respite care assistance, and community enhancement programs.

As a member of RSVP, you will be covered by our accident and liability insurance, a supplemental insurance coverage, to cover any out of pocket expenses incurred, due to an accident while on a volunteer assignment and when enroute to and from your volunteer service. This benefit is provided at no cost to our members.

Members of RSVP will also receive our quarterly newsletters and will be invited to our annual volunteer appreciation banquet.

If you would like additional information please ask Becky Brown or contact RSVP at 352-796-8117.

# Hot Opportunities

- ◆ **Office Assistant**-Enter raw data into computer for record keeping. Computer knowledge in MS OFFICE needed.
- ◆ **Night Hike Leader**-Lead or assist a night hike four times a year. You don't have to be an expert; you just have to know where you are going.
- ◆ **Weekend Warrior**-Greet visitors, answer the phones and other light duties on Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 pm. No special prior knowledge needed. Come on any Friday to get trained.

To volunteer for any of these positions, please contact Becky Brown at 352-754-6722 or email [Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com](mailto:Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com).

# Support Snapshot

By Office of Recreation Services staff

Chinsegut receives many forms of financial assistance through grants, volunteer hours, partner donations and general cash donations. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 - June 30. With 2008 nearly over, here is a snapshot of support that has been received to date.

As one can see, the majority of support comes from our most valuable VOLUNTEERS. The value of volunteer hours was calculated by volunteer hours logged, multiplied by \$18.77 per hour. (A national average from Independent Sector, [www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)). The best resource that Chinsegut Nature Center has is our volunteer program since so many of our programs would

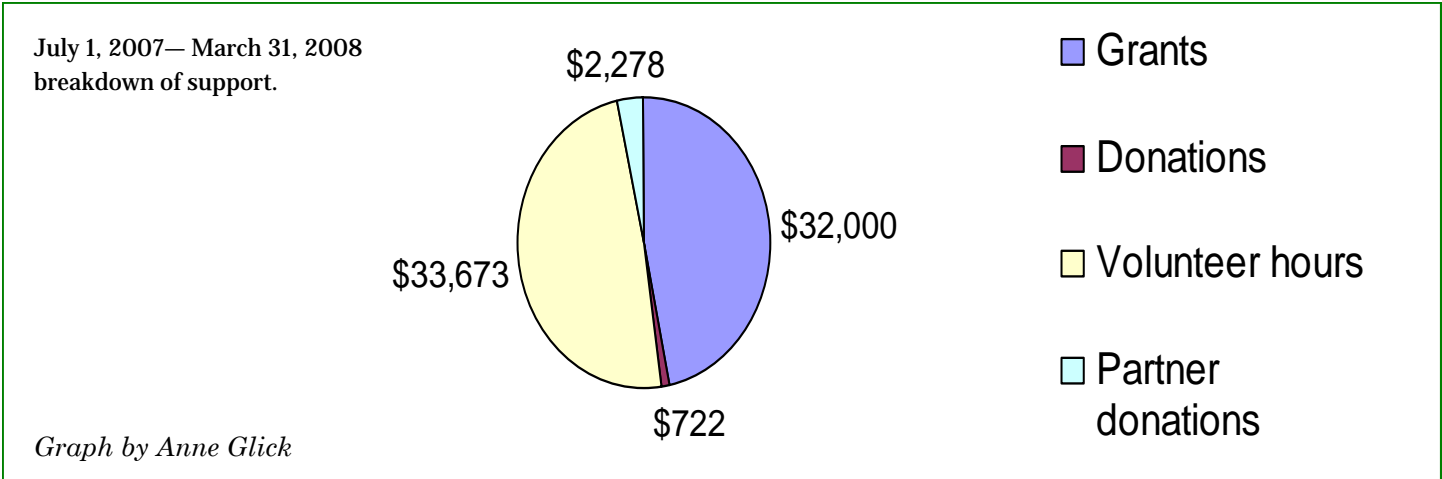
not be successful without their unending commitment to Chinsegut.

Our second largest donation came from a recent grant received from the Longbrake Family Foundation to build a new butterfly and water garden behind the Nature Center. Partner donations to build our new stages came from Hernando Audubon Society, Diamond Construction, and Ken and Trisha Brooks.

We receive general donations from the public through cash donations. All donations get deposited into a special account held in trust by *The Wildlife Foundation of Florida*. This was created specifically to assist the FWC in its conservation efforts.

Nature Center Director, Kristin Wood, does a tremendous job of cutting corners and getting organizations to donate their services for free, but there are numerous costs associated with running a nature center dedicated to public service. With our four main events, daily operations costs, animal care expenses, speaker fees and program expenses — it all adds up.

We thank and appreciate all the volunteers for contributing their hours, and we also appreciate all the financial and in-kind donations that keep Chinsegut moving ahead each year.





**MyFWC.com**

Chinsegut Nature Center  
23212 Lake Lindsey Rd  
Brooksville, FL 34601

## Volunteering at Chinsegut Nature Center

Chinsegut Nature Center is located within the Chinsegut Wildlife and Environmental Area, approximately 7 miles north of Brooksville. It is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Chinsegut Nature Center has numerous hiking trails for the public to enjoy bird and wildlife viewing. Public programs and events are offered to the public year round, sharing information on wildlife habitat conservation.

Chinsegut is a loose translation of an Inuit word given to the area by Raymond Robbins, meaning "the place where lost treasures can be found again." Our volunteers share our vision of sharing the *Chinsegut Experience* with residents and visitors to the sandhill region.

If you would like to be a part of the wonderful group of volunteers that make Chinsegut Nature Center a great community asset, call Becky Brown, volunteer



*Becky Brown, Volunteer  
Program Specialist*

program specialist at  
352-754-6722 or email  
[Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com](mailto:Rebecca.Brown@MyFWC.com)