



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

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VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Annual Report
2010-2011



**Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission**

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FWC Volunteer Program

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Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but **because they're priceless.**

– Sherry Anderson, PhD, Psychologist & Author

Photo – Volunteer, Stephen Harris, plants scrub pine at a restoration workday in the Ocala National Forest.



VALUE IN VOLUNTEERS



*FWC volunteers continue to make a positive impact, by increasing project capacity, as well as public knowledge and awareness in support of the **FWC mission: Manage fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.***

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Volunteer Program utilizes Citizen Science and Stewardship to achieve conservation goals. Volunteer Coordinators work with biologists and land managers to identify and develop habitat and species conservation projects, as well as recruit, train and recognize volunteers. Volunteer Coordinators also work to facilitate volunteer placement throughout the agency. The Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services (PAWV) supports volunteer coordination, placement, and management. PAWV also reports volunteer value to the agency and expands partnerships to support volunteer programs through funding and in-kind contributions.

Volunteers are crucial to the agency, because they provide manpower and resources, expand productivity, and allow staff to divert time and energy elsewhere. Volunteers donate time to an organization for many reasons: personal and professional development, health benefits, enjoyment and sense of purpose, and community contribution. The agency benefits from volunteer donated time, talent and resources, and our volunteers even inspire others to act generously. The volunteer reward is not only learning, but also sharing conservation experiences and values with family, friends, neighbors and colleagues. As a valuable component of the FWC team, volunteers keep us thinking, progressing, and achieving our goals.



Photos left to right – Volunteer, David Simms, manages a Coastal Clean-Up outreach and education table in Cedar Key; Volunteers measure catch at an FWC sponsored fishing tournament.

Fiscal Year 2010-2011 (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011) was another active, productive and successful year for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) volunteer program. The volunteer program expanded in volunteer number, effort, project type and scope, increasing our statewide network of trained volunteers. Citizens of all ages, backgrounds and skills contributed their time to assist with activities such as facility and ground maintenance, wildlife research, biological sampling and monitoring, laboratory work and habitat restoration. The FWC benefits from the skills, experiences and dedication of volunteers, and, in turn, we strive to offer our volunteers a fulfilling, meaningful and satisfying volunteer experience.

Over the past four years, there has been a marked increase in total volunteer hours and value to the agency, totaling 323,013.72 volunteer hours valued at \$6,734,197.81 and 155 full time equivalent positions. Volunteers have also donated effort to 130 programs, with 80% of these programs and 36% of total volunteers focused on conservation specific activities such as monitoring species of greatest conservation need and restoring wildlife habitat.



DEDICATION

Total volunteer hours increased by 2% from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011, an increase in value of nearly \$40,000.

Fiscal Year 2010-2011	Agency Totals
Volunteer Hours	113,599
Volunteer Count	4,156 ¹
Value of Volunteer Hours	\$2,426,467 ²
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	~ 55 Positions

Division/Office/Institute	Volunteer Hours
Division of Hunting and Game Management	36,426
Division of Marine Fisheries Management	4,162
Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management	2,046
Division of Law Enforcement	22,018
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute	20,674
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation	19,872
Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services	8,398

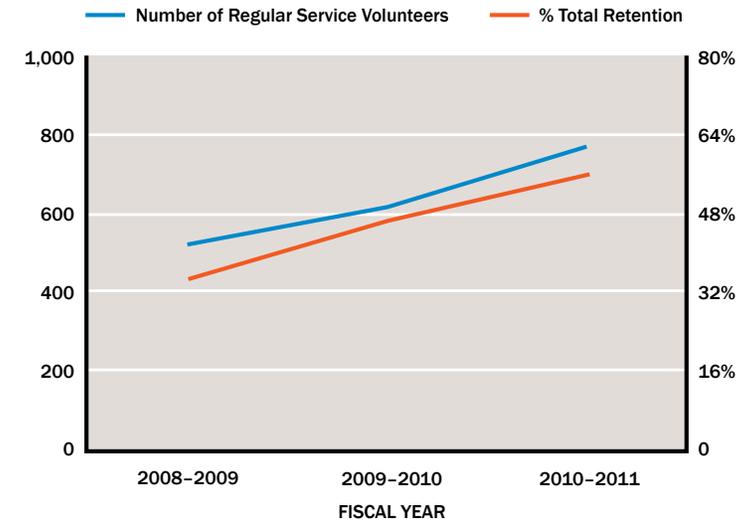


Figure 1. Number of Individually Tracked Regular Service Volunteers and Total Retention. Total Retention is calculated based on the percentage of volunteers for a given fiscal year that have previously volunteered in one or more fiscal years. Total Retention includes 1,402 Regular Service Volunteers that can be individually identified and tracked within the agency volunteer database (VolTrack) during the reported time period.

Since fiscal year 2007-2008, total volunteer hours have increased by 22%, resulting in an additional value to the agency of \$416,141; and total retention has increased from 35% to 56%. (See Figure 1)

1 – Volunteer Count includes both active Regular Service Volunteers and Occasional Service Volunteers during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

2 – Value calculated using Independent Sector 2010 national estimate on value of a volunteer hour: \$21.36 (http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

3 – Value calculated using an average of the Independent Sector national estimate on value of a volunteer hour from fiscal years 2007-2008 to 2010-2011: \$20.49 (http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

Division of Hunting and Game Management

Hunter Safety Volunteers:

- Support our hunting heritage by teaching youth the knowledge and skills needed to be safe, responsible hunters.
- Hosted 676 hunter safety classes resulting in 12,951 graduates. This is the highest number of opportunities ever offered in Florida.
- Conducted two huntmaster workshops and helped coordinate 69 hunts for 672 youth and parents for the Youth Hunting Program of Florida.



*Volunteers contributed **36,426 hours.***

*Hunter safety class **opportunities increased by 21%**
from fiscal year 2009-2010 to fiscal year 2010-2011.*



Division of Marine Fisheries Management

Cedar Key Volunteers:

- Assisted with field study activities, educational beach walks, water quality and fish identification.
- Participated in coastal clean-up activities, such as monofilament recovery, recycling outreach and sorting collected marine debris.
- Assisted with the Nature Coast Fishing for Youth program, where youth learn knot tying, fish handling, rod rigging, fish identification and de-hooking.

Kids Saltwater-Fishing Clinic Volunteers:

- Since 1996, more than 52,298 children and 34,586 parents have participated in kids saltwater-fishing clinics. This would not have been possible without the 10,274 volunteers who assisted with educating young anglers about fishing techniques, marine habitats, ethical angling and marine conservation.

Volunteers contributed **4,162 hours**.

Volunteer hours for kids saltwater-fishing clinics increased by 28% from fiscal year 2009-2010 to fiscal year 2010-2011.

Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management

Tenoroc Fish Management Area (FMA) Volunteers:

- Facilitated 29 outreach events at Tenoroc FMA, including school programs and nature festivals.
- Maintained and improved more than 10 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails on Tenoroc FMA.
- Collected largemouth bass population data on five Tenoroc FMA lakes over a four-month period.

Southwest Region Volunteers:

- Facilitated 58 outreach events around the region, including fishing derbies, fishing clinics and outdoor shows.
- Installed seven fish attractors on Lake Walk-in-Water and two attractors on Tiger Lake.
- Sampled fish populations on 11 lakes throughout the region.

South Region Volunteers:

- Facilitated three outreach events around the region, including fishing clinics, fishing derbies and an outdoor festival.



Volunteers contributed **2,046 hours**.

Volunteers are an important outreach resource to fisheries management, as there are 1.4 million anglers annually, who enjoy 24.4 million days of recreational fishing in Florida's fresh waters.

(National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation-2006)

Photo – FWC Biologist, Eric Johnson, and former FWC Biologist, Danielle Lewis, prepare to sink brush into Tiger Lake. The brush serves as an underwater fish attractor. Volunteers often help biologists create these underwater fish attractors on public lakes.



Division of Law Enforcement

Reserve Officers:

- Assisted the FWC Division of Law Enforcement in its mission to protect the state's wildlife, fresh and saltwater aquatic life and human resources.
- Officer Donald Trussell, from the Northwest Region, was awarded Reserve Officer of the Year (2010). Officer Trussell donated 1,200 hours to the FWC and participated in seven boating safety classes. He helped with physical assessments and training scenarios for new hires, assisted with K-9 training, as well as participated in at least 10 public relations events at Beau Turner Youth Conservation Center, Tall Timbers Research Station and Florida State University. Reserve officers are an excellent force multiplier, patrolling day or night, on land, on the water or in the air.

*Volunteers contributed **22,018 hours.***

Reserve Officer hours increased by 11% from fiscal year 2009-2010 to fiscal year 2010-2011.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI)

Herpetological Research Volunteers:

- Sampled for striped newts and gopher frog tadpoles, collected data for a State Wildlife Grant program titled “*Survey of winter-breeding amphibian species in the peninsula.*”

Marine Mammal Research Volunteers:

- Rescued and assessed the health of marine mammals.
- Monitored and participated in research studies for marine mammals.

Stock Enhancement Research Facility (SERF) Volunteers:

- Assisted with local outreach events such as the Florida State Fair, MarineQuest, Florida Sportsman fishing and boating shows, as well as the Tampa Tribune Outdoor Expo.
- Collected specimens and provided routine daily animal husbandry.
- Volunteers from Online Fisherman organized two special-opportunity fishing events at the hatchery for foster children from the Blooming Place for Kids. Nine volunteers contributed a total of 96.75 hours. The Online Fisherman group received a Fish Florida grant to provide all the children with free rods, reels and tackle boxes.



*Volunteers contributed **20,674 hours.***



FWRI volunteers and interns donate time to a variety of successful research programs that strive to provide a scientific foundation for the management of Florida's fish and wildlife resources.

Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Bear Management Volunteers:

- Assisted with outreach, response and research, which includes educating the public on black bear habitat, feeding habits and management techniques.

Project WILD Volunteers:

- Donated time toward four WILD presentations, as well as lead 29 Project WILD/ Aquatic WILD, 27 Growing Up WILD, four Flying WILD, three Black Bear and five Schoolyard Wildlife workshops for approximately 1,692 participants.

Wildlife Management and Environmental Area Volunteers:

- Assisted managers with facilities and grounds maintenance, land management, wildlife surveys and habitat enhancement.
- J.W. Corbett and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) recorded more than 2,000 volunteer hours during fiscal year 2010-2011. Bull Creek-Triple N Ranch WMAs recorded more than 1,000 volunteer hours.

Ridge Ranger Volunteers:

- Donated time to conserve endangered habitat and species on the Lake Wales Ridge during fiscal year 2010-2011. Sixty-one of the 135 participants were new to this program because of outreach efforts to colleges such as South Florida Community College and to other events such as *Boktoberfest* and *Naturefest*.
- Removed 18 tons of old debris and tires from conservation areas, primarily from two sites: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Flamingo Villas and FWC's Carter Creek.
- Removed 8,000 feet of old barbwire fence line from two conservation areas: FWC's Sun Ray and Lake Kissimmee State Park.
- Maintained endangered scrub lupine experimental plots at the Lake Blue conservation area.
- Maintained a native plant nursery at Royce Ranch, and supplied plants from this nursery to restore a damaged area at Lake Placid as well as Royce Ranch.
- Mapped the locations of dumped debris and fence cuttings.
- Mapped invasive plants at three conservation areas (Mountain Lake, Sun Ray and Silver Lake) and to track habitat restoration coverage during workday events.

*Volunteers contributed **19,872 hours.***



Habitat and Species Conservation volunteers donate time to rewarding projects that integrate scientific data with applied habitat management for the purpose of maintaining stable or increasing populations of fish and wildlife.

Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services

Brooksville Ridge Volunteers:

- Removed invasive plants on FWC, other public lands and a neighboring Audubon property.
- Monitored, banded and translocated nestlings as well as enhanced nest site habitat for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) at approximately 50 nest clusters. Because of volunteer assistance, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker biologist remained current with nest cluster preparation throughout the year.
- Monitored 10 Southeastern American Kestrel nest boxes for the presence or absence of eggs and young. Also, built 12 new nest boxes and installed four of these new boxes on poles.
- Enhanced habitat at the Chassahowitzka WMA and Chinsegut/Big Pine WEAs through prescribed burn preparation, fire line maintenance, debris removal and hardwood reduction on 2,000 acres. Also maintained equipment and repaired fences.
- Restored habitat at Half Moon WMA through hardwood reduction and tree planting.
- Collected insect samples within the Chinsegut WMA and the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest for the Florida Natural Areas Inventory Rare Invertebrate Survey (FNAI RIS).
- Monitored the distribution and population trends of common and imperiled butterfly species for the Florida Butterfly Monitoring Network.



Volunteers contributed 8,398 hours.



Because of volunteer assistance, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker biologist remained current with nest cluster preparation throughout the year in the Citrus Wildlife Management Area.

Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services *(continued)*

Northeast Region Volunteers:

- Participated in Bear Management outreach and data collection events, canvassing over 626 homes in four different communities.
- Participated in training and observation events, monitoring six public and privately managed areas for Florida scrub-jay families.
- More than 100 volunteers participated in Jay Watch Program Training and Observation events throughout the state of Florida.
- Installed and maintained 80 Snail Kite nesting signs on Lake Tohopekaliga (Lake Toho).
- Constructed and installed 13 Snail Kite feeding platforms on Lake Toho and Lake Kissimmee. Volunteers helped to construct and install Snail Kite feeding platforms which provide juveniles with more open spaces for feeding and the ability to handle larger food items; thus, potentially increasing the juvenile survival rate of this endangered bird.
- Assisted with Snail Kite Stewardship events on the water.
- Monitored alligator nest habitats on two regional lakes.
- Sampled fish, using electroshock, on two local lakes.

Chinsegut Conservation Center Volunteers:

- Enhanced habitat by removing invasive species, maintaining the bird and butterfly garden, maintaining trails and fire breaks.
- Remodeled and cleaned the interior as well as managed the front desk at the Conservation Center.
- Taught youth and adults about native plants, wildlife and outdoor skills through approximately 30 year-round educational programs and four festivals, such as Reptile and Amphibian Day, Pioneer Day, 5K Fun Run and the Birding and Wildlife Festival. Activities included guided bird hikes, mushroom walks, night hikes, archery, map and compass, and pine weaving classes, as well as native plant hikes, junior birding workshops, astronomy nights and a sing-along musical evening. Volunteers helped to educate over 10,000 youth and adult participants.

Volunteers helped to educate over 10,000 youth and adult participants about native plants, wildlife and outdoor skills at Chinsegut Conservation Center.



Volunteers helped to construct and install feeding platforms for the Snail Kite, with the goal of increasing the juvenile survival rate of this endangered bird.



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Photo - Volunteers hike at the Tenoroc FMA trail opening.



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