
EXPANDING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR A
COMMUNITY TREASURE



Chinsegut Hill Historic Site Business Plan



MAY 2025

HernandoPast.org

HISTORIC HERNANDO
PRESERVATION
SOCIETY

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Executive Summary

Chinsegut Hill Sanctuary is an exceptional historic site in Hernando County currently owned by the State of Florida and leased for 50 years to Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Historic Hernando Preservation Society (HHPS) Board would like to assist the county in increasing public access to the property as well as reducing the financial burden on taxpayers to maintain the site.

HHPS also desires to create a Master Site Plan to strategically invest in preserving the historic assets, increasing archeological studies, and planning for appropriate amenity improvements so the property can continue to benefit this generation.



About HHPS

The Historic Hernando Preservation Society is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to support and encourage ongoing interest and research relating to the history of the original Hernando County, Florida, including aspects of Archaeology, Architecture, and Culture of current day Hernando, Citrus and Pasco Counties.

Ongoing Projects:

- Historic Markers & Signage
- Speakers Forum
- Archaeological project support
- Cemetery documentation
- Preservation education
- Historic Walking Tours
- Historic Home Tours
- Coordination with other organizations for mutual goals

HHPS meets the 1st Thursday each month in historic downtown Brooksville at City Hall, 201 Howell Ave. A general business meeting starts at 6:00PM, often followed by an educational presentation at 7:00PM. All are welcome to attend.





Goals

Chinsegut Hill is arguably Hernando County's most important historical asset. As a community gathering space for over 150 years, the land and the people who lived and worked on it are compelling to both local residents and visitors.

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| Goal 1: | Open the grounds seven days a week |
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| Goal 2: | Reduce taxpayer maintenance burden |
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| Goal 3: | Develop historically appropriate Master Site Plan |
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| Goal 4: | Increase public programming |
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Goal 1 Breakdown: Open the grounds seven days a week

The grounds are currently open on Saturday and Sunday for tours hosted by the Tampa Bay History Center. Although city and county staff are there at other times, there is no public posting or consistency in those hours. HHPS would open the grounds daily to the public.

Start Date: 07/01/2025

Completion Date: n/a

Steps To Make Goal 1 Happen

1. Coordinate volunteer schedule of HHPS members to be onsite during public hours
2. Produce signage, website & marketing materials announcing hours
3. Set up office area for volunteer to work in
4. Create volunteer job description

◆ Things To Think About

Tampa Bay History Center has created signage around the Manor House that allows for a self-guided history tour of the grounds.

Several trails have existed over the years of the woods to the north and east of the manor house and would be cleaned up and have directional signage installed.



Goal 2 Breakdown: Reduce taxpayer maintenance burden

HHPS will analyze current duties of county and other government agencies and create a plan to replace appropriate duties with qualified volunteers.

Start Date: 10/01/2025

Completion Date: 4/1/2026 (plan for FY 2027)

Steps To Make Goal 2 Happen:

1. Create a list of current services provided by County, City, and other government agencies.
2. Solicit qualified replacements for in-kind donations of services to HHPS.
3. Create a budget for expenses that cannot be provided as in-kind (like electricity, water tower)



Things To Think About

Services will be divided between one-time improvements and ongoing expenses. Partners will commit to a certain commitment length, giving HHPS time to solicit future partners or renew current partners.

Goal 3 Breakdown: Develop historically appropriate Master Site Plan

After development of the Master Site Plan, appropriate improvements will also be made. More archeological digs are needed onsite as well as promoting the unique history of Chinsegut. HHPS will apply for State grants for funding.

Start Date: 2025

Completion Date: 2026

Steps To Make Goal 3 Happen

1. Work with County and stakeholders to create a Master Site Plan
2. Work with legislative delegation for a 2026 appropriation
3. Submit plan for approval to Department of State, Division of Historical Resources
4. Apply in April 2026 for DOS Historic Resources Small Matching grant and DOS Arts & Culture Museum grant for 2027



Things To Think About

The DOS grant cycle for 2026 will close before HHPS begins working at Chinsegut. That funding gap could be covered by the one year appropriation as recommended to Chairman Hawkins by Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson. Stakeholder meetings to create the Master Site Plan would be held on Chinsegut grounds. As a 501c3, HHPS is eligible to apply for these and other grants.

Goal 4 Breakdown: Increase public programming

Many community organizations have missions that overlap with Chinsegut. Groups such as Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, Arts Council, the Ederington Foundation, Hernando Historic Museum Association, Friends of the Library, and Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution would make fitting partnerships at the Hill.

Start Date: 07/01/2025

Completion Date: 2026 schedule complete by 10/1

Steps To Make Goal 4 Happen

1. Host meetings with potential partners
2. Determine appropriate programming/projects for each group
3. Create schedule
4. Produce marketing materials to promote schedule

◆ Things To Think About

Partners may provide either programming, grounds or maintenance support, or one-time projects. HHPS will create a schedule of events and include as many other partners as possible in order to cross-promote, raise awareness for Chinsegut. Partnerships may also include cash or in-kind tax deductible contributions.





Mission

The Historic Hernando Preservation Society is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to support and encourage ongoing interest and research relating to the history of the original Hernando County, Florida, including aspects of Archaeology, Architecture, and Culture of current day Hernando, Citrus and Pasco Counties.

Managing the Chinsegut site is completely in line with our core mission for what HHPS should offer our community.



Service Offerings

HHPS would sublease the grounds and retreat center from the BOCC. The grounds would be open daily for free public use and the cottages, classroom, and dining hall would be available for rent.

Offering 1	Rentals for cottages, dining hall, and classroom
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Offering 2	Educational programming
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Offering 3	Onsite staff
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Offering 1: Rentals for cottages, dining hall, and classroom

HHPS will continue the retreat center bookings as well as manage new rentals.

- HHPS will determine rental rates upon review of retreat finances and market recommendations
- HHPS will provide retreat center housekeeping
- HHPS will work with County Tourism and VISIT FLORIDA to recruit renters
- HHPS will promote local attractions and businesses to renters
- HHPS will work with marketing professionals to spread awareness of the site





Offering 2: educational programming

HHPS will work with the Tampa Bay History Center, the Chinsegut Conservation Center, and other local organizations to increase programming opportunities.

- Past successful programming will be reconsidered, such as:
 - Lunch and Learn
 - Porch concerts
 - Trail and birding enthusiast events
- New programming will be considered based on interest of stakeholders, such as:
 - living history programs
 - workshops, children's events, themed summer camps
 - period-appropriate recreation
- Programming will be offered on a monthly basis and promoted at least 60 days in advance.



Offering 3: onsite staff

HHPS will recruit and retain an onsite manager to provide other services tailored to the employee's skill set.

- Onsite manager will ensure grounds are never left unattended
- Onsite manager will create an additional layer of hospitality and service for retreat guests



Meet The Team

The following have committed to volunteering their expertise to the goals of HHPS at Chinsegut Hill.

All have prior volunteer experience at Chinsegut, but have never put all their powers together to create one dynamic team.



Jan Knowles

HHPS President

Great Brookvillian of 2014 has dedicated her life to volunteerism in our community. She successfully obtained the \$1.5 million grant for the 2014 manor restoration.



Jo-Anne Peck

HHPS VP and Historic Preservationist

Jo-Anne is a certified preservationist, consultant,, and building and is also skilled at website management.



Amber Lamoreaux

HHPS Treasurer & Dade Battlefield President

Amber is a gifted docent and event planner who also coordinates school tours with the Tampa Bay History Center. Under her leadership as President of the Dade Battlefield State Park, they have been regularly recognized as a top-performing Park.



Deb Charlow

HHPS Board Member & Chinsegut Docent

Deb has been volunteering at Chinsegut as a docent for over a decade and is an expert in historic clothing as well as a reenactor.



Doug Davis

HHPS Board Member & Small Business Owner

Doug is a life-long resident of Hernando County and has served on many community boards. He is passionate about sharing local history and has a degree in marketing.



Ross Lamoreaux

HHPS Board & TBHC Chinsegut Site Manager

When TBHC became Chinsegut's museum partner, Ross began the deep dive into Chinsegut history. A living history reenactor and Civilian Conservation Corps expert, he has expanded understanding of Chinsegut's story.



Gary Ellis

Archeologist

Gary has directed five archeological digs at Chinsegut as well as created a map of archeological areas of interest.



Natalie Kahler

Chinsegut history author & podcaster

Natalie has volunteered at Chinsegut in many roles, including Retreat Manager and Event Planner. She has penned two books on Hill history and is in the second season of a podcast based on Chinsegut owner Elizabeth Robins' diaries.



Dr. Chris Meindl

Director of Florida Studies at USF

Dr. Meindl has been bringing his USF students to Chinsegut for 22 years! As an educator and geographer, he has recently published Florida Springs: From Geography to Politics and Restoration.



Liberty Tree Care

Arborist

A descendent of Chinsegut's Ederington Family, Liberty Tree Care's Chris Jernigan has donated countless hours to maintaining the health of Chinsegut trees.



Mary Sheldon

Hernando Historic Museum Assoc. President

An enthusiastic researcher and long-time leader at the museum, Mary is deeply committed to expanding our knowledge of Hernando County's roots.



Barry Meindl

HHPS Member & Roots Creative Co. Designer

Barry is Hernando's most exuberant and boundlessly energetic volunteer. A gifted designer, he has created branding for HHPS, Brooksville Main Street, and the Emancipation Day Celebration at Chinsegut.



Calli DeRoin

HHPS Member

As you can see in this photo, Calli has been volunteering at Chinsegut and other community organizations since childhood. A talented artist, Calli is also a gracious and dedicated hostess.



Lisa Huggins

Twin Lakes History Collection Curator

Lisa's mother, Mable, dedicated her life to documenting the history of her family's long history in Hernando County. Upon her passing, Lisa has picked up her mother's mantle in sharing those stories.



Joe Pecora

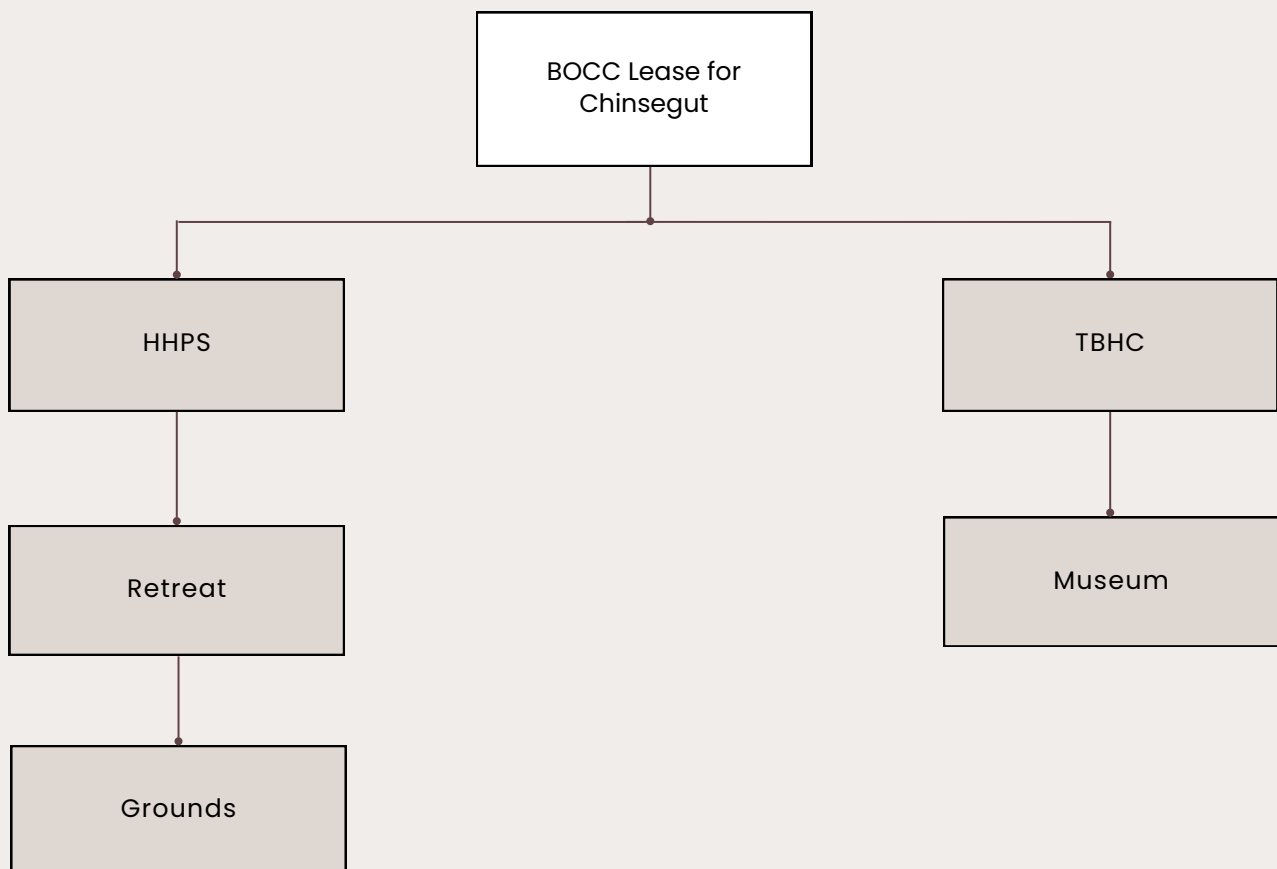
accountant

Joe is a retired accountant with Hernando County government and a former bookkeeping volunteer with the Friends of Chinsegut.

Partners' Structure

When the Margaret and Raymond Robins donated Chinsegut Hill Sanctuary to the Federal Government as an educational research center and wildlife preserve, it constituted over 2000 acres.

In subsequent years, the land management was divided between various State and Federal agencies. The portion of the land in discussion is owned by the State, and in 2017, Hernando County entered a 50 year lease to manage it.



Notes

HHPS would respectfully ask the County to maintain their sublease with TBHC for the museum.



Partner Roles and Responsibilities

	Role	Responsibilities
BOCC	State Leasee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insure Manor House • Water tower agreement with FAMU • Museum building maintenance
TBHC	Museum Lease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open grounds Saturday and Sunday • Conduct tours on Saturday, Sunday, and pre-arranged other times • Museum housekeeping
HHPS	Grounds & Retreat Lease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open grounds Monday-Friday • Maintain grounds • Operate retreat center • Organize and host public programming • Spearhead creation of Master Site Plan



Initial Marketing Plan

Method	Description	Budget
NatureCoaster.com	Monthly feature article and ad	\$1000
Visit Florida	campaign	\$3000
WEDU	feature story	free
Hernando Sun	programming ads	\$500
ER Diary Podcast	ad in each podcast episode	free
YouTube	short historical narratives	free
WWJB	event public service announcements	free
Roots Creative Co.	six month marketing plan	donation

Notes

Following the creation of the Master Site plan, a paid marketing strategy will be developed. In the interim, the marketing indicated above will be implemented.

The Numbers

Chinsegut Retreat booking statistics have been skewed since 2020 due to the pandemic, followed by months at a time in which the retreat was closed in between subleases or due to hurricanes. **HHPs has chosen to base numbers, therefore, during the Friends of Chinsegut lease period, from 2015–2018 in which the retreat was open year-round.**

Key Retreat **Monthly** Statistics used in business plan

25%

Cottage Capacity

\$14K

Cottage Revenue

\$11K

Cottage Expenses

\$13K

Programming Revenue

\$5K

Landscaping
Expense

\$2K

Dining Hall/Classroom/
Grounds



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Natural beauty
- Compelling History
- Community meeting space
- Resource for community
- existing infrastructure
- existing recreational amenity



Weaknesses

- expensive building maintenance
- lack of community awareness
- organization of parking
- no established donors



Opportunities

- trails
- CCC cabins
- archeological digs
- daily access for public
- hub for nonprofits
- educational



Threats

- delayed maintenance
- decay of CCC structures
- uncertainty of County maintaining lease with State
- interest by private business in management
- loss of community access to property





Appendix A

The following is an Executive Summary from the Friends of Chinsegut Hill, Inc. in 2017 when they asked the BOCC to request a 50 year lease of the property. Unfortunately, the ballon loan mentioned in the document did bring about the end of the nonprofit Friends group. The summary itself provides key strategies that would be still be successful today.



Chinsegut Hill Executive Summary

Hernando County, Florida is blessed with an incredible unpolished jewel! Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Chinsegut Hill has the potential to be an international destination due to its beauty and charm and historical and environmental importance. The recently restored Manor House serves as both the centerpiece, a historical Museum and a Gift Shop. Many original artifacts have been uncovered and are now on display throughout. Exciting new facts are being discovered almost daily as we review the available archives, adding to the Museum's story and attraction. As the word is starting to get out, museum tours are on the rise, exposing visitors to the lodging and conference capabilities of the facility, which are on the upswing as well.

Nothing in the area compares for the opportunity to attract small conferences, retreats, weddings and family reunions, or just a quiet getaway for individual travelers, as Chinsegut Hill does.

In 2013 the Friends of Chinsegut Hill successfully lobbied the Hernando County BOCC; convincing them to lease the historic Chinsegut Hill property from the State and license the operation of the facility to the Friends. The same year, the State awarded a \$1.5million historic preservation grant to Hernando County for the restoration of the historic manor house.

Unfortunately, the Friends lacked the expertise to adequately oversee the restoration of the Manor House and mistakes were made; including the hiring of a contractor and an Executive Director that lacked the experience and capacity to successfully complete the restoration on time and budget. While much was accomplished, there have been many challenges, including the purchase of an overpriced air cooling system that has never worked, and salaries that were not wisely appropriated. An ill-advised balloon loan was made to shore up the shortfall, however, the situation had become so unbalanced that revenues from the facilities never would be able to cover the shortfall and balloon payment. The requirement to have a full time Caretaker on site added to burden as the Caretaker's cabin had become run down, making it nearly impossible to recruit reliable Caretakers. Many volunteers had to give of their time to stay overnight on site during events and when guests were in the cottages.

In 2015 a pilot project was launched as Hernando County Tourism secured a grant for a postcard mailing targeting all the churches within 350 miles of Chinsegut Hill. Ten retreats were booked as a result; proving the value of this target market and paving the way for a similar plan in the coming year.

Most recently, having had great success with our monthly luncheon schedule, we have increased our luncheons to three per week. These luncheons are driving both memberships and business. Luncheon guests are treated to a tour, which usually results in them becoming members of the Friends. As the dining hall restrooms have not yet been completed, luncheon guests are directed to the nearest cottage for use of restrooms, exposing them the cottages; retreats, family reunions, weddings and individual lodgings have been booked as a result. Many guests have returned bringing friends and family..

The hard work and sacrifice of the Board and a few volunteers have allowed us to get to this point. There is no question that highly motivated paid staff will be necessary to take Chinsegut to the next level. Raising funds for the required salaries is a must and we believe there are grants available to accomplish this. This is our number one priority.

Additional efforts in the past several months have included recruiting new Board members, bringing valuable talents including strategic planning, finance and marketing skills to the organization. Lisa Callea joined the Board in 2015 and was recently appointed President of the Board of Directors. Mrs. Callea has built two successful companies, launched a ministry that is said to be the catalyst of most food and meal distributions in the County, and has served on the boards of a number of local nonprofit organizations.

Today the Chinsegut Hill Board is more unified than ever, key initiatives have been identified and work is underway on many of the goals outlined for increasing revenue and stabilizing the business. Much of the bleeding has stopped, a new staff of volunteers is in place along with new onsite Caretakers. Revenues are up and improvements are noticeably visible.

Mrs. Callea has secured the assistance of five of the area's top grant writers to secure the many potential State, Federal and Private grants available for this historical landmark. She and other Board Members have also begun securing donations of materials, time and money from various corporations and groups throughout the community, all of which will help offset expenses. Natalie Kahler, our Manager, was able to secure a large donation of a number of high end pieces of furniture to replace most of the aging furniture in the Cottages.

A number of independent television video episodes have been filmed and aired, such as PBS "Off the Beaten Path" and the Travel Channel's "Mystery at the Museum," and articles have been published during the past few months exposing the charm of Chinsegut to thousands.

With the ship stabilized, it's time to move this gem forward, but how? Partnerships are the key to success.

Chinsegut Hill is one of the highest points in the State of Florida and Brooksville is the exact geographic center of the State. Chinsegut is only 70 miles from two of the five major population centers in the state making it accessible - in a little over an hour by car - to nearly 7 million people.

Fifty miles to the south lies Tampa, which is part of a large metropolitan area called the Tampa Bay Area (2.8 million population), and also part of the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan statistical area. This is the fourth largest metro area in the Southeastern U.S., after Miami, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta. The Greater Tampa Bay area has more than 4.3 million people and is projected to hit 4.56 million by 2017 while the Greater Orlando metropolitan area has a population of 2.13 million, the 6th largest in the Southeastern U.S. and the 3rd largest in Florida.

Plans are in the works to target The Villages, Wesley Chapel, Gainesville and Ocala, as well as the greater Tampa and Orlando regions in a joint marketing effort with Florida's Adventure Coast Visitors Bureau. Local efforts include targeting Belle Parc, Belle Parc RV Resort, Cloverleaf and Campers Holiday.

A number of local vendors and artisans have partnered with the Hill and create unique one-of-a-kind "Chinsegut" products such as Chinsegut Hill coffee, soaps and candies, along with featured local artwork, to add to our Gift Shop offerings. All of this has been accomplished with a 100% volunteer effort.

Live Oak Theater, a hugely successful, local performing arts company, is considering the Hill as a partner for their new production season. Localized special events include Mason Jars and Guitars, Tea on the Porch, Friday Night Drive-In and a "Victorian Christmas Gala" to name just a few.

In a partnership of a different sort, in 2018 local descendants of Chinsegut history will be contacted to "adopt a cottage" and create an experiential environment based on their ancestors' personalities, adding to the history and charm of the retreat's cottages. Adding historic elements to these cottages could allow for additional State grant funding for further improvements.

Negotiations are in the works to host a number of annual "Shabby Chic" and or "Antique" events including shows with the South's foremost event coordinator. Planned improvements to the grounds and facilities include restrooms and new windows for the dining facility. The donation of paving stones has been secured for new paths to the cottages and the improvement and paving of the

fire pit common area. The County is working with the Friends to procure a new air handling system for the Manor House, which will make us eligible for Library of Congress, Smithsonian, and other grants and exhibits.

Initial plans are in discussion to create and install a “landmark” pondless waterfall feature in the common area between the cottages. A large wrap-around deck with retractable covering adjacent to the Dining Hall and Common area is also being discussed. This will increase the size of dining services available to events such as weddings, corporate Christmas parties and fund-raising events.

We have a target of raising a minimum of \$100,000 in grants this coming year. We believe fees generated from rentals, hosting retreats and events, meals, tours and gifts will be in excess of \$350,000 for 2017, 2018. These are priorities for the coming year.

We will achieve this by:

- 1) Partnering directly with the five grant writers in researching and submitting the grant requests.
- 2) Partnering with Florida’s Adventure Coast Visitors Bureau to market to the aforementioned target markets.
- 3) Utilizing various political, corporate and organizational contacts to secure monetary and product donations for needed improvements and additions.

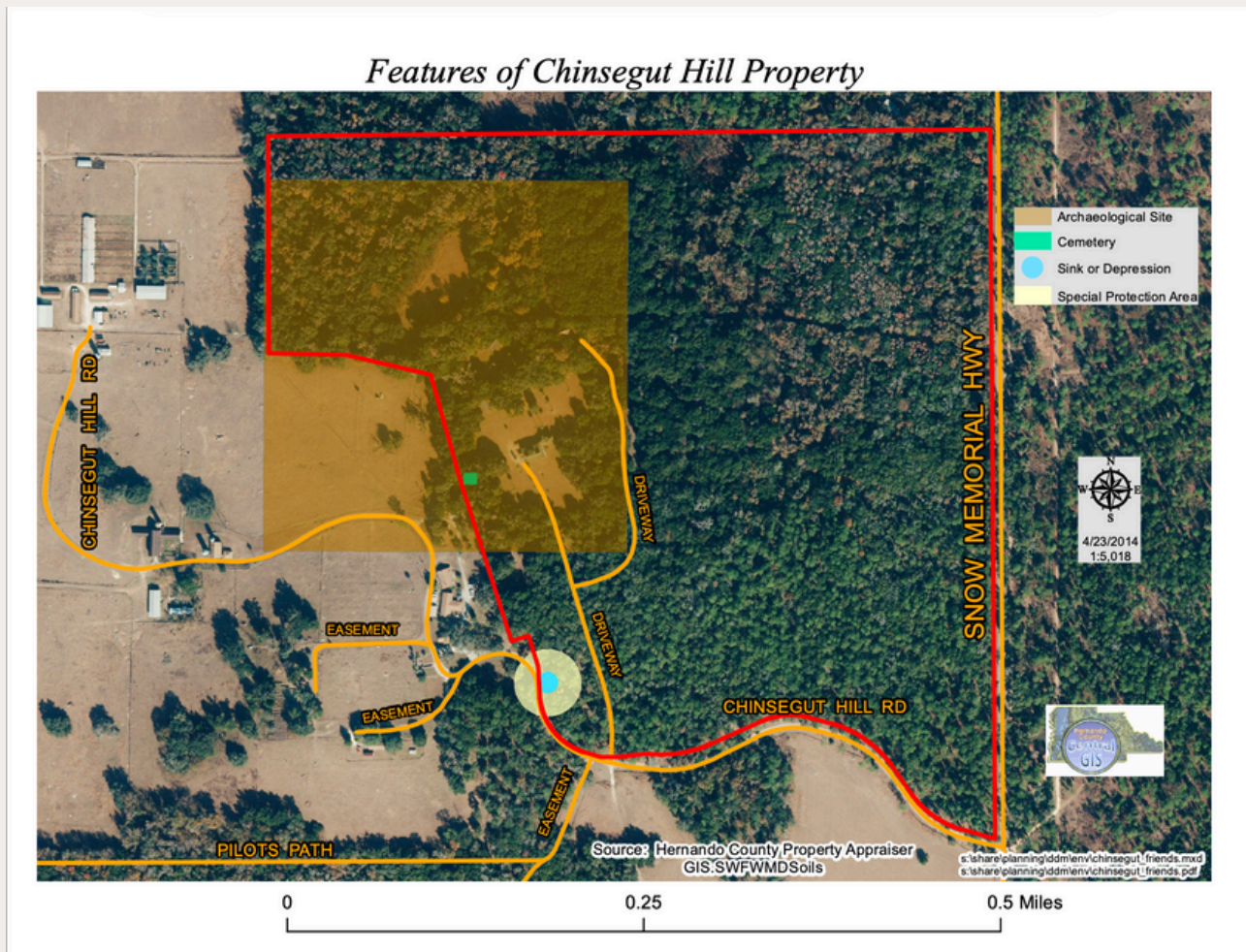
Once the proper amounts are secured, the Board will oversee hiring the proper staff needed to secure the success of Chinsegut Hill. These will be paid positions, as outlined in the attached organizational chart. The Executive Director will be responsible for the overall operations of the facility including securing grants, marketing and events. The Museum Curator will be responsible for all areas of the Manor House and Gift Shop, as well as any additional historic additions to the facilities including research, acquisition and display of artifacts, exhibits, tours and publicity. The Office Manager will be responsible for the day to day accounting and administration. The Hospitality Manager will oversee the retreat facility operations.

The greatest challenge for the Friends in making these plans a reality is the lack of capital or funding for the unplanned and unforeseen material water plant expenses; the faulty air-conditioning system alone has drained over \$20,000 from the operating funds. As most of the duties performed on the Hill are handled by volunteers, those areas that are out of the areas of expertise of the board happen to be the most challenging, maintenance and repair of the physical plant. With the support and partnership of the Hernando County BOCC, namely in assistance with maintenance of the plant and repair/replacement of the faulty air-conditioning system, we believe we will be able to stabilize the organization financially and ensure the long-term success of Chinsegut Hill as a historic attraction and tourism destination and the jewel of Hernando County.



Appendix B

This map of the designated archeological area is from page 11 of Hernando County's "Chinsegut Hill Management Plan FY 15 Final Version 05 28 2015." The Master Site Plan would take into consideration these boundaries and the recommendations of GARI Archeology.

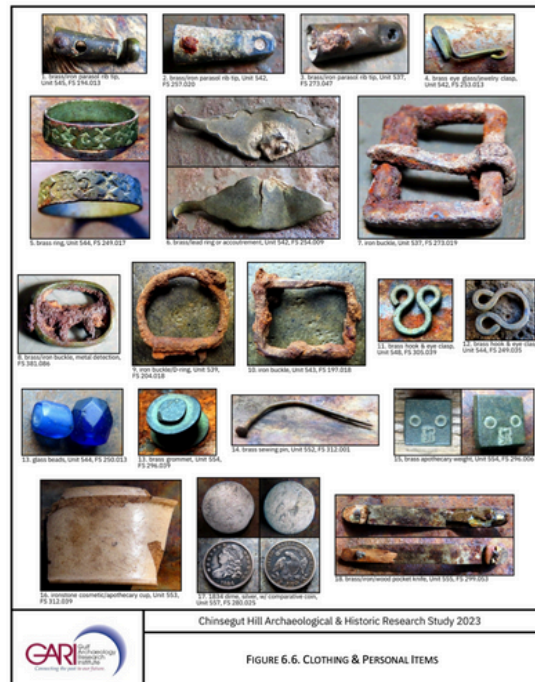


Appendix C

The following are the newest recommendations from GARI (Gulf Archeology Research Institute) regarding Chinsegut Hill Sanctuary. Access the full report at https://gulfarchaeology.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Chinsegut2023_FinalReport-no-catalog.pdf



Chinsegut Hill Archaeological & Historical Research Study 2023



[Excerpt from Chinsegut Hill Archaeological and Historic Research Study, GARI Field Research Study 2023-1, Chapter 8. Summary of Findings and Directions for Future Research] Gulf Archaeology Research Institute, 5990 N. Tallahassee Road, Crystal River, Florida 34428

Preface

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 8 of the above referenced technical study resulting from the archaeological and historic work at Chinsegut Hill. It's loaded full of reference figures which have not been included but which may be gleaned from the larger study which is available by request. We have included three figures with this document that basically steers the reader toward the areas of archaeological and historic significance for the hilltop. As a property the hilltop contains a great span of cultural history from distant prehistory to the modern era with an emphasis on the early to mid-19th century plantation periods. The property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and due to its collective history complete with in-situ deposits is likely a National Historic Landmark (NHL) candidate. That assessment is normally made by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service to exacting standards. The Gulf Archaeology Research Institute (GARI) is familiar with such standards, and we routinely work to preserve and protect such properties. GARI currently is the archaeologist of record for two NHL properties, the Crystal River Archaeological State Park, Crystal River, Florida and Fort King in Ocala.

Due to short notice GARI was unable to write an extensive property management plan. Though it is sufficient to demonstrate that areas of significance can be pointed out within the core area on top of the hill. The good news is a more complete plan is currently possible given the extent of the archaeological and historic research completed to date at the property. This document can serve notice that such documents are important because it is in the best interests of the preservation and protection of the significant aspects or features of the property, those managing the property and their responsibilities with respect to development and interpretation, and to the public. Historic and archaeological sites are no different than public parks where improvements must be made to accommodate park management and the public use or access and provide utilities when and where warranted to support the above. In that regard, property owners and managers need to know what is important about the site and where the significant resources are actually located. Small improvements can make huge impacts if placed within Areas of Potential Effect (APE). And, it is important for property owners and managers to know what options they have with respect to potential impacts. In historical preservation terms that might be, where are the APEs? What improvements can be made without impacting on significant resources? Will we have to do a formal Phase 1 Study, Phase 2, or a simple monitoring of the improved area while under development?

Importantly, where can we make improvements that won't affect significant resources? A property preservation plan will address such questions saving time, money, and resources.

Chinsegut Hill is a large area and in modern times the majority of public use has been confined to the top of the hill containing the mansion, classroom and dining hall, and the cabins. Figures 1 – 3 show the areas of potential effect and delineates those areas on top of the hill where enough is known about the nature and extent of the historic and archaeological resources to label and score significance. The same can be done over most if not all of the property. What we have provided is but a summary. In this regard, it is better to know the preservation status in order to adequately assess options for future land use operations. This document is not long, but it will give you an idea of what is known and some important recommendations on addressing potential impacts in the future.

Testing in Area 1, the North Yard

The excavation of six shovel tests in the north yard or Area 1 met its objectives of verifying the absence of the hilltop midden sediments in this area and documenting historic-modern era disturbance patterns in subsurface soil contexts. At least two potential historic/plantation era wooden structures were previously located immediately to the south, closer to the mansion. Though the range of architectural debris present is not as dense as it typically is when derived from midden contexts, the range of materials and suspected chronological placement overlap with the information recovered from the parking lot trenches. The architectural-related materials from the Area 1 units included soft and hard (high fired) brick fragments, few sandy mortar fragments, local soft, Suwannee Limestone pebbles, clear and aqua windowpane glass, cut nails of all sizes, and possible iron hardware. Historic structures are suspected to be located in the near vicinity of Unit 564 at N260/W15 and between Units 562 and 563, probably south of the N229 line and between E18 and E42 (Figure 5.1). However, the overall density of cultural material argues for actual structures to be south of those test units. The presence of structures nearby make sense given structural remains are located immediately to the south and west in Area 3, Trench 3.

Additional archaeological work in this portion of the north yard is not likely to yield additional information on its use by the enslaved workers for habitation or functional plantation tasking.

Area 2 – The Northwest Hillslope, Picnic Area, and Reservoir Pumphouse Area

A total of 10 2 x 2 ft shovel tests (ST1-10 or Units 565-574) were excavated over the northwest hill slope in the vicinity of the CCC-era picnic pavilion and associated spring well. These features are topographically situated where the mantle of sandy and loamy Hawthorn Group sediments thins or pinches out, giving way to a thin loamy soil veneer that covers the undulating, shallowly buried Suwannee Limestone surface. Limestone outcrops are common further downslope. The spring well took advantage of this, being situated in an already existing seep and depression in the bedrock, allowing water to percolate to the surface. The previous 2014 Chinsegut Historic Landscape study revealed a small area east and upslope from the picnic pavilion as containing 19th century cut nails and an iron knife blade. It was suspected that this assemblage could represent an outlying slave building or activity area, but the context of these materials remained questionable. The aim of the current shovel testing effort was to clarify the preservation provenience of these 19th century artifacts as well as document the possible subsurface features and the range of 19-20th cultural materials in and around the CCC-era building

complex (picnic pavilion, fire grill, spring well, and landscaping stones). The 10 shovel tests were judgmentally located over the hillslope above and below the elevation in which the Hawthorn Group sediments (marking the limit of former citrus groves) give way to the Suwannee Limestone.

The shovel tests clarified our knowledge of the surface geomorphology on the northwest hillslope, in which Hawthorn Group sediments thin/pinch out or have been eroded off the slope at the location of the CCC-era picnic pavilion and spring well. Additional testing in the area that had produced cut nails and an iron knife in the 2014 study failed to identify 19th century slave or plantation-specific subsurface features. The five medium hard sandy clay brick fragments from Unit 565 and the few cut nails found east/southeast and upslope from the picnic pavilion lack stratigraphic integrity and context is lacking to make sense of them. Testing around and adjacent to the picnic pavilion debris field confirmed that there has been severe soil disturbance and mixing since at least the CCC-era, and the material culture assemblage supports observations that some of the ruined pavilion remains still atop or adjacent to the pavilion slab, were made from wood and cut nails salvaged from an earlier 19th century structure and that CCC masonry included the use of cement, mortar, and local Suwannee Limestone. Limestone or cherty limestone that was minimally dressed or broken up and used to “temper” the cement. In addition to salvageable cut nails, the pavilion utilized modern wire nails as needed and the sheet metal roof was secured by lead-capped wire nails. Bottle glass and plastic fragments are likely trash remains. The Picnic Area was cleaned up during the current study to provide for better evaluation of the building fabric, orientation of features, and short-term off-trail interpretation. What can be done with this specific collection of related resources is to continuing ground maintenance and signage advocating passive viewing. Pedestrian climbing into the remains of the Picnic Shelter is not advised as it is riddled with exposed metal sheathing and nails. This area could be crafted to permit walk-through viewing with mini-panel kiosks or a single larger kiosk describing the area and its utility to the CCC workforce.

The current study surveyed and tested the CCC period reservoir and pumphouse area east of the Picnic Area for the purposes of documenting this early water control system. The reservoir has been breached on its north side and the pumphouse effectively removed save for a partial foundation and mounting base for the electric water pump. As noted earlier, the recovered material assemblage is consistent with a 1930s operating system used nationwide to pump water for irrigation for large scale agricultural operations. As with other surviving examples of the use of Chinsegut Hill by the CCC the reservoir and associated pumphouse remains can serve as a reference point for an interpretable early CCC operation that also includes a few remaining wooden and block structures. The assemblage including built environment and material culture offers a unique set of preserved resources worth building a walking tour type of public interpretation program. Because the water reservoir is partially filled and has some crumbling around its wall edges it is inadvisable to allow close public access. However, it is possible to route a small trail off the main trail and do some creative vegetation clearing to create a bounded viewing area that covers the reservoir and remains of the pumphouse. The CCC had a profound impact on American agriculture and rural development during and after the Great Depression. The Chinsegut assemblage, while important locally and for Florida, it doesn’t represent some of the spectacular forms of rural development such as major park or dam projects. The goal here is to show how our local battalion and their efforts fit into and contributed into the larger federal mission of rural agricultural experimental development.

Area 3 - Parking Lot Excavations: Trenches 1 - 3 Trench 1 Excavations

Trench 1 Excavations

Trench 1 consists of a 120-foot-long x 4-foot-wide linear north-south trench established within grid coordinates N80-200/W180-184 and containing 24 five-foot-long units (Units 508-531). The trench is visually located at the west side of the facility parking lot within 100 feet of the west property boundary fence (Figure 5.1).

Trench 1 is the farthest distance of the three trenches from the plantation core on top of the hill and has been determined to be the least likely to contain in-situ deposits relating to the plantation period (1842-1865) owing to several post-deposition factors. Paramount of these would be the use of the area for gardening/agriculture and secondly use of the area as a parking zone since the Robbins era. However, the stratigraphy suggests remnants of the dark, organic midden soils with cultural material survive within a medium-brown, organic non-midden soil damaged by tilling. This sequence may be applied to all 24 of the trench units (Units 508-531).

The dark, organic midden soil with cultural material appears to have moved downslope over time to overlap already tilled and eroded soils. Plantation period (1842-1865) cultural material including an abundance of square cut nails, pearlware, whiteware and stoneware are present along with aqua and dark olive bottle glass shards. The midden soil also contains lead shot, brass and iron fragments and an abundance of very fragmented soft brick of local manufacture and mortar. Analysis of these materials and associated matrix strongly suggests downslope movement but not necessarily in-situ deposition.

The midden soil with higher densities of cultural material occurs along the 120-foot-long trench like fingers coming west and downslope from Trench 2. These clusters include units 508-514 (N80-115/W1840), Units 515-519 (N117-140/W184), Units 521-523 (N147-157/W184), and Units 526-531 (N164-118/W184). Figure 5.16 shows the distribution of cut nails and soft brick and mortar building materials. The figure accurately portrays the relationship of related building materials and while Trench 1 does contain clusters of such materials the overlapping of the dark organic midden soils is the vehicle of transport rather than by-product of in-situ deposition. This is bolstered by the low density of habitation related material culture and lack of in-situ features. While Trench 1 came up short in the context realm it does point a finger eastward toward Trench 2 and suggests the potential for spanning the distance between trenches to further define the nature and extent of the midden sediments. Because we have trench unit features coming out of the west wall of trench, moving further west to delimit the extent of the midden sediments could be addressed fairly economically coring or coring and small exploratory units.

Trench 2 Excavations

Trench 2 consists of a 73-foot-long x 4-foot-wide linear trench established north-south within grid coordinates N100-173/W96-100 containing 14 five-foot-long units (Units 532-545) and a single 3 x 4 unit (Unit 546) (Figure 5.37).

Trench 2 consists of four basic stratigraphic units (Figures 5.17-5.19). The upper horizon consists of overburden, sod and gray sand, granular to single grained, parking lot gravelly sand, and mixed, disturbed midden and intrusive subsurface sandy sediments. The historic midden sediments are very dark to dark

grayish brown sand, granular, very friable to firm, with many earthworm casts (due to organics) in-filled with organic sand or subsurface sandy sediments. The horizon has few to common charcoal flecks, scattered areas of burnt sediments with ash and decayed wood and few to common brick and mortar fragments. This midden soil is prevalent on the hilltop yard north of the mansion and likely was present on the edges surrounding the hilltop. Its presence west of the hilltop suggests the common use area is as large as originally thought and that the plantation activity area was quite extensive from the beginning. Diminution in depth of this horizon is likely the result of post-plantation use of available ground for gardening or other intrusive uses into and past the Snow family occupation period. The third horizon is a leachate zone in the subsurface sands. This sand is brown to yellowish brown sand, single grained. Loose to very friable, with leached midden and burnt sediments. This horizon contains intrusive historic features containing structural debris and is heavily bioturbated with (older) common tree root molds and myriad animal burrows. The subsurface horizon consists of sand, yellowish brown to yellow sand, single grained, loose, and less bioturbated with fewer animal burrows. Several features, both modern and historic, are noted in the figures.

The excavation of Trench 2 provided strong evidence for the presence of burned structural debris the length of the trench with particular concentrations in Units 534 through 544 (Figure 5.37). The material culture range includes both the Pearson and Ederington plantation occupations, however, the actual age of some of the material culture pre-dates the Pearson occupation and some materials as late as the Snow Family occupation. The pre-Pearson materials could relate to an earlier occupation of the hilltop. Some of the materials potentially may have a Seminole attribution including knapped bottle glass in Units 533, 539 and 540 and cobalt blue faceted beads from Units 542 and 544. A notion not inconsistent with Seminole lifeways was a penchant for selecting elevated areas in the near vicinity of ponded water such as that found at Lake Lindsey to the north. Additional excavation will be required to clarify whether the apparent pre-Pearson material culture is just that or, perhaps, part of the material culture used or made by Pearson's slaves. The construction material remains are consonant with plank-built structures that have been burned. Nonetheless, the bulk of the material culture is skewed toward domestic, or habitation structures and the midden sediments are consistent with soils inculcated with disposed broken material culture and the debris and food remains representing daily life. Trench 2 also provided botanical evidence that suggests locally procured Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*) may have been used medicinally. These seeds were not recovered on top of the hill, and they appear to be burned context specific in both Trenches 2 and 3. The burned berries associated with burned context suggest the potential for additional ethnographically known folk medicine to be present in the immediate area. Since the definition of the nature and extent of the midden sediments and their constituent content and context is essential to the interpretation of the Plantation Period it would be important to use the data recovered thus far to build a research design that directs where we go next. Features are obviously coming out of both the east and west walls of Trench 2 and that suggests connecting Trench 2 with Trench 3 to establish inter-site relationships, shared structural features, and artifact patterning. As noted above, some work should be conducted working westerly from Trench 2 toward Trench 1 to define a midden sediment boundary. Since Trench 3 is offset to the north relative to Trench 2 it seems that where the two trenches overlap would be the place to put intervening trenches to connect feature dots. The units evidencing the clearest archaeological feature signatures offer the best possibilities for linking structural remains. The value of using linear trenches is the coverage and potential for intercepting cultural features. The downside is that trench width seldom captures a whole structure. However, using parallel trenches provides the

opportunity to evaluate those components within units and see possible linkages without having had to excavate large areas.

The approach used at Chinsegut provides the opportunity to schedule intervening short trenches between Trench 2 and 3 to explore the nature and extent of the potentially linkable features and to presage the opening of larger excavation units to capture whole structures and their associated features (Figure 8.1).

What Trench 2 tells us is that wooden structures are present, they were ephemerally built plank construction that relied on nail fastenings, they appear functionally to be residential versus plantation specific tasking buildings, they burned to the ground sometime during the Snow Family period, and the land was likely subject to low intensity agriculture. The latter process resulted in some disarticulation of the burned debris, but not entirely, leaving tangible debris locations representing individual structures. The best recommendation for future work would be to follow the plan noted above for the clarification of structural context. The material culture assemblage has thus far been high and moving either east or west will likely increase the densities across all artifact categories.

Trench 3 Excavations

Trench 3 consists of a 60-foot-long x 4-foot-wide linear trench established north-south within grid coordinates N139-199/W58-62 containing 9 five-foot-long units (Units 547-555) and single eight-foot unit (Unit 556) (Figure 5.38). The trench is visually located near the east facility parking fence within 220 feet of the west property boundary fence. The trench is 2 feet west of the parking lot boundary fence composed of wooden poles connected by chain. Topographically, this trench lies closest to the northern summit of Chinsegut Hill. Local vegetation is a sparse sod cover and well away from any tree line. The previous Chinsegut Historic Landscape study and additional soil coring during the current study showed that this area has been a hot spot for metal materials and crisscrossed with metal electrical service pipes and unshielded lines. This area too has been previously covered by a range of parking lot refurbishing materials including rough limestone and small pea gravels as well as a thin veneer of asphalt. It is clear the parking lot surface has undergone several iterations, but the rougher material has since been cleaned up and the surface displays as a traffic worn lawn. The purpose of the testing was to determine if any out-pockets or extensions of midden sediments were present and to determine if any subsurface plantation-related features containing 19th century culture materials in context were still preserved. Despite what the parking lot looks like at present the testing did in fact produce substantial evidence for the extension of the hilltop midden sediments into the Trench 3 transect and farther west into Trench 2. Given the presence of in-situ features and an abundance of material culture in clusters, some associated with features, we can say this midden extension was more a result of active use-based context aggregation versus downslope movement.

Trench 3 consists of four basic stratigraphic unit's sans any feature specific intrusions. The upper horizon consists of overburden, sod and gray sand, granular to single grained, parking lot gravelly sand, and mixed, disturbed midden and intrusive subsurface sandy sediments. The historic midden sediments are very dark to dark grayish brown sand, granular, very friable to firm, with many earthworm casts in-filled with organic sand or subsurface sandy sediments. The horizon has few common charcoal flecks, scattered areas of burnt sediments with ash and decayed wood and few common brick and mortar fragments. This midden soil is prevalent on the hilltop yard north of the mansion and likely was present on the edges surrounding the hilltop. Its presence west of the hilltop suggests the common use area is as large as originally thought and that the plantation activity area was quite extensive from the beginning.

Diminution in depth of this horizon is likely the result of post-plantation use of available ground for gardening or other intrusive uses into and past the Robbins occupation period. The third horizon is a leachate zone in the subsurface sands. This sand is brown to yellowish brown sand, single grained. Loose to very friable, with leached midden and burnt sediments. This horizon contains intrusive historic features containing structural debris and is heavily bioturbated with (older) common tree root molds and myriad animal burrows. The subsurface horizon consists of sand, yellowish brown to yellow sand, single grained, loose, and less bioturbated with fewer animal burrows. The stratigraphic sequence of Trench 3 may be seen in Figure 5.39 which displays photographically and graphically the four horizons.

The excavation of Trench 3 provided strong evidence for the presence of burned structural debris, the length of the trench with particular concentrations in Units 547 through 555 (Figure 5.40). The material culture range includes both the Pearson and Ederington plantation occupations, however, the actual age of some of the material culture pre-dates the Pearson occupation and some materials as late as the Snow Family occupation. The pre-Pearson materials could relate to an earlier occupation of the hilltop. Some of the materials potentially may have a Seminole attribution such as the cobalt glass beads, trade pipe fragments, and worked olive green and aqua glass shards. As noted in the discussion of Trench 2 units this notion is not inconsistent with Seminole penchant for selecting elevated areas in the near vicinity of ponded water such as that found at Lake Lindsey to the north. There is an overlap in the use of American and European material culture as well as building construction methods and materials that can obfuscate the Indigenous and non-Indigenous ethnic line. Interaction between enslaved African American and Indigenous people is likely more than exchanges of material culture and the acculturative forces between the two are but generally known and even more likely polymorphic to a variety of degrees across the Southeast. At this juncture, while some evidence exists for a potential hilltop occupation earlier than the Pearson Plantation the issue may not be resolved to everyone's satisfaction without further material evidence and a clear separation of components. This inquiry should be built into any new archaeological work conducted within Area 3, the parking lot.

The construction material remains are consonant with plank-built structures that have been burned and evidence for this is present in both Trenches 2 and 3. The bulk of the material culture is skewed toward domestic habitation structures and the midden sediments are consistent with soils inculcated with disposed broken material culture and the debris and food remains representing daily life. As noted above, burned Chinaberry seeds were identified in Trench 3 (Units 547, 548, 551-553) in exclusively burned contexts. Between the two trenches the presence of a part of the pharmacopeia of ethnographically known slave populations in the Southeast adds an interesting new dimension to the study of Chinsegut Hill during the Plantation Period. This may be further addressed through continued excavation in Area 3 with the ground between the off set in trenches being the point of focus. The potential exists to view the off set of Trenches 2 and 3 such that units in both may contain shared building components yet revealed in the unexcavated space between trenches. Potential relationships can be seen in the density of brick and mortar as well as nail densities. The area containing Trenches 2 and 3 has first and second plantation period deposits (1842-1851 and 1852-1865) including relevant material culture and ruined structural debris. The area is rich in cultural debris and in-situ context despite some very obvious damage resulting from the later use of the area for gardening and even later parking lot use. A clearer picture of the nature and extent of these plantation period deposits may be discerned from continued excavation of the eastern half of the

Area 3 tract such that patterning of debris and period associations can be recovered, evaluated, and placed in their proper interpretive framework.

Summary of Recommendations

Area 1

Chinsegut Hill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such it embodies integrity of deposits largely skewed toward the Mansion and immediate grounds. An amendment to the nomination might focus on the specific attributes of the Plantation Period components and their archaeological significance. We have established integrity of context and in principle the fabric of pre-and post-Civil War life on the hill with a special reference to the integrity of the enslaved population deposits.

The area north of the Mansion has been tested sufficient to determine the boundaries of the midden sediments and extent of the historic Plantation Period (1842-1865) occupations with principal attention placed on the areas occupied by the enslaved populations during the Pearson and Ederington Periods north of the Mansion. Some work has been conducted on the eastern slope that proved little or no evidence for material culture, patterns or features relating to habitation during either plantation period. Though a paucity of information exists for the east side, should ground-breaking park development be planned for Area 1, that activity should be physically monitored in the event culturally significant resources be exposed or discovered during the development. Further, based on developing research questions it is possible that more definitive archaeological work may be planned for the portion in Area 1 immediately north of the Mansion previously addressed in 2014. Any ground disturbing activities planned for the area north of the Mansion should also be monitored for the effect on or discovery of significant cultural resources.

Area 2

All of Area 2 is within the large tract currently used for nature trails and the current trail goes by all of the recorded CCC cultural resource components including the Picnic Area, Reservoir, and Pumphouse. These resources are 50 years and older and may be cumulatively and separately eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These resources have their own unique connection independent of the older historic components but representing a 20th century use of the hilltop. With respect to the National Register program, the CCC resources could be considered as another subset of resources contributing to the historical significance of Chinsegut Hill. Area 1 has historic resources of a distinctly different nature than Areas 1 and 3. Resource management, protection and interpretation can be effectively conducted through the continued use as a nature-based trail through a landscape that has undergone several changes through time from upland pine, row crop, citrus-based agriculture, and later to experimental agriculture and land modification. The historic resources should be included in the nature trail tour with educational kiosks describing each interpretive station and their role in the CCC occupation of the property. Access to each station needs to be restricted to viewing only with pedestrian traffic limited to the trails. There are sufficient interpretive stations available between the Picnic Area, Reservoir and Pumphouse with other CCC structures built along the north end of the property. On the east side the wide terraces built by the CCC to test erosion control are more easily visible than the north side. They represent a large-scale earthmoving project designed to test the viability of terracing to mitigate the erosion of Florida's sandy soil and optimize growing space to meet the needs of single crop agriculture. The targeted kiosk sites

representative of the CCC occupation will require clearing and vegetation control and possible total open wooden fencing to restrict pedestrian access to the respective ruins.

Area 3

The excavation of three linear trenches across the west parking lot named Area 3 was highly productive with respect to further delineating the extent of the hilltop midden sediments, providing more complete assessment of the extent of the enslaved population's living space, and elaboration of their material assemblage. Though the ground is very compact, the context is present and recoverable as is a growing body of material culture. The excavations provided some temporal boundaries for the content and context indicating the destruction of the built environment occurred sometime after the end of the Ederington Period (1852-1865). The ephemeral plank-built structures and associated content were likely burned down during the Snow family occupation during the 1870s. Indeed, the material culture does not extend past that general date and any later materials were recovered within the upper plow zone, including some modern metal debris. The area does have a few modern utility trenches to support electrical lines and at least one iron water pipe and stratigraphic compression due to its modern use as a parking lot. There is an urgent need to weigh the value of continuing to use the parking lot as a parking lot which promotes the decline of the significant buried archaeological and historic cultural resources versus setting the area aside to permit their protection. There is another area within the bounded hilltop, in the southwest quadrant, that is suitable for parking and that has undergone archaeological testing to determine presence or absence of cultural resources. The area is largely free of resources; however, the west edge contains a disarticulated cement stair and foundation blocks from a dismantled CCC building and the south end contains the burned remains of a small old barn. This barn structure is known photographically from the end of the 19th century and was tested during the 2014 season. The combined evidence is sufficient to rebuild the structure should that be an interpretive goal.

Further testing of Area 3 would seem prudent to build on a number of the original goals and permit the linking of Trench 2 and 3 data sets if we are intent on fleshing out the nature and extent of the lifeways of the enslaved population (Figure 8.1). The extent of the hilltop midden sediments as they exist at the west side of Trench 2 likely extend to a point between Trench 2 and 1, the farthest west trench. It is unknown how close the midden sediments approach the Cemetery, but the archaeological signature is now quite readable and small units to the southwest would provide a more complete assessment of the extent of the enslaved population's living space, an elaboration of their material assemblage, and clearer separation of components.

Overall Management Guidelines

- 1) Continued resource protection on the hilltop is a function of degree of ground disturbing modern use. This area contains key significant cultural resources. Ground disturbances north of the Mansion should be restricted to point specific intrusions that have little impact on cultural content and context. For example, putting up large tents requiring posts or tent rope poles has a low impact, they are point specific. Excavating holes or trenches for utilities or garden area plantings are major, disrupting impacts. If the ground penetration exceeds 9 inbs, then cultural context is disturbed. The general rule that ground disturbing impacts deeper than 9 inbs will require pre-disturbance archaeological study, or minimally monitoring by a professional archaeologist will permit adequate protection for buried deposits.

- 2) The yard south of the Mansion and east of the driveway similarly should be treated with some further consideration for large scale ground disturbing activities. However, unlike the north yard the south yard does not appear to contain in-situ cultural features and does not appear to have been a focal point for historic habitation. Rather, this area seems to have numerous historic and more recent horticultural areas. Given the lower potential for modern impact on significant cultural resources it would be more advantageous to move events requiring tents to this area, freeing up the north yard from further impacts.
- 3) The yard area south of the Mansion and west of the driveway has been tested through coring and small test units and excepting the burned remains of the mid-late 19th century barn along the south edge of the plantation square revealed very little in the way of significant cultural resources. This area could be utilized as the new visitors parking lot thus freeing up the current parking lot for long-term protection.
- 4) The current parking lot, the subject of most of the substantive discussion in this report, contains along with Area 1 the key cultural resources related to the historic plantation periods for Chinsegut Hill. The area has undoubtedly suffered some impacts due to vehicular use, principally compression of cultural components. Nevertheless, pursuit of the plantation period research hinges upon restricting further impacts and archaeological access. Ground disturbing impacts such as utility lines have already crossed several areas of Area 3. Unfortunately, its proximity to the Mansion, education building, and residential cabins make it the ideal central parking area. The abandonment of this convenient parking area to return to open lawn may be a challenge to County management. However, doing so protects the very resource important to the interpretation of the site and also provides a new landscape to the north half of the plantation square. We would suggest this new viewscape, sans parked cars and rough gravelly parking lot and sundry fenceposts, will be more impressive to the visitor as they walk the short distance from the southwest quadrant parking lot. Indeed, the view from the Mansion will reflect a natural landscape. The existing roadway can be maintained leading up to the Mansion and likely the handicapped parking as well. Actually, this parking area seems to have been pretty disheveled by the time the Mansion was tossed off its foundations in the 1890s and the Robins family occupation. It is also a landmine of old roofing nails and tarpaper. In the main, any further ground disturbance to Area 3 should be avoided without prior archaeological consultation that may result in either pre-disturbance clearance, fieldwork or archaeological monitoring.
- 5) Protection of the cultural resources located in Area 2, north of the main public activity areas around the Mansion, will be a bit more difficult given their remoteness and limited trail access without an active on-site interpretive staff or the provision of limited tour-guided access only policies. These CCC related resources are hardy, mostly comprised of cement, block and brick, or stone, but others such as the old Picnic Pavilion are made of wood and thus subject to vandalism or fire. The preservation options are limited to exposure of the resources to the majority of trail users and kiosk focused interpretation or bypassing the resources and allowing tour guide interpreters provide a more passive interpretive approach. The former would almost require the resources to be fenced off from the visiting public to discourage climbing and pedestrian damage

and the use of kiosk-based interpretation of the context. The passive approach would have the tour guide interpreters discuss the CCC ruins which would lay largely inaccessible to the public off the main trail. Telling the public there are some really neat things hidden off the trail which they cannot visit is not a good interpretive strategy. It may also encourage some visitors to return for unsupervised or controlled access to sensitive archaeological features. This activity may be hard to control and the vandalism consequences somewhat counterproductive. Very few preservation options are 100% but routing the public trail by the ruins makes them more publicly viewable, accessible with limits, and creates attractive points of interpretation about the history of the use of Chinsegut Hill.

The archaeological and historic study of Chinsegut Hill has been both a natural and cultural historic journey with key partners assisting over the years. The range of resource types vary from prehistoric Indigenous all the way to the relatively recent historic past. The natural history of the hill from upland pine forest through till agriculture to orange groves to experimental agriculture and concomitant land use modifications means the tract offers a plethora of potential studies into Florida agriculture. The continuation of the studies will allow for a variety of directions where the archaeological and historic methods and process can be used to locate, identify, evaluate, and interpret the broad natural and cultural context. Though additional work has been prescribed for the study areas discussed above there is an emerging need to expand off the current study tract onto adjacent lands to explore the nature and extent of the Plantation Periods.

We would recommend the development of a long-range planning group that includes Hernando County Parks and Recreation, Florida Agricultural and Mining University (FAMU), Gulf Archaeology Research Institute (GARI), Tampa Bay History Center (TBHC), and key local historic preservation partners. The TBHC should be the lead in this group to provide the overall context for planning and discussion and to provide Hernando County with recommendations and solutions. It is impossible to plan for all interpretive and protection directions or outcomes so the group should focus on the important or salient site features and areas where stabilization is the optimum preservation direction, or where resource instability or threats indicate the need for excavation or mitigation to protect the resource data. This planning group will also work to provide directions for the site's interpretation in terms of what information is known, what additional information is needed, where that target information is likely to be located and recovered, and the assignment of priorities for acquisition. These are the details which can be structured within an overall research design to guide the recovery of archaeological data that contributes to the long-term interpretation of the site. Following a set of cogent, well thought out recommendations simply allows for an interpretive process that sees new information added each year to provide new visitor experiences versus one sudden explosion of information whose interpretive potential is quickly exhausted along with visitor fatigue.

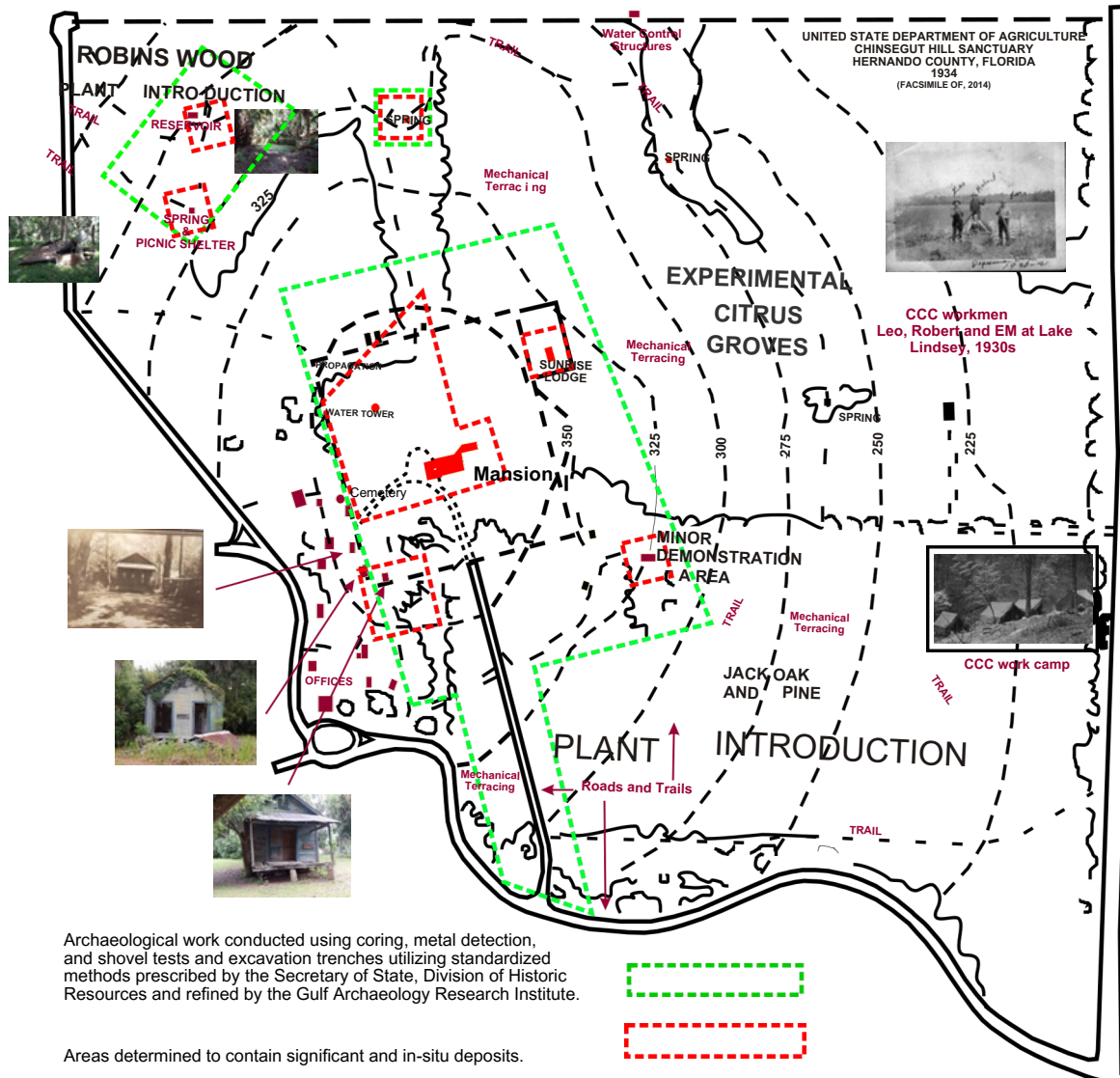
One additional recommendation relevant to the social landscape of the Chinsegut Hill site is the appropriateness of using the site for celebratory events such as marriages and anniversaries. Holding these events at southeastern plantations has become vogue over the past decade likely because of the grand architecture and settings. These events can be profitable and even assist in funding the site and its research and interpretation programs. But not everyone sees these events in the same way. The site is the location of two plantation period occupations that used enslaved labor. Those were not happy times for

the enslaved people, and we recognize that site interpretation of those periods must be truthful but also cognizant of the potential pain that may be felt by visitors, both African American and not. We think it may be appropriate to bring this topic up internally at the TBHC and then externally with potential African American partners or groups to gauge prevailing attitudes about what kinds of social activities create the best social interactions and the least social anxiety. We think it would be best if this discussion were held with your African American partners and the local community so that the convergence of appropriate activities and the need to inform and interpret the history of Chinsegut Hill are given the best hearing.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide a glimpse of a possible management plan for the cultural resources at Chinsegut Hill. This document was meant to provide context to the cultural significance and provide indications of where significant archaeological and historic context have been identified and areas of potential effect are located on the hilltop. As noted earlier, much of the property has been surveyed and quite a bit tested, so the development of a more comprehensive management plan will contribute much to the understanding of the historic hilltop and surrounding land and provide for best management practices as the hilltop park is used and developed for public benefit.

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Raymond Robins and CCC Related Areas of Potential Effect (APE)



The Great Depression of 1929 brought great economic distress to the nation, much of which translated into massive unemployment. The new Roosevelt administration responded with the Emergency Relief Act of 1932 and the creation of the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the redecessor of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The mission of the newly formed CWA was to put to work large numbers of workers on public relief projects. Rather than public handouts disenfranchised workers could be put to work on public works projects. Raymond Robbins saw the opportunity to do just that and in 1934 after having donated his land to the Federal Government, Camp A-1 opened at Chinsegut Hill. When the CWA was liquidated in March 1934 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) occupied Chinsegut Hill with the newly formed CCC Battalion #5468. During their tenure at Chinsegut Hill the CWA and CCC workers built new entrance and service roads, trails, water and soil conservation structures, as well as picnic and workers service quarters and offices. The mechanical movement of soils around the hill was designed to facilitate modern agriculture by gradual terracing of slopes creating water conveyances to reduce erosion. The remains of their efforts survive to this day and many are recognizable from the existing trail system.

Figure 1. The location of significant and potentially significant post-plantation, Robins family, and CCC related cultural resources on Chinsegut Hill.

Prehistoric to Plantation Periods Areas of Potential Effect (APE)

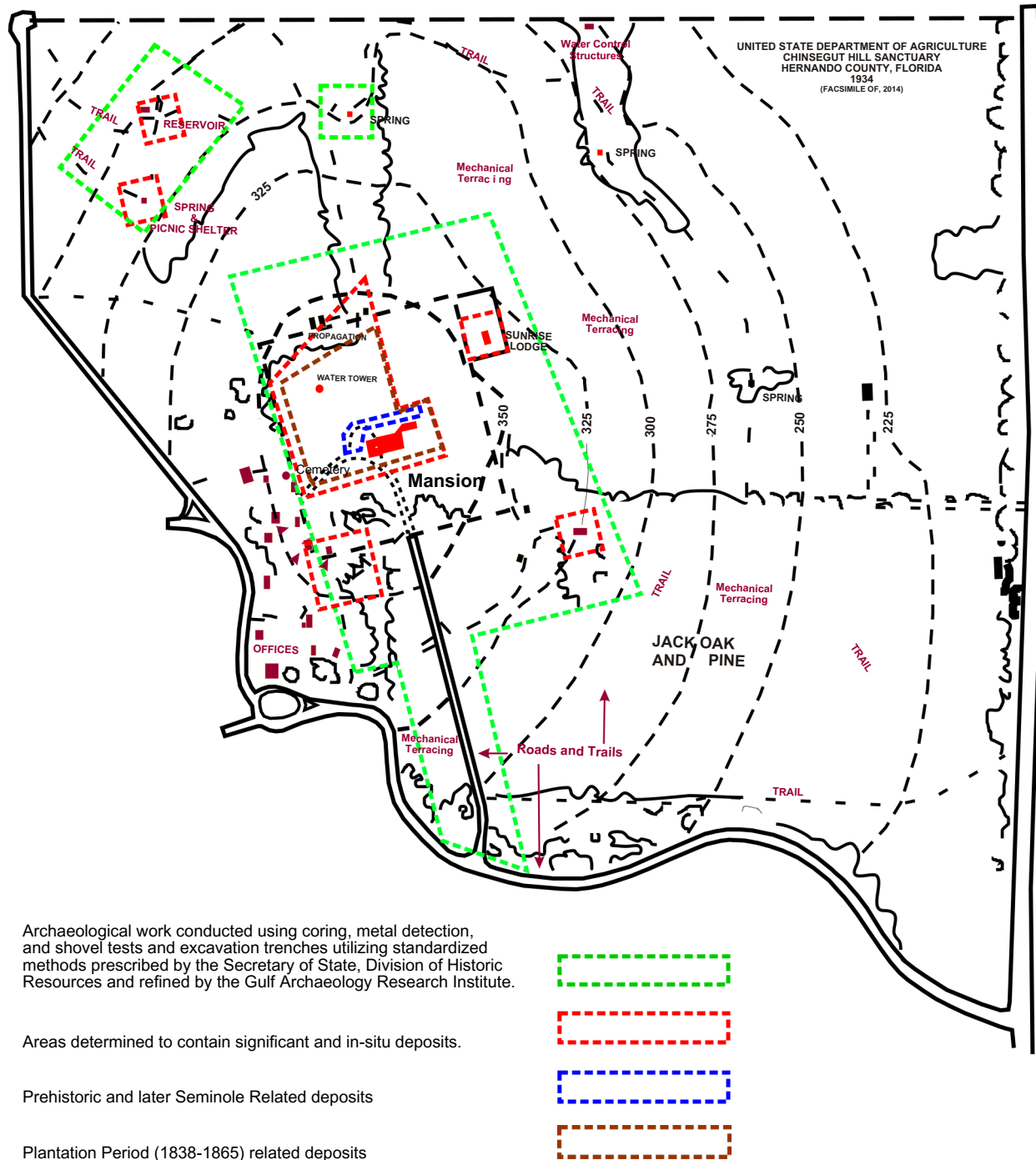


Figure 2. The location of significant and potentially significant prehistoric through plantation period cultural resources on Chinsegut Hill.



L=low, M=med, H=high, V=very, VH=very high, cc=ccc, pl=plantation, r=robins, D=destroyed, UNK=unknown/unsurveyed

Figure 3. The aerial location of significant and potentially significant prehistoric through plantation period cultural resources on Chinsegut Hill core area.