



The Institute
for Regional
Conservation
(IRC)

A not for profit
501(c)3
organization

Friends of IRC News

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5th FOIRC Party Auction Items
Photo: Kirsten Hines

Autumn 2008

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A Sunny Day in the Rain...

Many thanks to everyone who braved the uncertain weather to join us at our 5th Annual FOIRC Fundraising Party! Elane Neuhring led the first ever butterfly count at Doc Thomas House, Citizens for a Better South Florida did a great job with the kids and Valerie Wisecracker entertained us all with her witty songs. There was a great selection of raffle and auction items this year as well and it definitely helped with the fundraising! Volunteer awards were also presented to Brother Milledge, Claudio Kraushaar, Nora Fosman, Patty Phares and Randy Quick for all their help in 2008. We hope you had as much fun as we did!



Photos: Keith Bradley & Kirsten Hines



FOIRC Update

- Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's party!
- We raised over \$4,000.
- 6 butterfly species were observed during the count.
- To date, FOIRC has raised over \$7,000 this year. *Please help us hit the \$10,000 mark again this year!*



Mission Statement: The Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC) is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and long-term management of biodiversity on a regional basis, and to the prevention of regional extinctions of rare plants, animals, and ecosystems.

Steven Green Moves On

**Steve & Sara,
Good luck in Orlando!**



Much to our grief, Steve Green is leaving IRC after over 3 years of service to move to Orlando where his wife got a job she's very excited about. (Congratulations Sara!) We are most definitely going to feel the loss. Since he started at IRC, Steve has proven to be the go to guy for just about anything and everything that needs done quickly, efficiently and well.

He never fails and even takes on some of our least desirable tasks without complaint. He was officially brought on to work on our restoration crew and

quickly moved to managing that while also working in some capacity or another on just about every project IRC has taken on since Steve's arrival. Among other things, he rivals the best at plant ID, is expert with GIS technologies, and has even undertaken complicated geodatabase procedures. In fact, Steve will likely continue to work with us remotely on our geodatabase even after he leaves. This year Steve was the first recipient of IRC's new Arrowsmith Award for Service. It was well-deserved as Steve has definitely done more than just a great job at IRC. Steve, best wishes in Orlando!



Photo: Jesse Hoffman

The Following Volunteers and Sponsors Helped Make This Year's Party a Success. Thanks!



Artist Ana Bikic by Red Flag at the auction. If you would like to buy a print of this work go to <http://fineartamerica.com/featured/red-flag-ana-bikic.html> 40% of each sale will be donated to IRC! Thank you Ana for your enthusiasm and generosity.

Individuals

- Adam Hines
- Ana Bikic
- Bill Calderoni
- Claudio Kraushaar
- Jan Kolb
- Jonathan Estrin
- Joy Klein
- Patty Phares
- Robert Trenn
- Tiffany Troxler
- Valerie Peña
- Valerie Wisecracker

Organizations

- Avalon Gardens Nursery
- Center for Radiant Health
- Citizens for a Better South Florida
- Fairchild Tropical Gardens
- Jireh Salon
- Jungle Island
- Mainzer's German Deli
- Miami Art Museum
- New Theater of Coral Gables
- Peppy's in the Gables
- Pro-Native Consulting

- Silent Native Nursery
- Tropical Audubon Society
- UF—Crocodile Research Team
- Veber's Jungle Garden



Photos: Kirsten Hines

Plant of the Season: Samphire (the Amaranth family)

Steven Green

“What’s in a name? That which we call a samphire by any other name would still be an amaranth.”

- modified from William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliette*

Though it does not encapsulate Shakespeare’s tale of “star cross’d lovers”, quite like a rose, the legitimacy of this quote with regards to semantics can effortlessly bridge the divide between ye olde 16th century English literature and botanical nomenclature. The name samphire can refer to any one of several creeping vines in the amaranth family (Amaranthaceae). These plants are all succulent, mat-forming or clumping species found frequently in coastal wetlands and occasionally along beach dunes. True to these plants’ affinities for the coast, the name samphire is a corruption of the fisherman’s patron saint: St. Pierre, or St. Peter.

Economic uses for these plants have included using the ashes in the production of soap and glass; and using the succulent leaves in salads (amaranth genera are closely related to spinach). In the British Isles, many of these species can be found growing along treacherous cliffs. One of the perils of Samphire gathering is referred to in William Shakespeare’s *King Lear*:

'Half-way down
Hangs one that
gathers
samphire;
dreadful
trade!'

In South Florida, there are several native, coastal

amaranth genera, including *Atriplex* (saltbush), *Salicornia* and *Sarcocornia* (both commonly referred to as glasswort), *Suaeda* (seabligh), and the true samphire: *Blutaparon vermiculare*. The name of the species (*vermiculare*) literally means “worm-like”, referring to the growth habit, and appearance of samphire. Samphire is hardy, salt tolerant, and has respectable clusters of yellow to white flowers, but it is intolerant of drought. It does well as a sprawling ground cover, or as a hanging basket plant, but it requires full sun to thrive. IRC has several samphires available for sale at our nursery in 6-inch pots for \$5. For additional information on samphire and other native landscape plants, please visit our Natives for Your Neighborhood website.



Blutaparon vermiculare
Photo: Keith Bradley

Have a Merry Green Christmas!



Harlan & Lydia Rifkind by their live Dade county slash pine X-mas tree.

Photo: David Rifkind

Looking for ways to be more environmentally-friendly this Christmas? Why not start with a live X-mas tree that can be donated to a restoration project?! The Rifkind family approached us last year with the idea and thanks to them, we added another pine tree to our Doc Thomas House restoration project. We don’t have any trees for sale in our nursery, but contact a native plant nursery (see www.afnn.org or www.fnps.org for help) and purchase a Dade county slash pine (*Pinus elliotti* var. *densa*) to take home and decorate. Give us a call at the end of the season and we’ll find a home for your tree. You can even start the new year off right by planting the tree yourself!



David Rifkind, Harlan Rifkind & Steven Green stand by their newly planted X-mas tree at Doc Thomas House.

Photo: Brother Milledge

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Watching the Sea Rise

Mike Barry & Kirsten Hines

IRC Senior Biologist Mike Barry has been working closely with former 10,000 Islands National Wildlife Refuge (TTINWR) Biologist Terry Doyle to create an up-to-date vegetation map for the refuge. This project was designed to track exotic vegetation over time, but has proven useful for looking at hydrologic change as well. By comparing their 2008 map to a 1940 vegetation map, they are observing habitat shifts that are partly the result of sea level rise.

Preliminary calculations show ~3,000 of the original 6,000 acres of marsh converting to mangrove. Marsh-mangrove ecotones are affected by a variety of factors including freshwater flow from upstream, frequency and intensity of fires, climate and sea level rise. Fire suppression and human-altered hydrology play roles at TTINWR, but sea level rise is also implicated because non-mangrove species die-offs at the TTINWR sites are similar to those attributed to sea level rise by researchers at other Florida sites. Examples include buttonwood

scrub ridges with pine stumps and slight sand rises with scattered buttonwoods and dead sabal palm trunks. Another probable sea level rise attribute is that black mangrove barrens have increased substantially since 1940. On some of the inland bays and middle mangrove islands, where the effects of drainage and fire suppression are reduced, mangroves are taking over and buttonwoods are being restricted to the highest portions of the islands. This further suggests sea water inundation since buttonwoods require a greater distance from the water's edge than mangroves.

In addition to these gradual impacts from sea level change, the middle islands, back bays and outer islands are strongly affected by storm erosion. Panther Key, one of the largest and most visited outer islands on the refuge, has changed since 1940 with the southern-most seaward tip retreating 150m. The net loss of upland and coastal berm habitats is ~7 acres – roughly 1/3 what it was in 1940. This issue is com-

pounded by the accelerated rate of sea level rise observed with global climate change. While sea level rise has been occurring for thousands of years, experts are predicting a 30-60cm rise in the next 100 years compared with a 4cm/ 100 year rate from 4,000 years ago to 100 years ago. Given the observed habitat alteration from a 22cm rise in the last 60+ years, it's clear that such rapid change would drastically alter the landscape even inland. Fortunately, we can slow the rate of sea level rise by reducing our environmental footprint. Yet another reason to live green!



Barren of dead black mangroves.

Photo: Dennis Giardina