



The Institute  
for Regional  
Conservation  
(IRC)

A not for profit  
501(c)3  
organization

# Friends of IRC News

Volume 4, No. 1



Orange Geigertree (*Cordia sebestena*)  
Photo: Keith Bradley

Winter 2008

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Biologist

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**Tiffany Troxler**  
Research Associate

**Paula Garcia**  
Part-Time Staff

**Kathryn Samelson**  
Part-Time Staff

## Friends of IRC Newsletter Editor

Kirsten Hines  
hines@regionalconservation.org

## Thank you for helping Friends of IRC reach the \$10,000 mark in 2007!

Thanks to your generous contributions, FOIRC raised more money in 2007 than ever before and it shows! We have new educational hand-outs, the website is expanding (including 2 new databases launched), our volunteer restoration program is stronger than ever and our nursery is open for business! None of these things would have happened without your donations. We would especially like to thank the following donors for contributing at the \$100 level or higher:

Allyn Golub

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The Nature Conservancy

The Ross Foundation

Tom & Sandi Troxler



From all of us, to all of you... Thank you and Happy New Year!

We would also like to thank the following for significant  
volunteer contributions:

Amy Kimball-Murley

Claudio Kraushaar

Jimi Sadle

John Bradford

Kathryn Samelson

Lewis (Brother) Milledge

Mary Barfield

Nora Fosman

Patty Phares

Randy Quick

Suzanne Koptur

Tina Whelan

## FOIRC Update

- We got 17 new members in 2007
- Watch our homepage for current IRC news updates
- We still need filing cabinets

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.

## Meet IRC's Part-Timers



**Paula Garcia**  
Photo: Keith Bradley

We've been so busy with restoration and field projects that we've needed some extra hands! IRC now has two part-time staff: **Paula Garcia** and **Kathryn Samelson**.

A native of Argentina, Paula joined the IRC staff last summer as part of our restoration crew. She is currently an undergraduate student at Florida International University where she is majoring in Biology. The start of classes has decreased her hours at IRC,

but she's still a regular at weekend restoration events and is great at detail work in pine rocklands.

Kathryn began volunteering for IRC in the fall as a way to put her Environmental Science degree from the University of Colorado to good use. After weeks of enduring long treks through dense hammock and being poked by cactus spines, she became staff in December. She works as part of our restoration crew, as well helping out

with other field projects as needed.

Welcome to the team!



**Kathryn Samelson**  
Photo: Kirsten Hines

**Interested in joining the Pine Rockland Working Group field trip to Andros, Bahamas from Feb. 29—March 3?**

**Contact Keith:**

Bradley@  
regionalconservation.org

*Photo to Left:* Bahamas National Trust employees mark park boundaries on Andros as Chris Bergh (TNC) looks on

*By:* Keith Bradley

## IRC Collaborates in the Bahamas

In October, IRC Assistant Director Keith Bradley participated in a trip to Andros Island, Bahamas at the request of The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC's primary reason for the trip was to start work on a grant awarded to TNC and the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) to control exotic pest plants in the Bahamas. Keith attended to assist with this project and to plan for an upcoming field trip being conducted in association with the Pine Rockland Working Group Conference. The Pine Rockland Working Group is a group of land managers, biologists, and others involved in the conservation of the pine rockland ecosystem, found



only in southern Florida and the Bahamas. Keith will become Chair of the Working Group following the conference, which will take place in Miami February 27—28. The field trip to Andros Island is from February 29 to March 3, and is open to anyone interested in the conservation of pine rocklands.

Keith traveled to Andros Island with Chris Bergh (TNC), and met with BNT employees

Tamica Rahming, Rivean Riley, and Randolph "Casper" Burrows. The team traveled along the Queens Highway, ground truthing previously identified populations of punk-tree (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) and mapping new populations as they were found by the team. Bergh demonstrated proper chemical control techniques to the team. Even though many populations of punktree have been found on Andros, it is hoped that BNT now has the capacity to completely eradicate it from the island, avoiding the environmental havoc it has created in Florida.



Wand Goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*)  
Photo: Kirsten Hines

## **Solidago stricta: Introducing the IRC Nursery** *Steven Woodmansee*

We've been working hard to expand our native plant nursery and we're now officially open for business. The idea for our nursery is to focus on native plants which merit, but have not been in, cultivation. Initially we will grow pineland, coastal upland, and wildflower species with broad ranges across Florida's ten southern counties and beyond.

One such species at our plant nursery is the perennial wildflower,

wand goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*). Found throughout Florida, this splendid yellow flowering herb occurs in sunny areas including marshes, prairies and hydric pine-lands. Spatula shaped leaves form basal rosettes which may be 6-15 inches in diameter. Several dozen flowers (an inflorescence) may be formed in a spike at the top of a flowering stalk (culm). Culms are distinguished from many other species of goldenrod by possessing leaves which gradually grow smaller toward the top. Inflorescences may be 1.5-6 feet tall, and are produced throughout the year. Flowers are visited by several types of insect pollinators, especially bees and wasps, many of which are beneficial to ones yard as they attack garden pests.

Wand goldenrod needs no fertilizer, and after planting, seeds readily

recruit areas of bare soil. Plants are hardy, being pest and drought resistant. Unlike many goldenrods which produce aggressive underground runners, wand goldenrod forms basal rosettes, which may produce new plants at the base (pups) and is non aggressive. Goldenrods are often blamed for causing hay fever, however, most plants which cause hayfever, such as ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), are wind pollinated. Goldenrods are insect pollinated and their hayfever reputation is false. Be sure and consider adding this superb wildflower to your yard, it's on sale for \$1-8 (based on size) at the IRC nursery.

To make purchases, see a list of the unusual native plants available in our nursery or to arrange a visit, contact Patty at 305-247-6547 or [Castillo@regionalconservation.org](mailto:Castillo@regionalconservation.org)

## **Make 2008 an Eco-Friendly Year!**

*Kirsten Hines*

You're doing the native landscaping thing; you recycle; you have a compost; and you've switched to compact fluorescent lights. What else can you do? We've been working hard at IRC to limit our impact on the earth and it's remarkable what a difference "little" changes make over time and how it helps the finances! We saved over \$700 on our energy bill last year by switching our lightbulbs, raising our A/C a few degrees and turning off/ unplugging unused appliances. Here a few tips to help you reduce your impact at home and beyond:

- Wash your clothes in cold wa-

ter, choosing warm over hot when you feel heat is a necessity. Also, use the permanent press cycle sparingly as it uses more water.



<http://www.jcsog.com/images/earth.jpg>

- Use the moisture sensor mode on your drier instead of the timer to save energy.
- Install low-flow shower and faucet heads.
- Check your tire pressure monthly for optimal gas mileage.
- Buy a reusable drinking bottle, preferably metal, and drink tap water. The bottled water industry uses more water than it "creates", contributes to pollution and is less regulated than municipal water.
- Use timers or occupancy sensors for exterior lights and seldom used areas of the house.
- Keep the blades on your lawn-mower sharp and set it to the highest level. Longer, healthy grass requires less watering.
- When watering plants, one longer session is more effective than several short ones and is best done early in the morning or late in the evening.
- Clean your A/C filter frequently.

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## Mailing Address

If you would like to receive an email version of this newsletter instead, please email us at [friends@regionalconservation.org](mailto:friends@regionalconservation.org) to sign up and help us save costs on paper.

## What was IRC up to in 2007?

- Accuracy assessment of South Florida National Parks vegetation mapping
- Augmentation of populations of rare plants for restoration
- Botanical consulting for numerous organizations & individuals
- Creation of a master geodatabase for IRC data
- Leadership & affiliation with CESU, FLEPPC, FNPS, IUCN-ISG, Pine Rockland Working Group, SER & TAS
- Evaluate success of invasive exotic plant treatments
- Exotic plant assessments, monitoring & mapping throughout South & Central Florida
- Floristic assessment of Panama
- Floristic inventories of conservation areas in Monroe County
- Implement conservation actions for candidate plant species in Miami-Dade County pine rockland fragments
- Installation and monitoring of plots in Taylor Slough and hammocks of Everglades National Park
- Launching of 2 new online databases for the Florida Keys
- Management plans for the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program in Miami-Dade County
- Monitoring of candidate plants for Federal listing as Endangered
- Diet & Nesting of the endangered Allen Cays Rock Iguana (*Cyclura cyclura inornata*), Bahamas
- Official opening of our native plant nursery
- Participated in 30+ outreach, education & media events
- Population demography of the Federally-Endangered fragrant prickly-apple cactus (*Harrisia fragrans*)
- Post-hurricane field assessments of 6 endangered plant species
- Published 1 peer reviewed article
- Rare plant monitoring & restoration on Long Pine Key, Everglades National Park
- Rare plant surveys & review for Everglades National Park
- Restoration & management of privately-owned pine rockland & rockland hammock fragments in Miami-Dade County
- Mapping of rare & invasive plants along Florida Department of Transportation rights-of-way in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties
- Species assessments for the Big Pine Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista lineata* var. *keyensis*) & the Florida Bristle Fern (*Trichomanes punctatum* subsp. *floridanum*)
- Survey & status review of the Federally-Threatened Garber's spurge (*Chamaesyce garberi*)
- Survey of the endemic Rimrock Crowned Snake (*Tantilla oolitica*)



Queen butterfly (*Danaus gilippus*)  
Photo: Kirsten Hines