



Institute for Regional Conservation

April 2020 Newsletter

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Monthly Conservation Notes

Conservation is a Team Sport!

In times of crisis, the strengths and weaknesses of a team are amplified, and we can see that all around us in today's COVID-19 world. Whether we are socially isolated or not, the networks we weave and the way we interact with one another determine whether we can continue delivering on our mission, garner critical financial and community support, and survive and thrive as individuals and families. This is why I want to take a moment to focus on the IRC team of employees, associates, board members, funders, community supporters, and conservation colleagues. Because together we comprise an amazing team!

Mostly behind the scenes, Samantha Gabriel delivers critical support for administration, finance, media & publications, and human resources. She helps plan and staff our events, and many of you may have seen her recently at one of our Restoring the Gold Coast volunteer days. Education and Outreach Coordinator, Cara Abbott, continues to deliver excellence through adapting our Restoring the Gold Coast program, posting content on Facebook, and increasing our media resources in response to social distancing. Alex Seasholtz, our Ecological Restoration and Management Crew Leader, and

Our financial support base has been growing, and in 2019 we received more than \$25,000 in individual and business support from more than 100 donors for Restoring the Gold Coast, Natives For Your Neighborhood, and general support. So far in 2020, we have raised just over \$30,000, including an incredibly generous general donation of \$25,000 this month from an anonymous donor. These donations are key to IRC surviving the COVID-19 crisis and thriving into the future. We have also done well with institutional support, including significant donations in 2019 from Impact 100 Palm Beach County, New York Life, and the Florida Wildflower Foundation. Key grant support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for our work on globally imperiled pine rockland restoration is expected to continue into 2021.

Volunteers at events, researchers and citizen scientists who provide photographs and data for our websites, and collaborators at myriad nonprofits, universities, and government agencies, are all also part of the IRC team, as are community supporters in Florida, the Caribbean, and around the world. We should also acknowledge the families of all of those listed here since their support for our work has never been more clear in this age of family sheltering.

Moving forward, we will continue to expand capacity for those interested in IRC to contribute, including the formation of an

Michelle Smith, Field Biologist, are hard at work improving our in-field restoration and science practices, focusing on pine rocklands and invasive species.

Our 13 research and conservation associates continue to do incredible work at their respective institutions, and support IRC's mission through collaboration and data sharing. Examples are Jimmy Lange, hard at work increasing our knowledge of rare and locally extinct plants in Broward County, Kirsten Hines, traveling the state working on a new Florida wildlife book, and Mike Barry, who has been mapping vegetation change at Bahia de Jobs National Estuarine Research Reserve in Puerto Rico.

Our 7-member board continues to deliver leadership and continuity throughout the crisis. Co-founders Robert Heinzman (VP) and Donna Shore (Sec./Treas.) play key roles in executive decision-making from Massachusetts and California respectively. Our South Florida directors John Campanola, Patty Phares, and Allison Turner help us stay connected to our local communities, and our international director, Kingsley Dixon from Australia, makes sure we keep our eye on the big picture.

advisory board, and key committees including publications & media. If you are interested in volunteering please send a note to irc@regionalconservation.org titled "volunteer interest".

In closing, thanks again for all you have done for IRC and our mission. We know that times are difficult, more so for some than others. But we have faith in our mission, including the creation of a better future for ourselves and future generations - a world where we have learned from our past mistakes and have embarked on a grand journey to live in harmony with our planet and all of its ecological riches.

George Gann

Founder and Executive Director



DONATE



Thank you to all those who have

Donations allow us to provide

supported IRC's programs in the last month.

Kimberlee Pompeo, Fatima Grady, Gary Bremen, Cindy Dwyer, Denny Fernandez, James Fulton III, Grant Kunkel, and Leah Materna-Laurel.

IRC has an E-Trade account, so please contact us about giving gifts of stock.

important free resources to the public, land managers, scientists, landscape designers, and enthusiasts of native plants and native plant gardening.

To check out our Natives For Your Neighborhood website, [click here](#).

"Natives For Your Neighborhood is like a plant version of NPR: I use it all the time, so I really should support it financially!" Gary Bremen

A HUGE Thank You



IRC would like to extend a HUGE thank you to the anonymous donor who very generously donated \$25,000 in unrestricted funding in April. This key donation will help us not only survive COVID-19 but allow us to thrive in the future.

Weekly Conservation Conversations



Starting on Tuesday, May 5th, IRC will be launching our Weekly Conservation Conversations with George Gann via Zoom from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm every Tuesday. Each week we will have a different topic or theme related to our programs, free online resources, and current conservation issues. Click on the links below for a full description of each topic and also the zoom meeting information. Here is the list of our upcoming Weekly Conservation Conversations:

- **Natives For Your Neighborhood** on May 5th hosted by George Gann. For more information, visit the [Facebook event](#) and/or our [website calendar event](#).
- **Floristic Inventory of South Florida** on May 12th hosted by George Gann. For more information, visit the [Facebook event](#) and/or our [website calendar event](#).

- **Biodiversity Starter Plant Kits** on May 19th hosted by George Gann. For more information, visit the [Facebook event](#) and/or our [website calendar event](#).
- **Restoring the Gold Coast** on May 26th hosted by George Gann and Cara Abbott. For more information, visit the [Facebook event](#) and/or our [website calendar event](#).
- **Pine Rockland Initiative** on June 2nd hosted by George Gann. For more information, visit the [Facebook event](#) and/or our [website calendar event](#).

If you have any questions about attending any of these sessions, feel free to reach out to Cara Abbott at abbott@regionalconservation.org.

Coastal Consultation

IRC's Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, is now conducting on-site visits and evaluations of privately-owned properties on the barrier islands of southern Palm Beach County. We are working to improve coastal resilience and sustainability by increasing the diversity of native plants and habitats.

We are offering an introductory rate of \$100 for an initial 45-minute visit and \$100 per hour thereafter.

Any privately-owned property with existing or potential for native coastal habitat is eligible, from single-family homes to condominium associations and other multi-family properties.

 The Institute for Regional Conservation

COASTAL DUNE CONSULTATIONS

Part of our Restoring the Gold Coast Program
Creating healthy dunes with beautiful, resilient, native plants

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We are offering an introductory rate of \$100 for an initial 45-minute visit and \$100 per hour thereafter.

We will assess your dune or coastal landscape and recommend short and long-term actions designed to make your coastal garden strong, beautiful, and resilient using appropriate native plants.



About George Gann

George has 35 years of experience in coastal restoration including projects on Miami Beach, Key Biscayne, and Captiva Island. He is lead author of the Society for Ecological Restoration's International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration.

Make your coastal property more beautiful and resilient by scheduling a consultation today!

To schedule your private consultation, please contact Cara Abbott at abbott@regionalconservation.org or call 305-304-6610.

Biodiversity Starter Kits

In an effort to expand on the biodiversity hot spot we are creating along the coast in Southern Palm Beach County through our Restoring the Gold Coast program, we are excited to now offer biodiversity starter kits to private landowners who live on the

BIODIVERSITY STARTER KITS

As part of our Restoring the Gold Coast Program, IRC is offering native biodiversity starter kits for gardens on barrier islands in southern Palm Beach County.

Each kit comes with hand-selected native plants perfect for enhancing your native beach dune system or coastal garden. This service helps make the restoration of native habitats on barrier islands cost effective and time efficient.



barrier island.

We are currently taking orders for pickup (dates to be selected when it is safe to do so) and for delivery (for an extra fee). For more information, check out the flyer and visit our biodiversity starter kit [web page](#).

What Each Starter Kit Contains

A single kit contains five native plants in 4" to 3-gal. containers, including at least one rare species not readily available on the open market. A double contains 10 native plants. Prices start at \$60 for DIY kits.



Kits Are Available For:

- Beach dunes and coastal grasslands
- Coastal strand and shrublands (back dune)
- Tropical hammock forests and coastal gardens
- Butterfly attracting kits for a wide variety of coastal habitats

How You Can Get Your Kit

We will be offering a monthly pickup service of these kits. Delivery and planting can be arranged for an additional fee. If you're interested in purchasing an IRC Biodiversity Kit, please visit our website at: regionalconservation.org/donationrgc.html

Moving IRC Forward

During this unique and delicate time, IRC staff is continuing to move things forward and keep IRC going. We know it is a tough situation and there is a lot of negative media out there, but we wanted to share a few things we have been doing professionally and personally to keep up the hope and positivity.

- Increasing staff training in plant ID and ecological restoration practice.
- Posting "Species of the Week" on social media to educate and share information about different species in Florida.
- Preparing to launch free weekly webinars, Weekly Conservation Conversations, about IRC's programs and free web resources.
- Safely continuing ecological restoration projects in pine rocklands in Miami-Dade County.
- Initiating the second year of the "Corridors of Invasion" invasive plant mapping project with the South Florida Water Management District.

We are a nonprofit conservation organization exempt from taxes under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3.

