



# Institute for Regional Conservation

## August 2023 Newsletter

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## Monthly Conservation Note

### Invasive Species and Climate Change – a Dangerous Combination

News about the recent catastrophic fires on Maui, Hawai'i convey tales of dry conditions, high winds, and abandoned agricultural fields accumulating large quantities of highly flammable fuel to feed the fires that leveled a city and killed more than 100 people. A growing number of reports dig into the details, that abandoned sugarcane fields were overrun by at least three of the world's most invasive grasses: buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus*), and molasses grass (*Melinis minutiflora*), all three also found in Florida and the West Indies.

However, where degradation is severe invasive species control alone can be ineffective and costly – what is needed is a viable long-term restoration target. Whether that be a native ecosystem or a regenerative agricultural land-use, identifying the actions and processes needed to move the systems to a healthier and more resilient trajectory is essential for both people and nature. And this will require significant planning, stakeholder engagement, and resources. No matter where we are in the world, the time for quick fixes is over. Our ability to respond and adapt to climate change depends on it.


Like Burmареed (*Neyraudia reynaudiana*) in the pine rocklands of South Florida, and both buffel grass and Guinea grass in Puerto Rico, these invasive grasses burn hotter and faster than native vegetation in Hawai'i, and both scientists and firefighters have warned about the danger they posed to Maui for years. As recently as 2018, 21 homes in West Maui were destroyed by a wildfire linked to invasive species-dominated landscapes. Hotter temperatures driven by climate change worsen the problem.

In the best-case scenario, abandoned agricultural land recovers through natural regeneration and a native ecosystem is ultimately restored, usually with human assistance. However, in many parts of the world where degradation is severe, like much of Hawai'i, natural regeneration does not work. In high integrity ecosystems and where natural regeneration is possible, invasive species control can be very effective.



IRC Ecological Restoration crew treating Burmареed in pine rocklands. Photo by Melany Flint.

## Upcoming Events



# SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 2ND

SPECIAL LECTURES

**Cornell Museum**  
51 N Swinton Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33444

**10AM | Mark Cassini**  
Community Greening - 10,000 tree campaign

**10:30AM | Solid Waste Authority**  
Recycling

**11AM | Leneita Fix**  
The Reef Institute - Coral Bleaching, Rescue, and Restoration

**11:30AM | Evan Orellana**  
Surfrider - Clean Water

**Arts Warehouse**  
313 NE 3rd Street, Delray Beach, FL 33444

**12PM | George Gann**  
Institute for Regional Conservation - Habitat Restoration

**12:30PM | Kent Edwards**  
City of Delray Beach - Green Building Ordinance

**1PM | Elsa Gonzales-Soto**  
City of Delray Beach - Community Rating System for Stormwater Flood Insurance


**1:30PM | Kent Edwards**  
City of Delray Beach - Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Climate Action Plan

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST**

**6 - 8:30PM**  
Trivia Night Friday  
📍 Opportunities

**6PM - 9PM**  
Delray First Friday Art Walk  
📍 Downtown Locations

**More Info**



### September 2nd - City of Delray Beach - Climate & Art Event

George Gann, IRC Executive Director, will be a speaker on September 2nd, at 12pm at the **Arts Warehouse**. He will be presenting on Habitat Restoration. Stop by and discover the importance of nurturing native ecosystems in urban environments. These precious ecosystems play a vital role in preserving our native plant and animal species, especially in the face of climate challenges. George will discuss the efforts of Delray Beach in restoring these habitats for a sustainable future.

For more information about the City of Delray Beach's Climate and Art Event visit here:

[www.delraybeachfl.gov/ClimateAndArt](http://www.delraybeachfl.gov/ClimateAndArt).

### September 9th - Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day at



## Atlantic Dunes Park

Join us for an exciting day removing nonnative plants from Atlantic Dunes Park on Saturday, September 9th, from 9am-12pm. We will be cutting and hauling nonnative plants within the park that have been overtaking areas of the maritime hammock.

Bring yourself, a friend, and some enthusiasm! We have all the equipment you'll need and there is no experience necessary.

Please be sure to [RSVP here](#) as space is limited for this event.

**Restoring the Gold Coast Program**  
The Institute for Regional Conservation



**ECOLOGICAL  
RESTORATION  
VOLUNTEER DAY**

**Where:** Atlantic Dunes Park  
**When:** Saturday, September 9th from 9am-12pm  
**Register here:**  
<https://www.volunteermatch.org/search/opp3721721.jsp>  
**A confirmation email containing all the event details will be sent to all registered participants on the day prior to the event.**

*Uniting people and nature to restore our world.*

30th ANNUAL  
**NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY**  
SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2023



**JUPITER INLET LIGHTHOUSE ONA**  
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES   Lighthouse TOURS**  
**GUIDED WALKS   A.R. GAME EXPEDITION**  
**ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES   20+ LOCAL PARTNERS**  
EMAIL [kmoore@blm.gov](mailto:kmoore@blm.gov) FOR VOLUNTEER PRE-REGISTRATION

   **NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

## September 23rd - National Public Lands Day at Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area

Join us to celebrate the beautiful diversity of coastal ecosystems during the 30<sup>th</sup> annual National Public Lands Day event on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 8am to 12pm at the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area.

IRC will be one of the many local partners celebrating National Public Lands Day! IRC will be giving several family-friendly guided tours along their trail showing native plants and coastal habitats. In addition to what we are doing, other organizations will be doing native plant installations, invasive plant removals, there will be hands-on activities for all ages. This is a great opportunity for volunteer hours, reach out to Karen Moore at [kmoore@blm.gov](mailto:kmoore@blm.gov) for volunteer pre-registration. Otherwise, we'll see you there!

## September 30th - Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day at South Beach Park, Boca Raton

On Saturday, September 30th from 9am-11am at

South Beach Park, join us to plant a variety of native plants to the beach dunes. Groups of volunteers will be instructed how to install our plants into the ground and learn all about coastal ecosystems.

Grab a friend and come out to help us plant a so we can continue to add the essential biodiversity back into the coastal ecosystem.

Please be sure to [RSVP here](#) as space is limited for this event.



**JOIN US**  
**FOR AN ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION EVENT**



**We Need Help With:**  
Installing native plants on the beach dunes  
Register here:  
<https://www.volunteermatch.org/search/opp5723971.jsp>

**Event Details**  
Saturday, September 30th  
From 9am to 11am  
At South Beach Park



**The Institute for Regional Conservation**





**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Fernando Porphirio, Raymond Jungles, Sally Channon, Airam Belt, Maria Beltran, & Michael Poland.

Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: Barbara McAdam, Lindsay Boehner and Valerie Seasholtz.

While we get funding for some great projects, those funds rarely cover all of our costs, so we really do need your support to continue our important work.

Donations allow us to provide important conservation services such as improving our free online resources, increasing protection of rare plants and animals, restoring native ecosystems, and advocating for better public policy.

**Thank you** to our recent Natives For Your Neighborhood (NFYN) sponsor: [Native Butterfly Flowers](#) located in Brevard County. If you're interested in our NFYN sponsorships, reach out to [Michelle Smith](#).

IRC has an E-Trade account. Please contact us about giving gifts of stock.



**White Peacock (*Anartia jatrophae*).**  
Photo by Melany Flint.



DONATE

## Bloomin' & Buzzin' - An Autumn Social A Do Good Delray Event



**SAVE THE DATE!** We're thrilled to announce an upcoming fundraising occasion in collaboration with Do Good Delray, hosted by the **Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce**. This year, we're joining forces with **Central Park Taekwondo - Delray Beach**, and our focus is set on generating funds for our **Natives For Your Neighborhood** website and program, as well as our **Pine Rockland Initiative** and **Restoring the Gold Coast** programs.

### Save the specifics:

**Date:** Wednesday, October 18th

**Time:** 5:00pm - 8:00pm

**Location:** **Delray Beach Historical Society**

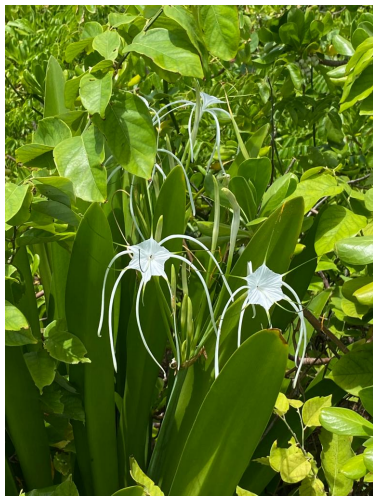
This event is designed for **all ages** to enjoy. Anticipate a delightful array of food, beverages, face painting, trivia, raffles, and much more!

Secure your tickets without delay - just **click here**. For those interested in becoming sponsors, additional details can be found on the flyer above and by **clicking here**.

Let's work together to achieve our objective of reaching **\$10,000** in support! Your participation is invaluable.

## From the Field

Interesting Finds with Celeste Boncompte, Field Technician



**Hymenocallis latifolia (Mangrove spiderlily)**

found in coastal beaches and thickets.



Sea turtle eggs, from a hatched clutch, in the beach dunes.



A trail sign that encourages further thoughts: " In nature nothing is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful" - Alice Walker.

Interesting finds with Celeste Boncompte, Field Technician.

A rare experience from our Ecological Restoration Team. While their usual focus is on restoration work in the pine rocklands of Miami-Dade County, they recently had the special opportunity to engage in conservation efforts within the coastal ecosystems of southern Palm Beach County. This change of scenery brought about some fascinating highlights during their restoration work.

All photos by Celeste Boncompte.



Interesting to see pothos growing like a thick mat in this coastal hammock habitat, whereas you would usually see it vining up trees. Pothos is a nonnative vine in Florida.





# Pine Rockland Initiative Updates

Melany Flint, Field Supervisor, came across this butterfly recently. The [Bartram's scrub hairstreak butterfly](#) which is a federally endangered butterfly that is native to the pine rockland habitat of South Florida. The [Pineland croton](#) is the only known larval host plant where the caterpillars feed on leaves, flowers, and fruits of the Pineland croton.

This species is under significant threat from development, nonnative species, and mosquito control. Rising sea levels pose a danger, potentially engulfing its habitat in the Florida Keys.

Always such a rewarding find, especially with all the work our restoration team and collaborators do day in and day out.



Photo of Bartram's scrub hairstreak butterfly by Melany Flint.

## Recent Events

### Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day - Native Plant Installation - at Red Reef Park - August 5th

IRC and [City of Boca Raton](#) held an ecological restoration event at Red Reef Park. We had 16 volunteers that helped install 21 plants of coastal strand and beach dune species (a total of 60 plants). A few plant species included: [Dodonaea viscosa var. viscosa \(Varnishleaf\)](#) which is listed as imperiled by IRC, [Opuntia stricta \(Erect pricklypear\)](#) which is state threatened, and [Ipomoea imperati \(Beach morningglory\)](#) which is listed as imperiled by IRC. We also removed 3 large piles of *Scaevola taccada* (Beach naupaka), the nonnative scaevola from our region, which is Category I Invasive by [Florida Invasive Species Council](#).

Thank you to our volunteers, who helped install and remove plants on such a hot and humid morning. Thank you to City of Boca Raton for sponsoring and funding this restoration event!

For more photos from the event, [click](#)



[here.](#)



## Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day at Red Reef Park - August 19th

IRC and [City of Boca Raton](#) held an ecological restoration event at Red Reef Park. We had over 30 volunteers that helped install 60 different native plants. A few plant species included: [Jacquemontia reclinata \(Beach clustervine\)](#), a federally endangered herb, [Ernodea littoralis \(Beach-creeper\)](#), and [Hymenocallis latifolia \(Mangrove spiderlily\)](#).

We also removed 4 large piles of *Scaevola taccada* (Beach naupaka), the nonnative scaevola from our region, which is Category I Invasive by [Florida Invasive Species Council](#).

Thank you to our volunteers, who helped install and remove plants on such a hot and beautiful morning. Thank you to City of Boca Raton for sponsoring and funding this restoration event!

For more photos from the event, [click here.](#)

## Become a Sponsor of Natives For Your Neighborhood

Help IRC continue to update and expand [Natives For Your Neighborhood \(NFYN\)](#) while advertising your business or organization to a targeted audience of over 600,000 yearly users. Ideal sponsors are native plant nurseries, native landscape consultants and environmental groups looking to reach new members.

For more information on the available



sponsorship levels and benefits of sponsoring NFYN, contact [Michelle Smith](#).

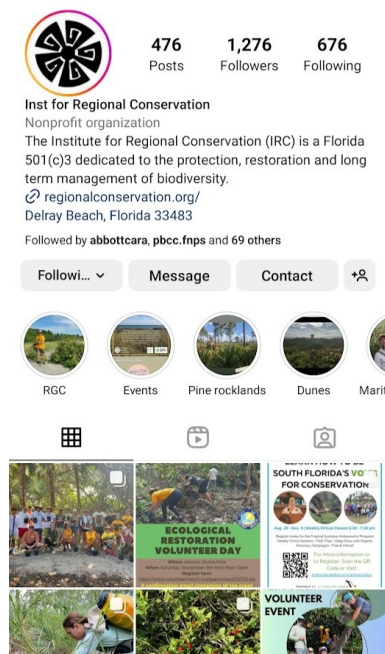
## NATIVES FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

HERBACEOUS	EMERGENT	CANOPY
Your name and a link to your website under "Additional Sponsors"	Your icon and/or name with a link to your website on the right bar visible on all pages guaranteed to be among the top spots.	Your icon and/or name and a link to your site on the right bar on the home page and visible on all subsequent pages including plant lists and plant details.
\$100	\$1,000+	\$250+

<https://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/>

**The Institute for Regional Conservation**  
Conservation of rare plants, animals, and ecosystems

## Follow us on Social Media



Inst for Regional Conservation  
Nonprofit organization  
The Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC) is a Florida 501(c)3 dedicated to the protection, restoration and long term management of biodiversity.  
[regionalconservation.org/](https://regionalconservation.org/)  
Delray Beach, Florida 33483

Followed by [abbottcara](#), [pbcc](#), [fnps](#) and 69 others

Follow... Message Contact +

RGC Events Pine rocklands Dunes Marit

Grid of images showing conservation activities and volunteer events.

The best way to stay up to date on all things IRC is to follow us on social media! Every week we spotlight a native plant in a "Wildflower Wednesday" post and give a glimpse into one of our many unique projects in a "From the Field Friday" post. On top of that, we share event photos and relevant news pieces.

So, if you haven't already, follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!

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



The Institute for Regional Conservation | [Website](#)  
Newsletter Editor: Michelle M. Smith



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