



December 2019 Newsletter

Monthly Conservation Notes

Gratitude and Hope

I am glad that Extinction Rebellion exists to antagonize the authorities, and that Greta Thunberg won Person of the Year for her outspoken work on climate change. And I have read with interest the media follow-up to the 11th Annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit in Key West. It is obvious that business as usual just won't work when it comes to climate change and the global biodiversity extinction crisis. And people are (finally) taking note.

But I worry. I worry that despair will overcome us, and society in general. That politicians and the courts will be too slow to act, and that we will expend too much energy fighting over who gets to profit from global change. I worry that we will not take full advantage of all of the conservation work that has been accomplished to date, and that we will fail to acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, who set the stage for this fight for survival of species, and human evolution toward a sustainable relationship with our planet.

As 2019 winds down I want to take this opportunity to say that, despite all the setbacks and challenges, I am excited to be alive and in this fight. I am grateful that there are patches of biodiversity left along the Florida coast; that we have scraps of Everglades with which to work; that we have 2% of pine rocklands instead of zero; that I get to work with amazing people of all ages and walks of life; and for a wonderful family and community of

The future will be a battle, that is for sure. We must achieve transformational change, and that change will be resisted by many for reasons good and bad. But we cannot achieve transformational change through classical environmental resistance and advocacy alone. It must be created within a context of healing, both environmental and social; through the lens of ecological restoration and other allied restorative actions, from organic and regenerative agriculture to native pollinator gardens and green infrastructure. And I believe that every person can do something restorative in life. Not just reducing impacts on the environment, but participating in the great planetary healing that is critically needed. And needed right now. That, my friends, gives me hope.

George Gann

Founder and Executive Director



Following ecological restoration activities, a globally-imperiled pine rockland recovers from decades of fire suppression, Hurricane Irma, and a wildfire.

friends and colleagues with whom to share my journey.

This year marks The Institute for Regional Conservation's 35th anniversary!



All of us at IRC would like to wish you all Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

During this holiday season, we want to say "thank you" to everyone who has given their time, financial support, and partnership.

We are looking forward to new opportunities this upcoming year.

We greatly appreciate your past support and need your continued (and increased!) support to sustain our current level of commitment to the future of our ecosystems.

Cheers!

[DONATE](#)

IRC's main web resources surpassed

1 million page views in 2019!

Check them out: [Natives for Your Neighborhood](#),
[Floristic Inventory of South Florida](#), and
[Plantas de Puerto Rico / Plants of Puerto Rico](#).

IRC's 2019 Project Spotlight

Restoring the Gold Coast



With our \$100,000 Impact 100 PBC grant, \$10,000 New York Life Grant, and contributions from supporters like you, IRC has kickstarted our new Restoring the Gold Coast program. This year, IRC has conducted various events from Boca Raton to Ocean Ridge as part of this coastal dune restoration project. IRC has held five hands-on volunteer events, including our Kick-Off event and field trips with local high schoolers, three in-school lectures, a workshop, and various talks and site evaluations. For this upcoming year, IRC plans to work with students of all ages, and coordinate general volunteer restoration events, lectures, and workshops throughout southern Palm Beach County.

Do you know of a school group, club or volunteer group in South Palm Beach County that would be interested in having IRC give a presentation or participating in a hands-on restoration event? If so, reach out to Cara Abbott at abbott@regionalconservation.org.

Pine Rockland Initiative





With \$95,000 in funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in collaboration with the Miami-Dade County EEL program and other partners, IRC continues to conduct ecological restoration activities in globally imperiled pine rocklands in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. In the past two years, IRC's field crew has worked on over 150 acres of pinelands at 15 sites, treating non-native, invasive plants and reducing cover of native hardwoods that have expanded due to fire suppression.

We have also been working on cultivating, planting and monitoring Pineland croton (*Croton linearis*) at the National Key Deer Refuge in Monroe County. This project aims to increase the food source for the federally endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak (*Strymon acis bartramii*) butterflies, as Pineland croton is the only host plant.

We are also working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and other partners on the development of a Pine Rockland Business Plan, an innovative planning tool intended to help scale up the restoration of existing pine rocklands and "Expand the Footprint" of this imperiled ecosystem.



Elevating Global Restoration Standards



INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES
AND STANDARDS FOR THE
PRACTICE OF ECOLOGICAL
RESTORATION

SECOND EDITION SUMMARY



This September, IRC, the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), and more than a dozen other organizations from around the world released the second edition of the International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration. Introduced in 2016, the Standards establish norms to guide the development and implementation of ecological restoration projects worldwide. The updated Standards were announced at SER's 8th World Conference on Ecological Restoration in Cape Town, South Africa, where nearly 1,000 delegates from around the world convened to discuss the

issues, challenges, and opportunities surrounding restoration. IRC Chief Conservationist, George Gann, the lead author of the updated Standards, was on hand to deliver a keynote address. IRC will continue to collaborate with SER in 2020 in preparation for the World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France (June), the 2020 United National Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, China (October), and the launch of the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (January 2021).



Thank you to our recent donors for supporting IRC's programs.

Gayle Kolasa, Habitat Specialists, Inc., Native Plant Horticulture Foundation, Manuel del Llano, Christina Dupuy, and Stephen Jones.

Thank you to Bill Petry and Tim Keith for their generous donation of stock!

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

Donations allow us to provide 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](#).

Florida Panthers Benefit for ECISMA

Join our friends at the [Everglades CISMA](#) during National Invasive Species Awareness Week for the Florida Panthers vs. Chicago Blackhawks hockey game on February 29th, 2020 at the BB&T Center. Help support invasive species research and management in the Everglades! A portion of every ticket sold through [this link](#) (**AND THIS LINK ONLY**) benefits invasive species management and helps support progress toward restoring the Everglades. Your ticket includes free parking and early



Everglades Cooperative Invasive
Species Management Area

entry to a special ECISMA event starting at 4:00 pm before the game.

Recent IRC Events

IRC at Butterfly & Bird Day 2019

IRC's Field Crew Leader, Alex Seasholtz, attended the 2019 Butterfly and Bird Day at Castellow Hammock Preserve and Nature Center hosted by [Miami Blue Chapter, North American Butterfly Association](#) and Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces. There were great speakers, including Sandy Koi, one of IRC's Conservation Associates, and information to help keep Florida flourishing.



Ocean Ridge Restoring the Gold Coast Workshop



IRC held a workshop on Restoring the Gold Coast in Ocean Ridge at the Ocean Ridge Town Hall. Residents who attended the workshop listened to presentations from IRC's Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, and Education & Outreach Coordinator, Cara Abbott, participated in an open forum, and helped plant several native species along the town beach access south of Oceanfront Park. IRC's presentation covered a wide range of topics including the history of the coastline in southern Palm Beach County, background information on Restoring the Gold Coast, advice for homeowners and property managers on selecting plants to increase coastal biodiversity, and information on



biodiversity starter kits that IRC will have available for residents of Ocean Ridge in early 2020.

Thank you to the Town of Ocean Ridge for hosting and sponsoring this event, and especially to Town Manager Tracey Stevens! We would also like to thank Mary Ann Cody and members of the Ocean Ridge Garden Club for their support of this Restoring the Gold Coast event. [Link to photos.](#)

Atlantic Community High School Field Trip for RGC Program

IRC had the pleasure of taking Earth Science students from Atlantic Community High School on a coastal restoration field trip to Delray Beach!

Students learned about restoring coastal biodiversity first hand by helping IRC add native plants to the coastal strand, removing invasive species, and picking up trash.

Thank you to Chelsea Cantwell for letting us work with your students and for all you did to make this field trip happen!

And thank you to our primary sponsors, [Impact 100 PBC](#) and [New York Life Insurance Company](#), for sponsoring this event and allowing these students to make a positive impact on the world around them. [Link to photos.](#)



Lectures at Atlantic Community High School for RGC Program

IRC's Education and Outreach Coordinator, Cara Abbott, spoke to 150 Earth Science students at Atlantic Community High School about the history and management of coastal habitat, the importance of biodiversity, and how to become an advocate for Florida's coastline.



- **Talk at Martin County Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, January 7th.** IRC's Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, will give a talk at the [Martin County Chapter of FNPS](#). Stay tuned for official time and meeting place.
- **RGC Atlantic Dunes Park Volunteer Event, January 18th, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.** Join IRC, [Erin Deady Law](#), and the City of Delray Beach for a Restoring the Gold Coast event at Atlantic Dunes Park in Delray Beach. [Click here](#) for more details.
- **Public Imperiled Butterflies of Florida Work Group (IBWG) Meeting, January 28th, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm.** Join IRC and our friends of IBWG for their annual meeting full of presentations from experts across Florida. This meeting will be at the UF/IFAS Extension Miami-Dade County. For more details or to RSVP, contact IBWG leader and IRC Associate [Mary Truglio Fesmire](#).
- **Pine Rockland Initiative Volunteer Event at Pine Shore Pineland Preserve, February 1st, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.** Join IRC and [Miami-Dade EEL](#) for a pine rockland restoration event as part of our Pine Rockland Initiative program. [Click here](#) for more details. [Click here](#) for EEL's 2019-2020 Calendar to register!
- **Pine Rockland Initiative Volunteer Event at Florida City Pineland Preserve, March 7th, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.** Join IRC and [Miami-Dade EEL](#) for a pine rockland restoration event as part of our Pine Rockland Initiative program. [Click here](#) for more details. [Click here](#) for EEL's 2019-2020 Calendar to register!



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

