



**Institute for  
Regional  
Conservation**

## December 2024 Newsletter

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### Conservation Note

#### An Amazing Journey – IRC at 40

40 years is a long time to do anything, especially in today's supercharged, fast-paced, social-media driven world. "Got 30 seconds? Forget it, I'll give you two."

40 years ago is ancient history. Land lines, the first personal computers, the Cold War still

raging. But believe it or not, IRC was born 40 years ago this year. Wow.

First conceived on the banks of the Koyukuk River in Alaska, hatched in Boulder, Colorado, establishing ourselves in the Brazilian Amazon, growing and maturing in South Florida, spreading our wings globally, the IRC journey has truly been amazing. We never could have envisioned where it would all lead.

With 40 years behind us and an unknowable future in front of us, I want to take a moment to thank all the people who have traveled with us along the way. From my parents, who provided wise council during the legal setup, to founders Robert Heinzman and Donna Shore, to Keith Bradley and Steve Woodmansee who were essential to establishing IRC in Florida, to the amazing Delray Beach community that welcomed us with open arms 12 years ago, to our past and present board members, staff, associates, volunteers, donors, collaborators, and our families, I want to say “Thank you!” it has been an honor traveling with you on this path.

And what a path it has been. We may be small, but we are nimble and get things done. We: parlayed a five-month trip to the Amazon into two high level conferences that played a key role in mainstreaming tropical forest conservation in the United States; testified on the status of rare plants in South Florida resulting in the state listing of nearly 80 species; spent nearly a decade in the field building the Floristic Inventory of South Florida; spent more than a decade working on the bilingual Plants of the Island of Puerto Rico; built a professional restoration team that specializes in the restoration of globally imperiled pine rocklands, home to dozens of state and federally listed plants and animals; sued the federal government over delays in listing the ghost orchid; and, are main organizers and contributors to global restoration guidance at the highest levels. All of this was made possible by operating in a highly collaborative manner, that prizes the acquisition and transparent sharing of knowledge so that conservation and restoration actually gets done.

We look forward to the future, knowing it will be just as difficult as the past, but different, with even higher risks, but with an unwavering eye toward the goal – a restored, sustainable, just world for people and nature.

George Gann  
*Founder & Executive Director*



IRC Founders in the Amazon, 1985



IRC Founders at 40th Anniversary Celebration



IRC Team



**Institute for  
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*Help Needed*  
**ECOLOGICAL  
RESTORATION**  
*Volunteer Day*

**JAN  
TBD**

**9:00AM - 11:00AM**  
Atlantic Dunes Park  
1605 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach FL 33483

**REGISTER NOW**  
[www.regionalconservation.org](http://www.regionalconservation.org)

\*We will be removing nonnative vegetation from the park.

## Ecological Restoration Day

Join us for a volunteer day restoring Atlantic Dunes Park in Delray Beach. We need your help to remove nonnative plants from the hammock and dunes at the park.

We are working with the City of Delray Beach to solidify a date but we are aiming for late January. We will post more details on our social media soon. Check our event page periodically for updates and upcoming events.

[Click here for more details.](#)

## Wrapping up 2024



Ongoing restoration at Red Reef Park, Boca Raton, FL

As 2024 comes to a close, we at IRC would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters, volunteers, and partners who have stood by us through the years. Your unwavering dedication has been the cornerstone of our success, and together, we are making a real difference for South Florida's native ecosystems.

This year has been one of incredible growth and achievement for IRC. With your help, we:

- Hosted 25 educational outreach events in Delray Beach, Boca Raton, and Miami Beach, connecting with our local community and inspiring action for conservation.
- Our field team participated in over seven EEL events in Miami- Dade County!
- Engaging well over 600 volunteers through these events who contributed their time and energy to our projects and local community.
- Installed over 1,500 native plants, revitalizing critical habitats across the region.
- Our field team has removed hundreds of square feet of invasive plants, reclaiming space for native biodiversity to thrive.
- Reached thousands of people through our social media platforms, spreading awareness about the importance of ecological restoration.
- Our online resources such as Floristic Inventory of South Florida (FISF) and Natives For Your Neighborhood have reached over 100,000 views

Every plant installed, invasive species removed, and person educated brings us closer to our shared vision of a healthier, more resilient South Florida. None of this would be possible without your generosity and commitment to preserving our unique ecosystems.

As we prepare to enter 2025, we are energized and inspired to continue this vital work. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Here's to another year of growing, restoring, and protecting together!



## Recent Events

### Volunteer Day at Red Reef Park celebrating FAU's Center for Environmental Studies' 30th Anniversary

On December 3rd, IRC facilitated a volunteer event for Florida Atlantic University's Center for Environmental Studies to celebrate their 30 year anniversary. Over 20 volunteers helped with invasive species removal, installed over 100 native plants in the coastal strand, and picked up litter along the beach dunes.



### Field Trip with Cocoplum Nature School at Orchard View Park, Delray Beach

On December 5th, IRC's Conservation Program Manager, Liz Dutra and Program Associate, Mindi Ogden, led a group of over 45 kids from the Cocoplum Nature School on a fun field trip. They explored the park for native plants, discussed invasive species, and learned how scientists are helping restore the balance of nature, for example with the introduction of Air-potato leaf beetle to help control the invasive Air-potato vine. The beetle feeds on the vines and roots, allowing native plants which were being smothered by the vines to thrive again.



Thank you to Cocoplum Nature School for the opportunity to engage these curious young minds in an unforgettable day of hands-on learning and discovery.

### Reviving Urban Biodiversity Workshop at Orchard View Park, Delray Beach

On December 10th, IRC had the pleasure of hosting a Reviving Urban Biodiversity workshop at Delray Beach's Orchard View Park. During the event, attendees learned about native urban biodiversity and the importance of preserving remnant patches of natural areas in urbanized environments. IRC's Program

Associate, Mindi Ogden gave a presentation on invasives species, highlighting the threats they pose to native species, and discussed new emerging invasives in Palm Beach County. Participants also enjoyed a guided tour of the park where they learned how to ID several native and invasive plants.



## Volunteer Event at Winding Waters Natural Area in Palm Beach County

On December 19th, IRC partnered up with Palm Beach County's Ecological Restoration Management team at Winding Waters Natural Area in an expanding program called Reviving Urban Biodiversity. Volunteers had the opportunity to learn about native urban biodiversity and the importance of preserving remnant patches of natural areas in urban environments.

The majority of the event was dedicated to removing nonnative species from the natural area. All together over nine 30-gallon trash bags were filled with invasives such as Tasselflower, Shrubby false buttonweed, and Caesarweed. We are grateful for funding from the Hornik foundation for this wonderful event. We were also thrilled to have Mike Barry, IRC associate and Leyani Caballero, an orchid biologist visiting from Cuba join us for this event.



You can see more pictures [here](#).

## Reviving Urban Biodiversity Workshop with Town of Palm Beach Shores

On December 20th, IRC partnered up with the Town of Palm Beach Shores property owners association. Liz Dutra, Conservation Program Manager, gave a presentation about the importance of preserving remnant patches of native ecosystems and how nonnatives plants can disrupt ecosystems. There was also a town walkthrough to discuss improvements in the local landscape.





**Apply Now! We are looking for Field Technicians to join our team.**

We are seeking an experienced field technician (preferred but not required) for our Ecological Restoration Team. Join our mission to restore integrity and extent of the globally imperiled pine rocklands and other south Florida ecosystems.

Email [ldutra@regionalconservation.org](mailto:ldutra@regionalconservation.org) with your resume to apply.



**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Victoria Preuss, Sabrina Carle, and Steve Sewell.

Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: Barbara McAdam, Maria Rowley, 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.

Consider supporting our efforts which 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. Click the button below.

If you're interested in being a sponsor of Natives For Your Neighborhood, please reach out to **Katherine Hardial**.

The Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society is a new NFYN sponsor and has a new online plant store.

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

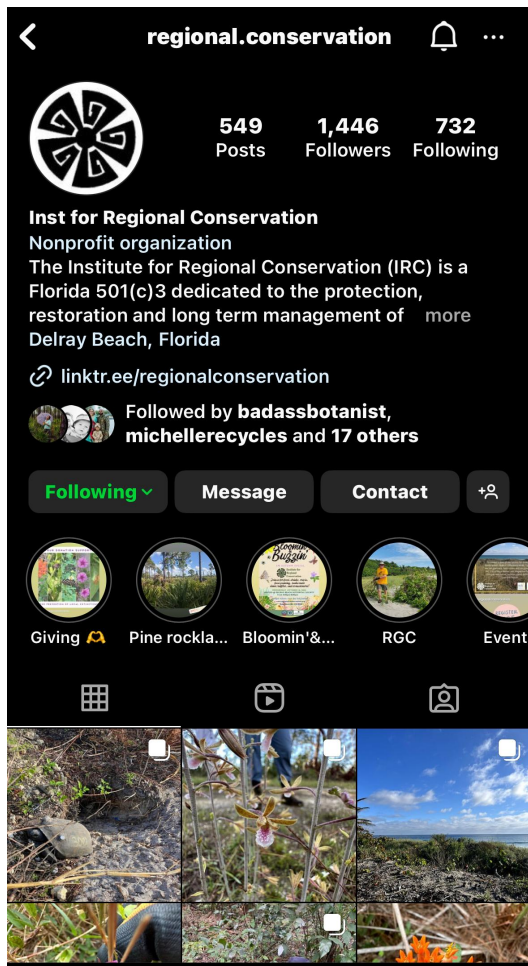


Beach-bean  
(*Canavalia rosea*)

PLEASE DONATE

Your donations empower us to enhance our free online resources, safeguard rare plants and animals, restore native ecosystems, and champion more effective public policies for conservation.

## Follow us on Social Media



The best way to stay up to date on all things IRC is to follow us on social media! Every week we spotlight native plants for "Wildflower Wednesday" and give a glimpse into one of our many unique projects from our "From the Field Friday" posts. You can also follow our socials where we share our event photos and lots of relevant information about the environment and beyond.

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.

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