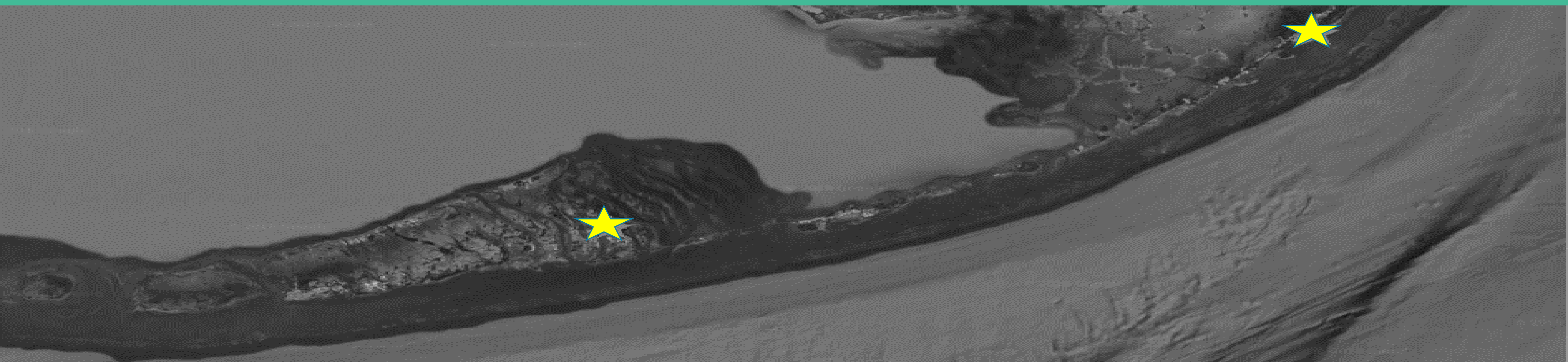




Institute for
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PINELAND CROTON, *CROTON LINEARIS*

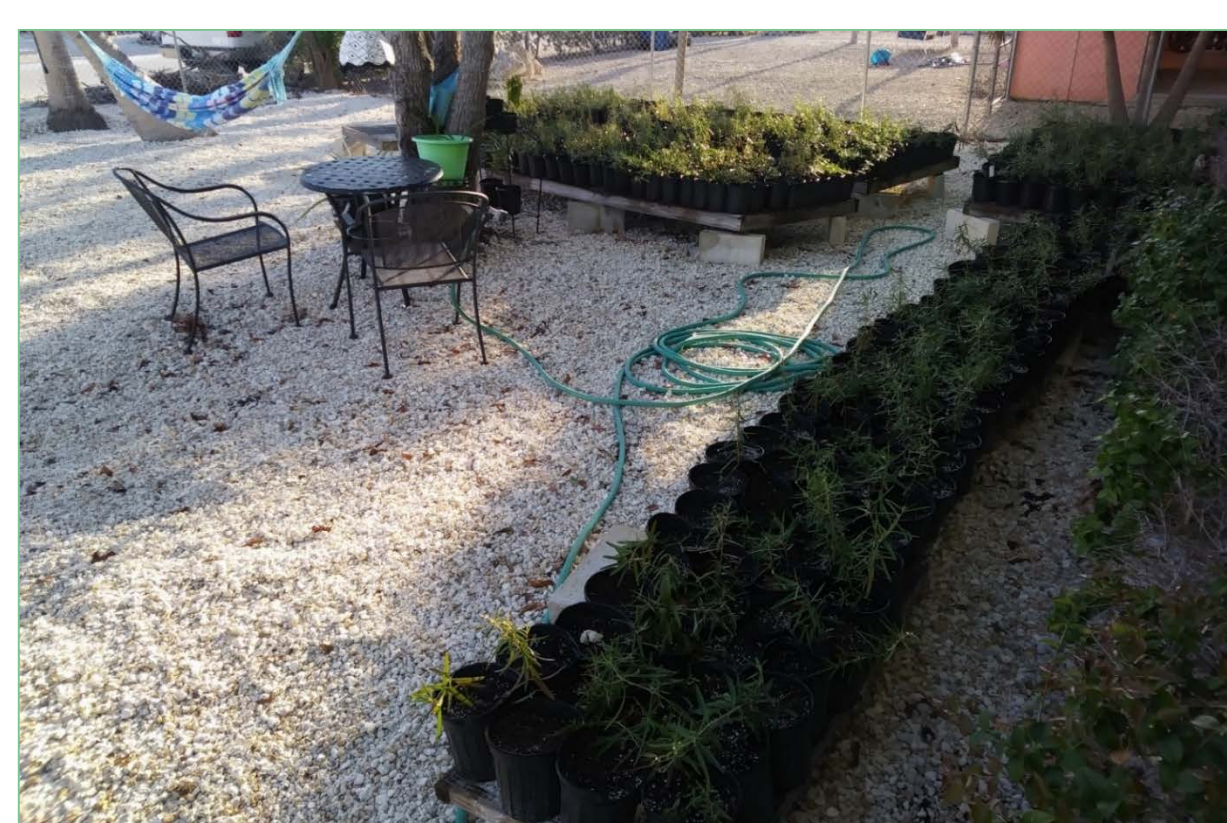
PROPAGATION AND PLANTING – NATIONAL KEY DEER REFUGE
THE INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL CONSERVATION, ALEXANDER BLOCHEL



This project is part of a multi-year U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Cooperative Recovery Initiative. Additional aid from Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park and Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge for the help on growing, watering, and caring for the Pineland Croton. This project is to prevent extinction of the Bartram's scrub-hairstreak and Florida leafwing butterflies in the lower Florida Keys. The goal of this project is to plant 6,000 Pineland Crotons throughout the National Key Deer Refuge on Big Pine Key.



This is Pineland Croton (*Croton linearis*). It is in the Spurge Family (Euphorbiaceae). It can be found from St. Lucie County to the Florida Keys, in Monroe County. It is also found in the Caribbean (Bahamas, Dominican Republic, etc.). (Above pictures: (A) Pineland Croton ready to be planted at top, (B) Seed Capsules, and (C) Seeds.



Storing and maintaining 860 Pineland Croton plants in my back yard in Key Largo. 700 of them have now been transported to Big Pine Key.

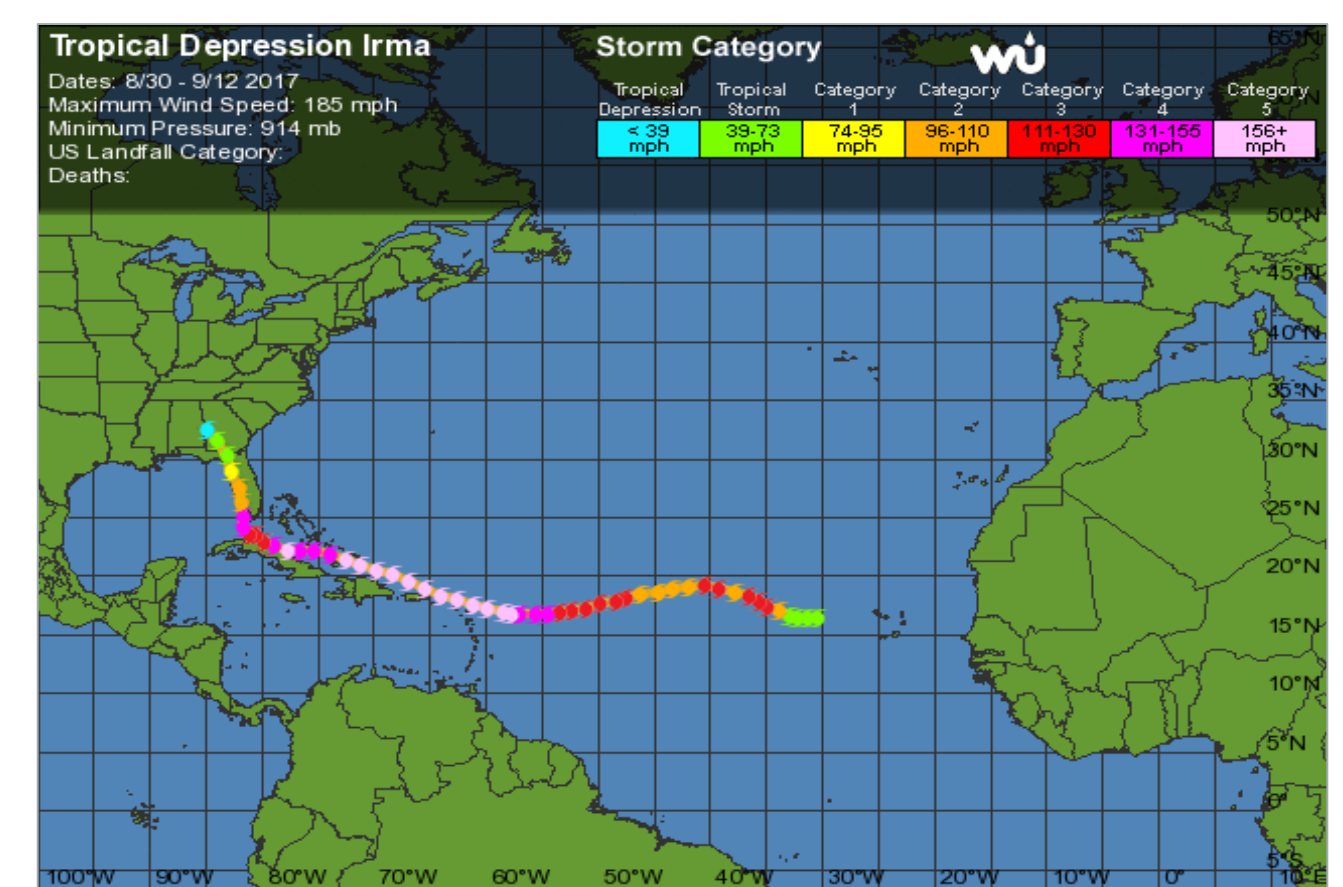
Planting 6,000 Pineland Crotons will benefit both the pine rockland flora and fauna.



But until the Pineland Croton plants are fully developed and well established, they need to be fenced-in to be protected from the Key Deer.



Pineland Croton are the sole larval host plant for the federally endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak (*Strymon acis bartrami*) butterfly in Florida. The butterflies lay their eggs on the flower stalks of the Pineland Croton.



Hurricane Irma, 2017, had a severe effect on previously planted Pineland Croton, killing over 140 plants due to storm surges, heavy winds, flooding, and fallen debris.



Currently the IRC field crew is drilling 700 holes for Pineland Croton plants that were propagated by Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park. The holes are made by using a rotary hammer drill and a portable power generator. These tools are used to prevent damaging surrounding vegetation. Plants will be watered by the NWR staff. In total, we have planted 636 Pineland Croton. 140 plants died from Hurricane Irma. We have 2,364 more left to plant. And 3,000 seeds that need to be dispersed.

