



## February 2022 Newsletter

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## Monthly Conservation Note

### The Dogs of War

In 2004, I attended my first [IUCN](#) World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, where I was Head of Delegation for the Society for Ecological Restoration. At the meeting of the members, representing more than 1,000 member organizations and countries, one thing really stuck out. Representatives from environmental organizations in Africa, the Middle East, and other conflict-prone areas of the world pleaded with the participants to take a stance against war and violence; the war in South Sudan was of particular concern then. Over the years, we continue to be reminded that conservation, restoration, and sustainability are not possible in a world of violence, whether that violence be state-sponsored, or caused by civil unrest, in the context of land grabs and illegal activities like poaching, or violence against women, children, and other vulnerable people.

The global community continues to work diligently, and much progress has been made, but the horrific details of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine remind us that

able to chart their own path in peace. And efforts to counter climate change and reach a sustainable future for our planet also depend on peace. But we know that standing by and doing nothing does not stop the violence. Actions matter. Like many, I have struggled with “What to do?”, “What actions can I take?” While the aggression of Russia must be rejected outright and countered with strength and determination, we must focus individually and as a society on hope and a better path forward, both globally and locally. We need to make our voices heard on issues affecting the wellbeing of both people and planet, from self-determination of the Ukrainian people, to violence and inequities in our local communities, to restoring healthy ecosystems and creating sustainable communities.

**George Gann**  
*Founder and Executive Director*

we have not evolved so much since World War II and the hot and very real violence, on both sides, of the so-called Cold War. Dictators and authoritarian governments still exist, violently enforcing their will and world view on their subjects. In the US, politicians and their supporters have let violence creep back into rhetoric, unleashing consequences both intended and unintended. War and violence are simply not acceptable means to political ends and take us backward toward the darkest parts of our past. The people of the Ukraine and around the world deserve to be



Every year, hundreds of people protecting land and the environment are killed or injured by violence.



**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Andrew Pompa, John Fitzpatrick, Robin Hammer, Timothy Phillips.

Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers**: Barbara McAdam and Valerie Seasholtz.

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



Photo of Oak Hairstreak by **Mary Keim**

## Key Tree Cactus Monitoring Begins

Earlier this month, IRC's Ecological Restoration Team Leader, Alex Seasholtz, joined Jennifer Possley, Lydia Cuni and Ray Morris from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden on Big Pine Key to monitor **Key Tree Cactus** (*Pilosocereus robinii*). They collected data on existing specimens of this critically imperiled cactus before habitat restoration work begins thanks to funding from The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program.



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## George Gann Receives CERP Certificate



George Gann is part of the latest cohort approved as a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP) through The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER). [The CERP program](#), which guarantees its practitioners meet a set of requirements including knowledge of restoration, field experience and understanding of restoration standards, is entering its 6th year and has practitioners from 18 countries.

## "Meet Our Team" Spotlight

### Welcome, Celeste!

IRC would like to welcome Celeste Boncompte, who has joined our Ecological Restoration Team! Celeste

Boncompte is a South Florida native and Florida International University graduate. She obtained her B.S. in Environmental Science as well as Natural & Applied Sciences, focusing mainly on botany and South Florida ecology. A passionate conservationist, she is very excited to have joined the IRC team and do her part in restoring Florida's endemic habitats.



## IRC Becomes CPC Network Partner



In February, IRC was approved as a network partner of the [Center for Plant Conservation](#) (CPC). CPC is a one-of-a-kind network of conservation partners that collaboratively work to save the imperiled plants of the United States throughout their native range. The President & CEO of CPC is Joyce Maschinski, a former board member of IRC.

## In Memory of Kathleen Brennan

We were saddened to learn of the recent passing of long-time supporter of and volunteer for IRC, Kathleen (Kay) Brennan. Kay was a joy to have volunteering in the office, often bringing donuts to share. We are thankful for the tremendous work she did on the butterfly pages in Natives For Your Neighborhood.



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](#)

