



# Institute for Regional Conservation

## February 2023 Newsletter

### In This Issue...

- Monthly Conservation Note - "Alignment"
- Upcoming Events
  - GardenFest Key West
  - TurtleFest 2023
  - Native Plant Day
- Thank You to Our Donors
- Meet Our Team Spotlight
- Pine Rockland Restoration in the Lower Keys
- Recent Events
  - IRC Strategic Planning Meeting
  - Let's Go Explore at Red Reef Park
  - Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day with Loggerhead Marinelife Center

[View as Webpage](#)

## Monthly Conservation Note

### Alignment

Next year will be IRC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it is hard to believe it has been that long since our founding. For any nonprofit it is hard to stay on track, to stay true to mission and not get distracted by shiny objects or fleeting opportunities. While it is true that we have wandered down many paths, one of the things we can take pride in is that we have stayed aligned with our original purpose – to seek a way to improve life for both nature and people. Alignment is not the same as strategy. It is more – it is having a shared vision, knowing everyone's role, and agreeing on a common course no matter where the path may lead. It also benefits from history and well as new energy and ideas; IRC is blessed with both.

grateful for all they have done and all they continue to do to support IRC and our vision of "Uniting people and nature to restore our world." Thank you, Robert and Donna!

George Gann  
*Founder and Executive Director*



IRC founders Donna Shore, Robert Heinzman,

and me in route to the Amazon rainforest, 1985.

Along with several staff members and local board members, we were fortunate to have Robert Heinzman and Donna Shore in person a few weeks ago in Delray Beach (see IRC Strategic Planning Meeting below). As IRC founders and long-time board members, Robert and Donna have participated in IRC's evolution since the beginning, and it was great to have them interact in person as they help IRC chart our path beyond 40 years. I am truly



Thirty-eight years later, in Delray Beach, following a tour of IRC restoration projects.

## Upcoming Events



### GardenFest Key West

Nature lovers can enjoy an exhibition and sale of rare plants, explore the unique Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden (a sponsor of IRC's Natives For Your Neighborhood) and discover fine arts and crafts during the 20th Annual "GardenFest Key West: The Green Market Place 2023", on Saturday, March 4. The event is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Garden, located at 5210 College Road. Admission is free. For more information, [click here](#).

### TurtleFest 2023

Join IRC at Loggerhead Marinelife Center's 18th Annual TurtleFest on Saturday, March 18, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Over 10,000 guests will join together at TurtleFest 2023 at the free-admission event in Jupiter which focuses on promoting ocean conservation through interactive educational exhibits and marine life, as well as music, art, shopping, games, and other family-friendly activities.

IRC's Coastal Biodiversity Restoration Technician, Kelly McLoughlin, will be giving a presentation about coastal conservation at TurtleFest.

For more information, [click here](#).





## Native Plant Day

Join IRC at the Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society's 25th Native Plant Day on Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This will be held at Elaine Gordon Enchanted Forest Park in North Miami.

This annual public outreach and education day will have activities for all ages: walks, programs, displays, plants and merchandise for sale, raffles and more.

For more information, [click here](#).



**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Michael Barry and Ann Rossman.

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) sponsors: **Miami Blue Chapter** of the North America Butterfly Association.

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



**Red-bellied woodpecker** (*Melanerpes carolinus*). Photo by Beryn Harty.

DONATE

## "Meet Our Team" Spotlight



### Welcome, Hector Reyes-Gaspar!

Hector Reyes-Gaspar joined our growing Ecological Restoration team this month. Before joining IRC he worked as a seasonal wildland firefighter for Everglades National Park. He has a great admiration for the diverse flora and fauna that call South Florida home. Additionally, he has a great interest in water activities and tropical fruit.

Hector is going to be a great addition to our Pine Rockland Initiative Program. Welcome to the team!

## Pine Rockland Restoration in the Lower Keys

This month, IRC Crew Leader Alex Crow and three of our field technicians traveled down to the lower keys to conduct ecological restoration work. The pinelands in the Lower Keys suffer from some of the same afflictions as those on the mainland such as irregular fire regime, hardwood encroachment, and invasive species.

IRC has been working on Big Pine and No Name Keys to reduce these threats and conserve rare species that call only these islands their homes including **Keys partridge-pea** (*Chamaecrista lineata* var. *keyensis*) and **Florida Keys deltoid spurge** (*Euphorbia deltoidea* subsp. *serpyllum*), which are both federally endangered.



IRC Field Technician, Celeste Boncompte, identifies Brazilian-pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) to target.



Typical hardwood encroachment in the Keys, dominated by Poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*).



The federally endangered Keys partridge-pea (*Chamaecrista lineata* var. *keyensis*).



## Recent Events

### IRC Strategic Planning Meeting

Earlier this month, IRC held a strategic planning meeting to evaluate our current programs and capacity and plan for future program growth and development. In attendance were six out of seven of IRC board members and several IRC staff. Two board members even flew in from Massachusetts and California to participate!

We would like to give a special thank you to Jennifer Possley from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden for joining our strategic planning meeting and Northern Trust bank for letting us use their beautiful meeting space in Delray Beach.

Stay tuned in the coming months as we continue to fulfill IRC's mission of conserving and restoring rare plants, animals and ecosystems in exciting new ways!



### "Let's Go Explore" Hike at Red Reef Park

IRC's Assistant Director of Programs, Cara



Abbott, and Coastal Biodiversity Restoration Technician, Kelly McLoughlin, co-led a "Let's Go Explore" hike at Red Reef Park in Boca with the Florida Wildflower Foundation's board member, CJ McCartney. Participants got to hear about the conservation work IRC is conducting at the site while learning about the unique plants that make up beach dunes and coastal strands.



Some highlights from the Let's Go Explore field trip included inkberry (*Scaevola plumieri*), sea lavender (*Tournefortia gnaphalodes*), beach clustervine (*Jacquemontia reclinata*), baycedar (*Suriana maritima*), yellow joyweed (*Alternanthera flavescens*), and 3 black racers!

For more photos, [click here](#) and [here](#).

---

## Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day with Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center

We are excited to share that our Restoring the Gold Coast (RGC) program is expanding into northern Palm Beach County! On Saturday, February 25, we held an ecological restoration volunteer day with Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center (LMC) staff and volunteers along the beach dunes adjacent to LMC (Juno Dunes Natural Area). We planted over 100 plants including sea-oats (*Uniola paniculata*), beach morningglory (*Ipomoea imperati*), inkberry (*Scaevola plumieri*), sea lavender (*Tournefortia gnaphalodes*), beach creeper (*Ernodea littoralis*), and beach ragweed (*Ambrosia hispida*).

Thank you to Neglected Plants, staff and volunteers from LMC, staff from PBC Environmental Resources Management, and staff from PBC Parks and Recreation. Also shout out to Roots n Shoots and Delray Beach Children's Garden for growing and supplying the beach ragweed we used at this planting event!



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



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: Cara Abbott

