



Institute for Regional Conservation

February 2025 Newsletter

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Conservation Note

Entry level destruction

I was a freshman, winding down my first year at the University of Colorado in Boulder, when I got a message to call my dad. The subsequent phone call changed my life. A few days earlier the Miami Riots of 1980 caused widespread property damage and among the casualties was our family tomato packing house in Perrine. My dad calmly explained that my parents' ability to pay for my college education was severely impacted. I needed to find a job that summer and immediately begin to make a much bigger financial contribution to my future.

My dad suggested I call the father of one of the kids in our Boy Scout troop, who worked at Everglades National Park, to see if they had any summer jobs. It turned out they did, and I ended up with a position of Park Aide in the Resources Management division. I worked out of the fire cache on Pine Island and spent most of the summer working on early restoration trials in the Hole-in-the-Donut. I learned all sorts of technical things about pine rocklands, invasive species, prescribed fire, equipment maintenance, and how the National Park Service (NPS) worked. But the most important thing I learned was about the incredible people that make up the NPS, and how dedicated, enthusiastic, and hardworking almost everyone was, but especially the seasonal and entry-level staff.



Prescribed burn in the residential area of Pine Island, Everglades National Park, 1981. Field crews, including prescribed burning and invasive species control teams, often comprise a high percentage of seasonal and other entry-level employees. Loss of these jobs will compromise the conservation and restoration of national heritage.

I had floundered my freshman year, but by the end of that summer I had a new plan, a plan that led me to the creation of IRC, my work with the Society for Ecological Restoration, and to this moment. Although I did not choose to work for the NPS, my experience over three summers had a profound positive impact on my life. For countless others, those first experiences led to a lifetime of public service within NPS, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service, and many other sister conservation-related agencies. And one thing I know from working in this space for 45 years is that none of these agencies has anywhere near the staff they need to effectively carry out their mandate.

No matter what your position is on the optimal size of the federal government, the mass firings of entry level employees and those making lateral moves between sister conservation agencies is indefensible and short-sighted. To be gleeful about it is cruel and immoral. The damage to the dreams and aspirations of thousands of individuals and their families is bad enough. But the long-term damage to our country and to our natural heritage is immeasurable. New employees, and the enthusiasm, love, and commitment that they bring are the lifeblood of our future. To cast them aside demonstrates the growing disconnect between political ideals and real life. For those of you impacted by the firings, our hearts go out to you. But please don't give up – we need you now more than ever.

George Gann
Founder & Executive Director

Upcoming Events


March 8th - Volunteer Event South Beach Park, Boca Raton

Join us for a volunteer day restoring South Beach Park in Boca Raton from 9am to 11am. We need your help to remove nonnative plants and install native plants to the beach dune system.

We look forward to continuing our restoration efforts at South Beach Park with continued support from the City of Boca Raton. Check our

event page periodically for updates and upcoming events.

[Click here for more details.](#)



ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION
Volunteer Day

Help Needed

MARCH 8TH
9AM - 11AM

SOUTH BEACH PARK
400 N. STATE ROAD A1A,
BOCA RATON, FL

Institute for
Regional
Conservation

CITY OF
Boca Raton
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

www.regionalconservation.org

Meet IRC at Native Plant Day Saturday, March 22nd

Join IRC at the Dade Chapter - Florida Native Plant Society's annual Native Plant Day on Saturday, March 22nd, at Castellow Hammock Preserve & Nature Center, in South Miami-Dade County. This FREE event is from 9am- 4pm. Come out and meet some IRC staff and learn more about our programs and ongoing restoration projects. See details of the event, including programs, walks, children's activities, plant sales, displays by environmental organizations, and more! Check out the website link [here](#) or the calendar. (link to calendar)



SAVE THE DATE

Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society
27TH ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT DAY
SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2025
9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Photo by Ray Schneider

Castellow Hammock Preserve & Nature Center
22301 SW 162nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33170

FREE Admission!
Join us for a variety of activities including:
Programs & Nature Walks • Plant Sales & Raffles • Children's Activities • Food Trucks
Artwork, Books & Other Merchandise • Displays by Local Organizations & Agencies

ANN NORTON SCULPTURE GARDENS | **Conservation CONVERSATIONS**
253 Barcelona Road, West Palm Beach, FL

Session Three: Water, Clean Water and Ecosystems
March 13, 2025 - 6 pm




Photo credit: Ralph Pace | Photo credit: Emily Noy

Implementing Novel Technology to benefit the Indian River Lagoon

The Nature Conservancy | **Greg Knecht**, Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy Florida

ALLIANCE PARTNER | MOUNTS BOTANICAL GARDEN OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

ANN NORTON SCULPTURE GARDENS | **Conservation CONVERSATIONS**
253 Barcelona Road, West Palm Beach, FL

This series focuses on critical conservation efforts aimed at restoring natural systems, particularly water and ecosystems. New this year are **Conservation Alliance Partners**—conservation groups working alongside various organizations with a shared commitment to conservation, education, and restoration.

Upcoming Sessions:

Session Four: Boots on the Ground
April 10, 2025 - 6 pm
Restoring biodiversity one neighborhood at a time
- George D. Gann, IRC
Local Habitat Restoration & Fisheries Research Partnerships
- Tom Twyford, Pres. WPB Fishing Club

ALLIANCE PARTNER | Florida Wildlife Federation Since 1938

Session Two: Water as a State of Sustainability
February 13, 2025 - 6 pm
ALLIANCE PARTNER | **CONSERVATION FLORIDA**

Session One: Everglades as a Harbinger
January 9, 2025 - 6 pm
ALLIANCE PARTNER | AUDUBON EVERGLADES

Photo credit: CI McCarney

Check out these interesting events coming up at Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens. Our very own George Gann is the guest speaker on April 10th at 6pm. See the flyer for more details or [click here](#).

Recent Events

Volunteer Day at Orchard View Park, Delray Beach

On February 15th, IRC along with support from the City of Delray Beach facilitated a volunteer event at Orchard View Park in Delray Beach. With over 20 volunteers, we were able to scatter throughout the park, removing different patches of invasive species.

In total we collected over 60 (55gallon) bags of invasive species, including Arrowhead, Snake plant, and Oysterplant. Thank you to our volunteers and the City of Delray Beach for their hard work and support! Stay tuned for more events in Delray Beach.



Native Plant Installation Volunteer Day at South Beach Park, Boca Raton

Ending on a high note, IRC on February 28th worked with volunteers to plant a variety of native plants at the beach dune along South Beach Park.

Volunteers learned how to install native plants such as Beach Jacquemontia, Beach verbena, and Inkberry. Installing native plants to the dunes enhances the biodiversity of our coastal ecosystems, building a more resilient dune against storms.

Volunteers also removed some nonnative Beach naupaka seedlings to protect the native plants that were installed from future invasion. This was our first event to kick off a series of events that will be happening at the Boca Raton beaches. Come join us at the next one!



Spotlight on our Newest NFYN Sponsor



We're excited to introduce [Natives of Corkscrew](#), one of Florida's premier providers of native plants, grasses, shrubs, and trees, serving the Fort Myers community since 2015. With a vast and diverse selection of native species, they are committed to helping you make the best choice for your native landscape projects!

In addition to their wide range of native plants, Natives of Corkscrew offers specialized services, including:

- FDEP Wetland & Upland Determinations
- Exotic Vegetation Removal & Maintenance
- Preserve & Lake Monitoring
- Gopher Tortoise & Burrowing Owl FWC Permitting
- Professional Mangrove Trimming

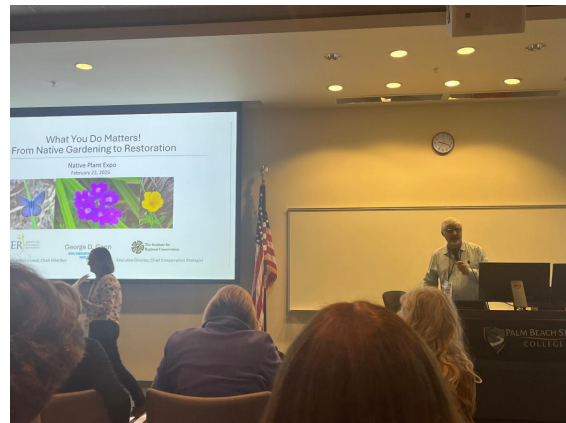
Interested in becoming a [Natives For Your Neighborhood](#) sponsor?
Please email our administrator, Katherine Hardial at khardial@regionalconservation.org for more information.



South Florida Native Plant Expo

hosted by the Palm Beach FNPS Chapter

On Saturday, February 22, over 200 people gathered at Palm Beach State College, Palm Beach Gardens, for the **first** South Florida Native Plant Expo, with George Gann as the keynote speaker. The Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society brought in twenty expert speakers who gave over thirty presentations throughout the day, ranging from biological controls of invasive species to underutilized native trees and native replacements for common tropical plants.



Hands-on sessions were popular in the campus nursery, including propagation techniques and learning how to distinguish between native and non-native cultivars. Tours of the established native garden were also an excellent way of showcasing native plants of South Florida.



Susan Lerner, Director of Horticulture with the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach Pan's Garden, discussed "HEDGES" and the importance of Pan's Garden, Florida's first all-native botanical garden. There were interesting talks across the board from experienced members, professionals, and advocates of our community who discussed native plants, wildlife, gardening, and more. Attendees traveled from as far as Sarasota, Indian River County, and Miami for this regional conference, and everyone was excited to learn throughout the day at this sold-out event.



Susan Lerner, Director of Horticulture, Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach Pan's Garden



Kayla Mosteller, Restoration Biodiversity Intern, Hosting IRC's Table at the event.



Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Sriram Narasimhan, Douglas Coupar, and Peter Grannis.

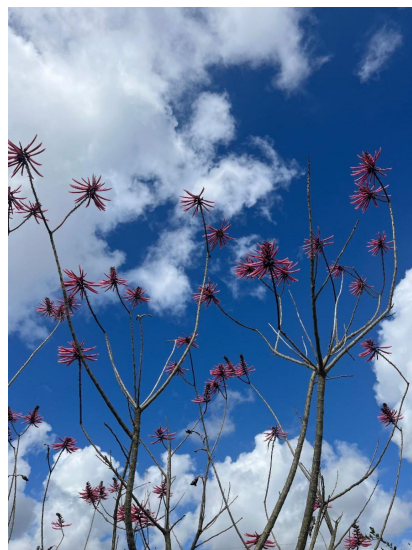
Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: John Campanola, Maria Rowley, Lindsay Boehner and Valerie Seasholtz.

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**.

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

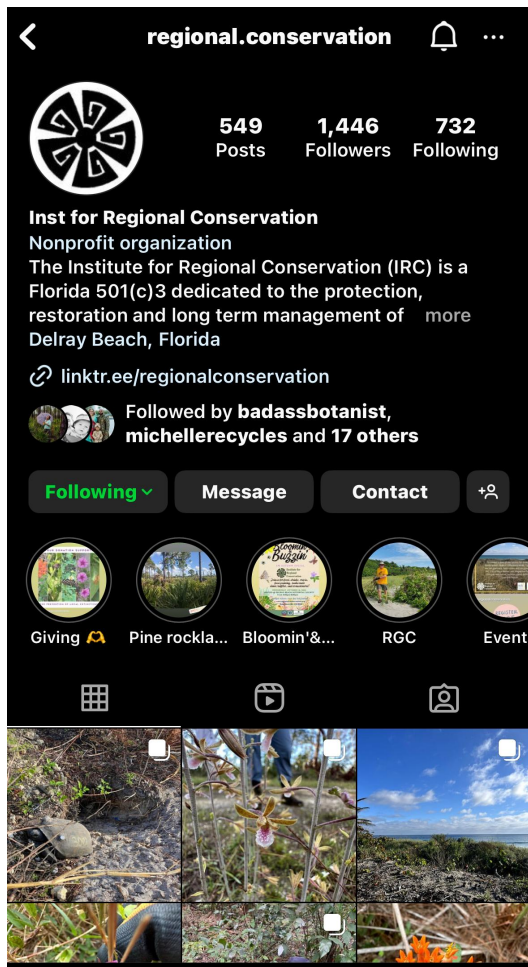


Coralbean
(*Erythrina herbacea*)

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.

The Institute for Regional Conservation | [Website](#)
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