



Institute for Regional Conservation

January 2024 Newsletter

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Monthly Conservation Note

40 years of community, conservation and restoration

IRC's programmatic aim to prevent local extinctions and help recover rare species and ecosystems is entirely dependent on our ability to focus on human experience, knowledge, interest, and resources. Over 40 years, IRC has engaged with hundreds of employees, collaborators, and donors. But unlike some organizations, it seems that the spirit of IRC stays with people long after their initial engagement has ended. I was reminded of this last week when I was in Brazil to help teach a Global Biodiversity Standard training course on behalf of the Society for Ecological Restoration.

Attendees came from 14 countries spanning five continents. One delegate, Gaby Orihuela, representing [Huarango Nature](#) in Peru, came up to me the first morning with a story she wanted to share. She lived in Miami in the 2000s and her first job in South Florida was working for IRC as a data entry technician for IRC's Floristic Inventory of South Florida. Although she went on to work at Fairchild Tropical



Gaby Orihuela and I at the Global Biodiversity training course in Brazil

This is the spirit of IRC in the world. We may look small, but we have a formidable community of supporters and ambassadors helping us achieve our mission – not just

Botanic Garden and ultimately back to Peru, her experience at IRC stuck with her over the years and she was excited to share that with me.

Before I left for Brazil, our IRC Associates team had our second formal meeting – 14 former employees and current collaborators who carry the IRC brand of conservation and restoration into the world from the Mexican Yucatan to the southeastern United States, to the Mediterranean Sea (see IRC associates section below). Other former IRC employees are now program officers for major conservation organizations that we collaborate with or engage with us as scientists representing government agencies and academia.

through our own direct actions, but through the organic actions of many. In turn, IRC helps these organizations and institutions to achieve their own goals. This is a legacy we can truly be proud of as we celebrate 40 years of work in conservation and restoration.

George Gann
Founder and Executive Director



Upcoming Events

February 10- Ecological Restoration Day at Red Reef Park

Event time: 9am-11am

Join us for a native installation planting day at Red Reef Park, Boca Raton. We will meet at the pavilion on the south end of the park. We will also give a brief overview about the importance of coastal ecosystem conservation. We hope to see you there.

You can sign up [here](#).

Restoring the Gold Coast Program
The Institute for Regional Conservation

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION VOLUNTEER DAY
With the City of Boca Raton

Help us install native plants & learn about coastal ecosystem conservation!

Where: Red Reef Park
1400 N Ocean Blvd,
Boca Raton, FL 33432

When: Saturday,
February 10th
9am-11am

Register at:
regionalconservation.org/ircs/Events.asp

We Need Help With:

- Installing native plants on the beach dunes.
- Mild debris clean up
- Invasive species removal

A confirmation email containing all the event details will be sent to all registered participants on the day prior to the event.

February 17-Ecological Restoration Volunteer Day at Atlantic Dunes Park

Event time: 9:30am - 12:30pm

Join us for a day focused on restoring ecosystem habitat at Atlantic Dunes Park, Delray Beach. We will meet at the entrance of the park. IRC will also give a brief overview about the importance of coastal ecosystem conservation. We hope to see you there.

You can sign up [here](#).



Restoring the Gold Coast Program
The Institute for Regional Conservation

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION VOLUNTEER DAY
With the City of Delray Beach
Help us remove invasive plants & learn about coastal ecosystem conservation!

Where: Atlantic Dunes Park
1605 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach, FL 33483
When: Saturday, February 17th from 9:30-12:30pm

Register at:
regionalconservation.org/ircs/Events.asp

A confirmation email containing all the event details will be sent to all registered participants on the day prior to the event.

Who are the IRC Associates?

Our Conservation and Research Associates are a critically important part of the IRC team. Most Associates have worked as staff members of IRC in the past, and choose to stay affiliated even after they pursue other professional opportunities. Other Associates have collaborated with IRC on conservation or research programs and have joined as Associates because they want to contribute to our mission. They assist in a variety of ways with our conservation programs, and bring a wealth of experience and skills our organization.

IRC Associates held their bi-annual meeting this month. Associates gave updates on their projects and discussed ways to collaborate on future IRC projects. The group intends to use their collective efforts and scientific expertise on a several projects involving ecological restoration strategies to mitigate climate change effects to protect native biodiversity and ecosystem function. Stay tuned for updates as this takes place!

Learn more about our IRC associates [here](#).



New IRC Associate- Welcome, Cara Abbott

We are thrilled to announce that our very own Cara Abbott is joining IRC associates! Cara previously served as IRC's Assistant Director of Programs & Education and Outreach Coordinator. Cara is passionate about conservation of marine ecosystems, Florida's native plants and pollinators, and helping



students of all ages learn about the world around them.

In 2023, Cara stepped down as Assistant Director to focus on homeschooling her two children. She currently works part time as a Science Educator with Saltwater Studies, teaches high school biology courses at a homeschool co-op in Boca Raton and volunteers with the Sea Turtle Conservation League of Singer Island.



Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Christopher Landsea, Amanda Treher, Gregorio Gonzalez, Judy Shaw, Maria Rowley, Robert Hattaway, Sharyn Ladner, Sriram Narasimhan, Theresa Strazisar

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

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.



East coast dune sunflower
(*Helianthus debilis*)

DONATE

From the Field:

Wildfire at one of our Pine Rockland Sites

One of our Pine Rockland restoration sites located at the US Coast Guard Station off SW 117th avenue recently had a wildfire where several acres of land were completely burned! You can read more about this wildfire [here](#). Although it wasn't a prescribed fire, it provided a wonderful opportunity for our crew to observe what happens to the plant communities post fire. Our ecological restoration crew is stoked as this wildfire has sped up our recovery plan by several years.

Pine Rockland species have adapted to periodic fires, and many species in this type of ecosystem are actually dependent on fire for their survival. In its natural state a Pine Rockland would typically see fire every 3 to 7 years, usually created by lightning strikes, however due to urbanization and habitat fragmentation fire disturbance has been much less frequent almost non-existent. Fire disturbance keeps overgrowth of plants in check and can release important nutrients that help plants to sprout and grow post fire.



Post fire at our Pine Rockland Site



Rockland spurge (*Euphorbia deltoidea*)
emerging post fire.

Fire plays a vital role in Pine Rockland ecosystems. Prescribed fire is the controlled application of fire by a team of experts under

specified weather conditions. Land managers and ecological restoration practitioners often use prescribed burns because they are incredibly important to many habitats, for many reasons!



Pine Rockland pre-fire



Field supervisor Melany Flint holding a fire intensity measuring device during fire effects monitoring data collection.

Our crew has been in the field working on collecting several fire effects monitoring data. The team is learning a great deal post-fire and is recording changes in species dynamics and fire effects at the work site. Check out some of neat photos from the field and stay tuned to learn more about the recovery of this Pine Rockland in west Miami- Dade County.

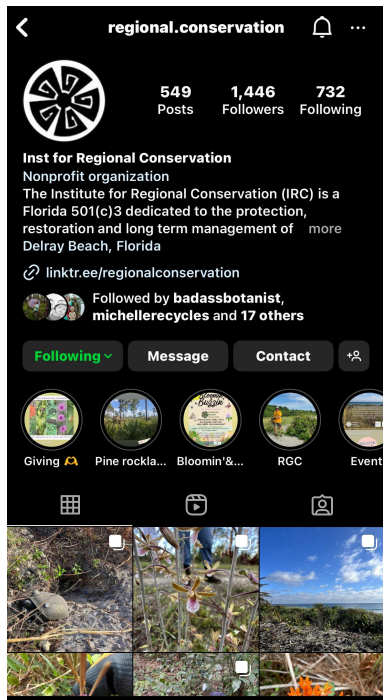
Photos by: Liz Dutra



Sabal palmetto



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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