



Institute for  
Regional  
Conservation

## January 2019 Newsletter

### Monthly Conservation Notes



Join us for our new monthly Conservation Notes, where we discuss topics important to our work. If you have ideas about topics you would like to see covered, please send us a note!

**Fire on the Ground!** With all the horrific wildfires occurring around the world, it is important to remember that we need more fire, not less, especially in the pine rocklands of South Florida, where IRC is actively working on several restoration projects.

Fire is a natural process, and without fire, biodiverse pine rocklands are overrun by hardwoods, both native and exotic.

Hardwood removal can be done by hand but is very expensive, and mechanical alternatives are being trialed, but neither are as effective as fire nor deliver other essential ecosystem processes, such as nutrient cycling and promotion of flowering.

### IRC to Launch *Restoring the Gold Coast* Program

*Restoring the Gold Coast* program is a two-pronged project that mobilizes partnerships in the South Florida community to teach children and adults about environmental advocacy and the importance of biodiverse coastal uplands, while participating in hands-on restoration activities. By then end of the 1970s almost the entire dune from Key Biscayne to West Palm Beach had eroded into the sea, and along with it most of the coastal biodiversity of southeastern Florida. While sandy beaches have been re-nourished, sea-oats have been planted and turtle nests protected, the vast diversity of coastal uplands has remained in a depleted state. *Restoring the Gold Coast* seeks to restore much of that lost diversity, through a cooperative effort with stakeholders, volunteers, and restoration experts. Ultimately, this project will take place in the historic Gold Coast barrier islands in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Over the past few months, IRC has worked to develop the conceptual framework for this initiative and prepare a \$100,000 proposal to Palm Beach County Impact 100, in hopes of gaining critical financial support for this project in southern Palm Beach County. We are grateful for the interest and letters of support from the community, including the Beach Property Owners' Association, City of Boca Raton, City of Delray Beach, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Gulfstream School, Keep Palm Beach County Beautiful, and Town of Briny Breezes. We also thank Jerry Lower of the Coastal Star, Bill Petry (see below), and Kimberlee Duke Marshall of

the Ocean Ridge Garden Club for helping us drum up interest and support. Please consider making a contribution to support this important effort, and wish us luck with our proposal to Impact 100!

**DONATE**



**Thanks to William Petry for his generous donation of stock at the end of 2018.** We are extremely grateful for his constant support of our work, from volunteering at multiple events at Atlantic Dunes Park, to this donation. Bill has also been instrumental in building support for our Restoring the Gold Coast initiative. Thanks to Bill, if you have appreciated stock, we are now set up to receive it.

By unanimous vote, the **Board of the Broward Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society voted to award IRC \$2,000 in unrestricted funds towards fulfilling our mission.** In a letter to George Gann, Richard Brownscombe, President, stated, "Given our small size, the gift is a statement of how much we value the work you and others at the Institute do." Thank you Broward County FNPS!

This year marks The Institute for Regional Conservation's 35th anniversary! Stay tuned for details in the near future regarding our 35th anniversary events.

## Recent IRC Events

### George Gann Presents to Two Boca Raton Garden Clubs

IRC's Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, presented to a joint meeting of the Silver Palm Garden Club and the Royal Poinciana Garden Club on January 23rd/ The topic was *Going Native!*

George discussed the history of IRC's work, including the Floristic Inventory of South Florida, Natives For Your Neighborhood, and the other free resources available on our website. He also went on to describe what is considered native and how anyone can *Go Native!*, by replacing common exotics in the garden with native plants. Thanks to the two garden clubs for making a donation to our mission. [Link to presentation.](#)



## IRC Hits the Road to Central Florida

George also presented to the **Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society** at Marie Selby Botanical Garden on January 21st about *The Promise (and some perils) of Ecological Restoration*, a version of a keynote lecture he gave to the Florida Native Plant Society last May. [Link to presentation.](#)

George also met with **Marie Selby Botanical Gardens** staff, including Vice President for Botany Bruce Holst, and CEO Jennifer Rominiecki, to discuss future collaborations. IRC and Selby first began conservation collaboration in 2004 during our Species of Management Concern project in Everglades National Park.



George Gann (Right) with Bruce Holst (Left) at Selby

## IRC Brings on New Crew Member

Recently, IRC has brought on a new field crew member to the team. Benjamin Durrington has a Master's degree in Ecology from Sorbonne Universite in Paris, France, has a love for plant macrophotography, and has experience with plant identification.

