



Institute for
Regional
Conservation

June 2019 Newsletter



Giant leather fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*), persisting in tiny remnant freshwater wetland at Ocean Ridge Hammock Park, Palm Beach County.

Monthly Conservation Notes

Join us for our 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!](#)

Neglected Diversity

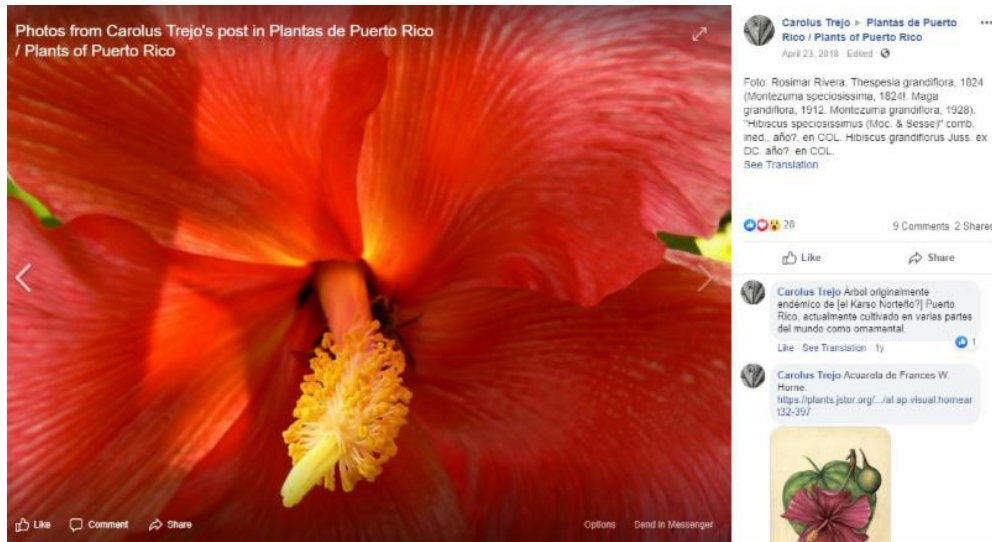
We've spent a bit of time lately talking about our Restoring the Gold Coast program, which aims to restore depleted biological diversity along southeastern Florida's coastal dune system. But a recent visit to Ocean Ridge Hammock Park reminded me that it's easy to forget about some of the rarest local ecosystems, where many native species persist in tiny pockets of remaining habitat. Along many barrier islands and in the Florida Keys, freshwater wetlands, including coastal interdunal swales and freshwater swamps, thrived on the freshwater lens that perched on top of the underlying seawater. These freshwater systems contained many native species like the giant leather fern (left), which we associate more with the great wetlands of the Everglades. But these rich freshwater wetlands added to the local coastal diversity, providing important habitat and resources for resident and migrating wildlife. This is why we have to take a landscape-scale approach to conservation and restoration, remembering to include these minor communities that otherwise get lost in the shuffle of project design, implementation and management.

This year marks The Institute for Regional Conservation's
35th anniversary!

Save The Dates!

IRC's 35th Anniversary celebration in Miami-Dade County will be on Sunday, October 27th at historic Simpson Park. Our celebration in Palm Beach County will be on Thursday,

Check out our Puerto Rico Facebook Page & Webpage!



For those who may not know, IRC also does conservation work in Puerto Rico! Our Executive Director and Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, along with Research Associate Carlos Trejo-Torres, Ph.D., manage the Plantas de Puerto Rico / Plants of Puerto Rico [botanical website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Like the Floristic Inventory of South Florida database online, the bilingual botanical website allows people to learn about the more than 3,500 vascular plants of Puerto Rico and contribute to their conservation. Of particular note, the botanical website offers preliminary conservation assessments for nearly 1,000 native species and a history of their conservation status among Puerto Rican, national and international organizations. With 4,000 members, the Facebook page offers a robust platform for users to post images, learn about, and discuss Puerto Rican plants of all kinds in a professionally moderated group. While this page is operated mostly in Spanish, nearly everyone using the page are bilingual, so don't be afraid to post in English. Thanks to Carlos Trejo for heading up the management of this Facebook group for the last four years!



A HUGE thank you to our recent donors for supporting IRC's Restoring the Gold Coast Program -

Thank you to our recent Natives For Your Neighborhood sponsor Kirsten Hines of [Kirsten Nature Travel!](#)

Mark Cudahy, Jerry Lower, and Kristine de Haseth!

Also, thank you to our recent donors for supporting IRC's program - Robert Heinzman, Danielle Romero, Susan Lerner, Dania Otero-Perez, Sabrina Carle, Lindsay Boehner, Mark Glasser, Elvira Velez, Elizabeth Judd, and Grant Kunkel!

Donations allow us to provide important resources for free to the public, landscape designers, and enthusiasts of native plants and native plant gardening. To check out our NFYN website, [click here.](#)

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Recent IRC Events



From left: George Gann; Angela Andrade, Chair, IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management; Jim Hallett, Chair of the Board, Society for Ecological Restoration. George represented both the Society for Ecological Restoration and IRC at two recent IUCN meetings.

George Gann attends IUCN meeting at National Zoo

This past week George Gann participated in two important meetings of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the National Zoo in Washington, DC. The first was the annual meeting of the IUCN United States National Committee, which brought together representatives from many of the more than 100 nonprofit and government members across the country. The second comprised the North American Regional Consultation for the IUCN 2021-2024 Programme in anticipation of the next World Conservation Congress in 2020 in Marseille, France. The IUCN Programme is a critical centerpiece of the international conservation agenda.

IRC jump starts Restoring the Gold Coast in the Town of Ocean Ridge!

While we have been communicating with many partners about our Restoring the Gold Coast Program, we wanted to take this opportunity to give a special shout out to the Town of Ocean Ridge community. On June 3rd, we conducted a rapid assessment of the dune supported by the Town and resident Kimberlee Duke Pompeo, followed by a luncheon with community leaders on June 20th. In attendance were representatives of the Town, Florida Coalition for Preservation,



Biodiverse beach managed by the Ocean Ridge

Ocean Ridge Garden Club, and Surfrider Foundation. The coming Monday, July 1st, George Gann will present a project overview and results of the rapid assessment to the Town Commission and residents. The commission meeting begins at 6:00 pm.

Garden Club at the southern end of Ocean Ridge, with a large patch of the now rare sea-lavender (*Tournefortia gnaphalodes*).

IRC hires an intern to help with the Pine Rockland Initiative!

Join us in welcoming our new Pine Rocklands Initiative Program intern, Isabel Marzullo, to the IRC team this summer!

Isabel is currently enrolled as a senior at Florida International University, pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies with emphasis on the natural resources component. She has volunteered in Costa Rica with La Tortuga Feliz, a sea turtle conservation program, and was a student in Dr. Hong Liu's restoration ecology class which completed a pine rockland workday with IRC in the spring.

We are excited to have her work with our field crew this summer to restore imperiled pine rockland habitat in Miami-Dade County!



Michelle Smith with volunteer at Big Pine Key for *Croton linearis* monitoring!

IRC Field Biologist, Michelle Smith, and volunteer, Kim Gabel, monitor *Croton linearis* for signs of herbivory from Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterflies on Big Pine Key!



IRC's crew members taking on new opportunities!

Left to right: crew member Louis Castillo has moved on to a new opportunity with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Division of Plant Industry in the Tampa Bay area, and our crew member, Benjamin Durrington has returned home to Fort Worth, Texas for the summer.

Everyone at IRC is grateful for their hard

work and dedication and wish them both the best in all future endeavors.



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

