



March 2021 Newsletter

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Monthly Conservation Note

Collaboration, Training and Discovery

It's easy to get siloed no matter our field of expertise or interest. While conservation and restoration require broad thinking coupled with highly specialized training, it's hard to put these things together in practice. But I wanted to share a recent experience that exemplifies how great conservation work can be accomplished, one step at a time. It starts with Jennifer Possley with Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, who had been mapping and monitoring rare plants at the U.S. Coast Guard Communications Station in the Richmond Pine Rocklands, Miami-Dade County, home to many rare plants and animals. Jennifer was concerned with spreading populations of invasive plants impacting rare species, a concern shared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). IRC has collaborated with FWS for decades, and Jennifer suggested IRC could help. IRC worked with FWS and the Coast Guard to secure funding and develop a plan, which included an Intra-Service Section 7 Evaluation, to ensure that our work benefited, not harmed, rare plants, the Miami tiger beetle, and the bonneted bat.

Our restoration crew began work in mid-

ecological restoration practice is that it makes us pay attention to everything on a site, which can lead to discoveries, even when highly qualified botanists have previously scoured the site. So it was with great excitement, but not a great surprise, when Alex discovered a new population of the federally endangered Florida Brickell-bush last week at the Coast Guard site. About a dozen days into work on about 20 acres of pine rockland, he found just 2 plants on the edge of a small open patch surrounded by saw palmettos. What a great combination of collaboration, training, and good old hard work. When Alex showed me the plants in the field last week, who was the first person I contacted? Jennifer Possley.

George Gann

Founder and Executive Director

February led by crew leader Alex Seasholtz, a [Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner in Training](#). He is a guru at invasive weed control and is becoming quite adept at pine rockland restoration. He is also a quick study when it comes to native plants and has rapidly assimilated field IDs for much of the pine rockland flora. One of the things about



A new discovery of the South Florida endemic Florida Brickell-bush (*Brickellia mosieri*)



Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs in the last month.

Anne Wilson & Douglas Thompson.

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

Thank you to our recent Natives for Your Neighborhood (NFYN) sponsor, [Florida Native Plant Nursery](#). This nursery is located in Sarasota that promotes native gardens and landscapes. They are open to the public and offer landscape consultations.

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.

DONATE

Program of the Month



October 19th, 2019 -
RGC Kick-Off Event at Delray Municipal Beach



July 13th, 2020 -
First Biodiversity Starter Kits Delivered



December 4th, 2020 -
Atlantic Dunes Park Planting Event

Restoring the Gold Coast

IRC's Restoring the Gold Coast (RGC) Program is a volunteer-driven initiative that aims to restore the incredible diversity of native plants and animals native to coastal beaches and dunes in southeastern Florida, along the historic Gold Coast from Miami-Dade to Palm Beach County.

In 2019, IRC was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the [Impact 100 Palm Beach County](#) to jumpstart this program. For almost two years, we have worked with 13 stakeholder groups and a total of 1,268 individuals on 39 restoration and educational events. These include volunteer events, continued restoration, presentations, and workshops. In this time, we have planted about 1,000 plants including 52 different species. We are ever so grateful to everyone who has made the start of this program an amazing and inspiring experience!

We will continue working with these groups while also building our network of volunteers. IRC is in the process of obtaining new funding to continue our work and hopefully expand from the dune system to the entire barrier island to include the shoreline on the Intracoastal waterway. We have also become an official affiliate of the Adopt a Dune Program. For information on Adopt a Dune Program, [click here](#).

Keep a lookout for upcoming restoration events, workshops, training videos on our [YouTube](#), and more on our website or Facebook page. If you are interested in contributing to this program, contact [Michelle Smith](#) for potential volunteer opportunities, purchasing one of our

Biodiversity Starter Kits, participating in Adopt a Dune, or sponsoring an upcoming event.

WELCOME BABY
ABBOTT #2!



CONNOR

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Congratulations to our very own Cara Abbott! We are excited to announce that baby boy number two has arrived on March 17th (St. Patrick's Day). His full name is Connor Rainn Abbott.

"Meet Our Team" Spotlight IRC Crew Members

Gabriel Caceres & Adam Newman

Gabriel Caceres and Adam Newman started as IRC restoration crew members at the end of December 2020, joining Alex Seasholtz (Restoration Crew Leader) and Donnie Faughnan (Restoration Crew Member) in their fieldwork mostly on Pine Rocklands.

Gabriel has had an interest in environmental science and nature since high school. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at UF. At IRC, he enjoys having the ability to practice habitat management and sound conservation efforts, all while enjoying the beauty that is the South Florida Pine Rocklands.

Originally from South Florida, Adam has watched the local natural lands disappear



Gabriel Caceres

over time. At IRC, he enjoys being part of helping the remaining pine rocklands so they can be preserved going forward. Adam received his Bachelor's Degree in Geography at FIU. He will be moving his restoration work to Tennessee. We wish him the best of luck in his next endeavor!



Adam Newman

Upcoming Event

- **Avery Pineland Volunteer Event - Saturday, April 17th:** Join IRC at George N. Avery Pineland in Princeton, Florida, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. We have room for 8 volunteers to join us. We are keeping numbers small for this event as we need to abide by the CDC COVID-19 guidelines. The event will be focused on removing non-native and invasive species and also trash pick up. For more information and to RSVP, [click here](#). Email [Michelle Smith](#) with any questions.

Recent Events & News

Native Plant Field Day

For this year's Native Plant Day, IRC led a field trip at Pine Shore Pineland Preserve in south Miami-Dade County as part of the Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society's (DCFNPS) Native Plant Field Day weekend.

IRC's restoration crew leader, Alex, and field biologist, Michelle, shared the ongoing restoration and collaboration efforts that have been going on at the preserve for several years now. We were able to find some great pine rockland plants in flower and saw so many Echo moth caterpillars munching on anything they could get their mouths on! Plants we saw in flower were Butterflyweed, Forked bluecurls, and Pricklypear. Thank you DCFNPS for putting together this weekend of field trips.





Congrats Donnie!

IRC's restoration crew member Donnie Faughnan recently passed his Florida Pesticide Certification Exam. We are so proud of this accomplishment.

Talk at Ocean Ridge Garden Club

IRC's George Gann gave a talk to our friends at Ocean Ridge Garden Club (ORGC) on *The Institute for Regional Conservation - Conservation and Gardening in a Changing World*. George discussed the importance of native plant gardening and how it can contribute to the restoration of our environment.

"The Institute for Regional Conservation
Conservation and Gardening in a Changing World"

Ocean Ridge Garden Club
March 8, 2021



George D. Gann
www.regionalconservation.org
www.ser.org



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

