



March 2020 Newsletter

Monthly Conservation Notes

Staying Focused On Our Children's World

All over the world, humanity is deeply immersed in the daily challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impacts are truly tragic, from loss of life and declining human health to the collapse of local and global economies. One thing that this crisis should make crystal clear, though, is that the world is now and forevermore inextricably linked.

For those of us working on the front lines of sustainability, we know that we must have healthy societies, healthy economies, and a healthy environment. If any of those fail, then the others suffer. In this case, we have two of the three legs of the sustainability stool collapsing at the same time. The concern is that serious damage to the third leg, the environment, may be following already. If that happens then we are in for an even bigger world of trouble.

Our job, as conservationists, ecological restoration practitioners, citizen scientists, students, researchers, and government employees, is to stay focused on the long game, the ultimate prize, worldwide sustainability. A sustainable world is what we hope our children and their children will inherit. It will be a world worth living in.

There is no question that it is difficult to concentrate on seemingly nebulous concepts like sustainability now, while we worry about how we will pay next month's mortgage, how to keep ourselves and our loved ones from catching the virus, and

There is more than ample evidence that protecting and restoring the environment makes good business sense, and can be quite profitable. But financial markets are currently set to a very short time scale responding to a very real crisis. In today's hyper-volatile markets, it can be timed in minutes or hours, not the years or decades needed to properly evaluate the performance of sustainable businesses. But those markets are important to human wellbeing - their performance has a real effect on many people's retirement plans, mine included. And that makes us nervous.

Whatever happens, though, we need to focus on the simple fact that, if we sacrifice the environment in our rush to rebuild the economy, we will sacrifice the economy of the future, along with the healthy societies and environments needed for human wellbeing and prosperity. This is why we need to push for a "restorative economy" not a "destruction economy" moving forward. Either can make us a living, at least for a time, but only one will give us a future we will be proud to pass along to our children.

In Summary

All of this makes our work at IRC more relevant than ever. So please consider helping in any way you can, from making a donation, to planning how you can add more native plants and butterflies to your garden one the crisis has past. Every little thing we do along the continuum of restorative activities moves us in the right direction, and that is something we should all celebrate.

George Gann

how we will keep from going crazy from physical isolation. We will get through this but, at the end of the day, how we get through it really matters.

The risk is that in the rush to repair the economy we will forget hard lessons learned and forgo decades of work to protect and restore the environment. But the climate and extinction crises will not go away. They will hammer away at us until we pay attention again. And so much time and energy will have been lost.



Recovery after COVID-19 will require us to work together to forge a new economy. Let's make it a restorative economy!

DONATE



Thank you to all those who have supported IRC over the last year. We genuinely need and appreciate all of your donations, volunteer time, citizen science reports, and other contributions. We know times are tight, but please consider giving whatever you can to help us survive these difficult times and thrive in the future!

Donations allow us to provide important free resources to the public, land managers, scientists, landscape designers, and enthusiasts of native plants and native plant gardening.

Thank you to our most recent Natives For Your Neighborhood sponsor, [Green Thumb, Inc.](#), which specializes in native plant and tropical landscape design, installation, and maintenance.

To check out our Natives For Your Neighborhood website, [click here](#).

IRC also has an E-Trade account, so please contact us about giving gifts of stock.

IRC Events Update

As many of you were probably aware, we had a full schedule of activities including public volunteer days, talks at libraries, table displays at festivals, and fundraisers planned for this Spring. However, in light of recent recommendations related to the corona virus, all events are currently postponed or cancelled.

Specifically, we have postponed the public volunteer days coming up at Oceanfront Park in Boynton Beach on April 4th and at Atlantic Dunes Park in Delray Beach on April 18th. As soon as we have new dates selected for these events, we will let everyone know.

Also, stay tuned for possible Facebook Live or free virtual workshops on our new Biodiversity Starter Kits as part of our Restoring the Gold Coast program and other interesting information about native plants.

We hope you all stay healthy and safe during this time and that you will join us when these get rescheduled! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Don't forget to check the IRC calendar in coming weeks for volunteer events as they start to come back online.

IRC Biodiversity Starter Kits



Support IRC's Restoring the Gold Coast program by purchasing a Biodiversity Starter Kit for coastal gardens. We are very excited to kick off this new feature for Spring 2020 to help promote biodiversity along the southern Palm Beach County coast. And don't worry, these are for beginners and pro gardeners alike!

Each kit will come with five hand-selected native plants perfect for coastal habitats, from the pioneer dune to coastal gardens that attract butterflies. This is a service to facilitate the restoration of our coastal ecosystems through the efficient distribution of native plants to coastal landowners. For more information or to order a starter kit, [click here](#).

Things We Can Do During The Crazyness

- Get outside and enjoy the outdoors to the extent that is practical and safe. Spend time in your garden documenting native plants and wildlife, including birds,

butterflies and other insects. Post these observations on one of many Facebook Group pages that are relevant (e.g., Florida Native Gardening, Florida Native Bees, Tropical Audubon Bird Board), or on iNaturalist. Give a shout out to IRC and our online resources where appropriate. Send an email to irc@regionalconservation.org and let us know where you have posted.

- Go online and browse Natives For Your Neighborhood for plants to add to your garden once the rains start and restrictions are lifted. Look for missing information or corrections that are needed. Let us know what you find. We have been adding data for ZIP codes north to Indian River west to Manatee counties. If you live in those counties, review our lists and see if they make sense for your ZIP code. We have also added data for beach dunes and coastal strand on the east coast all the way to the Georgia border; we need reviewers for those data too. Contribute information and images for species we are adding for central and northern Florida.
- Go to the Floristic Inventory of South Florida and pick a conservation area that you sometimes visit. Review the plant list and look for plants new to you so that you can try and find them next time you go there. If you have photo vouchers of plants from conservation areas that we are missing, post them on iNaturalist and send us the link so that we can create a reference and add them to the database.
- Check out our Plantas de la Isla de Puerto Rico/ Plants of the Island of Puerto Rico website. Look for plants common to South Florida and Puerto Rico, or if you live in Puerto Rico, look for species missing images. If you have posted good ones on the Plants en Puerto Rico/ Plants in Puerto Rico Facebook page, send us links.
- All of our websites share the same images. If you have some good ones for any species in need, send us images, or links to posts you have made on Facebook or iNaturalist. Make sure to give us permission in writing to use your images. Send to irc@regionalconservation.org.
- Above all, stay in touch with your friends and colleagues, get some exercise, learn more about how we can restore nature and ourselves, and be safe!

Recent IRC Activities

IRC Lecture at Florida International University

In early March, IRC's Chief Conservation Strategist, George Gann, gave two lectures for Dr. Hong Liu's upper level restoration ecology class at FIU's main campus in Miami. The first lecture covered the *International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration*. The second lecture was titled *Restoring Globally Imperiled Pine Rocklands: To Protect We Must Restore*. This gave students exposure to ecological restoration at two very different scales, and



demonstrated how the two are connected.

Volunteer Event at Florida City Preserve



IRC's crew leader, Alex Seasholtz, and field biologist, Michelle Smith, along with Kirk Linaje, Biologist II, of [Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program \(EEL\)](#), hosted a pine rockland restoration event as part of our Pine Rockland Initiative Program this month.

Thank you to all of our volunteers for coming out for this event. And a special thank you to Miami-Dade EEL staff and Natural Areas Management (NAM) staff for their collaboration.

Restoring the Gold Coast Event with Sea Turtle Adventures

In late February, IRC had the privilege of working with [Sea Turtle Adventure's](#) iCare Nature Club and students from St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic School at Gulfstream Park. Participants got to enjoy a beautiful morning on the beach while helping us restore native coastal biodiversity and doing a beach clean up.

Thank you Jackie Kingston of Sea Turtle Adventures for coordinating this event with us! We really enjoyed working with your wonderful nature club. Thank you PBC Parks and Recreation for your help in preparing the site for this planting event, for Steve's amazing help during the event and for letting us work in your beautiful park! And thank you to [Impact 100 Palm Beach County](#) for being our primary sponsor for the event!



We are a nonprofit conservation organization exempt from taxes under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3.