



## March 2022 Newsletter

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## Monthly Conservation Note

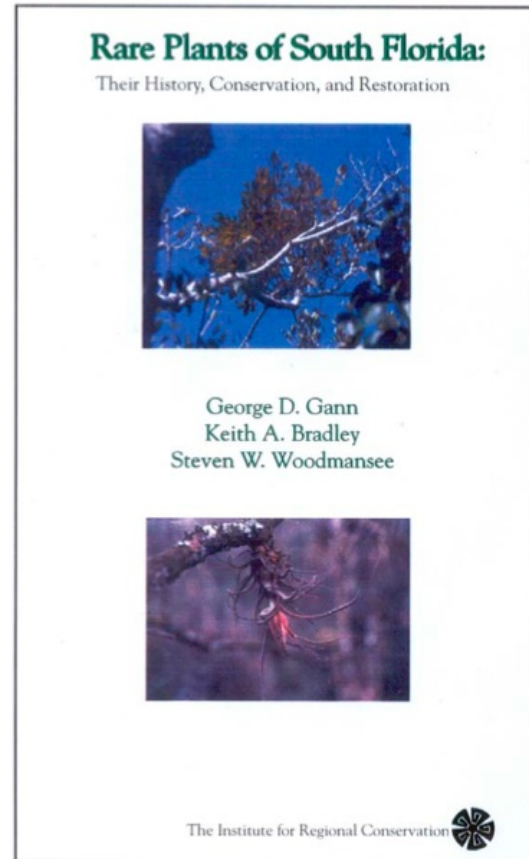
### What Happened to South Florida's Rarest Plants? A 20-year Review

Twenty years ago this month, IRC released [Rare Plants of South Florida](#), which I had the honor of authoring along with Keith Bradley and Steve Woodmansee. This book, produced after an intensive seven years of work by IRC and dozens of collaborators, documented the status of the rarest 25% of the native plants in South Florida, including more than 100 that were possibly extinct in the region. The release of Rare Plants of South Florida was followed by a series of land manager workshops, and then an explosion of plant survey and study work in the region by IRC and many others. IRC's rare plant ranks developed for the book were incorporated into the [Floristic Inventory of South Florida](#) and have been used as the basis for rare plant monitoring and restoration work in Miami-Dade County, Everglades National Park, and elsewhere. Many species thought lost from the region were rediscovered but, sadly, many were not. Other species have been newly discovered or recognized and described as new species.

of reviewing and reporting on the status of the rarest native plants in South Florida. To assist in this effort, the [National Parks Conservation Association](#) is partnering with IRC to provide support for a part time **Biodiversity Conservation Intern**, to work with me and our team through the end of the year. Please stay tuned for more news about this effort and consider making a donation to support this critically important work.

**George Gann**  
*Founder and Executive Director*

What has changed over the past 20 years? We certainly know a lot more, but what has happened to the rarest species in the South Florida flora? Have they recovered to some degree, or have they continued to decline? How do national parks and other protected areas help conserve regionally rare biodiversity? Beginning this month, we are excited to announce that IRC, together with many collaborators, will begin the process



**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Kimberlee Duke Pompeo for our Restoring the Gold Coast program, Victoria Preuss, Cindy Dwyer, and George Weyand.

Thank you to monthly donor and IRC Associate Steve Green, and our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: Barbara McAdam and Valerie Seasholtz.

Thank you to our recent Natives For Your Neighborhood (NFYN) Emergent sponsors! **Sustainscape** is a sustainable landscaping service in

decor in Lake Worth Beach. IRC Associate **Kirsten Hines** offers an illustrated practical guide to planting in South Florida to attract and benefit birds.

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

South Florida focused on native plants, water conservation, and non-toxic fertilization practices. [Amelia's Smarty Plants](#) is a garden center that offers native plants, pots, and garden



Photo of Mangrove Skipper  
by Beryn Harty

## IRC Receives Grant from Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties



IRC's Restoring the Gold Coast program has received significant new funding to restore native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems along the Palm Beach County coastline thanks to a \$40,000 Community Revitalization grant from the [Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties](#).

New this year will be an expanded geographic and thematic scope, as we will be able to work in northern Palm Beach County, as well as along the Intracoastal, increasing our ability to restore biodiversity and respond to sea level rise and climate change.

[DONATE](#)

## IRC Receives Community Impact Grant from New York Life

Thank you to [New York Life](#) for the \$10,000 Community Impact Grant which supports IRC's [Restoring the Gold Coast](#) program. Together, we can help restore native coastal biodiversity in Palm Beach County!

The Community Impact Grant program awards

grants of up to \$25,000 to local nonprofit organizations, which are championed by New York Life agents and employees. Since the program's inception in 2008, nearly 750 grants totaling more than \$10 million have been awarded to nonprofits across the country.



## FIU Field Trip to Pine Shore Preserve



IRC Field Technicians George Guillen and Alex Crow explaining to students how Saw palmetto thinning is done to give room to native grasses and herbaceous plants.

IRC had the privilege of taking Dr. Hong Liu's FIU Restoration Ecology class on a field trip to Pine Shore Preserve in Miami-Dade County as part of our Pine Rockland Initiative. We always look forward to this opportunity to inspire future restoration practitioners. In fact, all three of our current field technicians (Celeste Boncompte, Alex Crow, and George Guillen) were students in Dr. Liu's Restoration Ecology class while they were at FIU.

Students were given a tour of the pine rockland where they learned about what makes this habitat so unique and what techniques IRC is using to restore the site. Then, students were put to work removing invasive species.

For more photos, [click here](#).

## Meet Our Team Spotlight

### Welcome Back, Michelle!

Michelle Smith joined IRC in 2018 as a Field Biologist. She assisted in many aspects of the Pine Rockland Initiative Program, contributed logistics for the Restoring the Gold Coast Program, and helped with volunteer events. She became a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner In-Training (CERPIT) through the Society for Ecological Restoration in 2020. In June 2021 Michelle explored an opportunity to work for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Now as of



March 2022 she is back helping IRC share important program related information on social media.

Michelle is a native south Floridian. She graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's in Environmental Studies and Biology and a minor in Chemistry. Her botanical experience ranges from the Florida panhandle to central and south Florida, the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, and the high-desert sagebrush steppe in eastern Oregon. She is recently a Certified Wetland Evaluator (CWE) from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

We're glad to have you back, Michelle!

## Upcoming Events: Earth Day



Earth Day 2022 is coming up on Friday, April 22 with the theme "Invest In Our Planet"! We encourage you to look for special events happening in your area and get involved.

IRC is honored to be participating in an [Earth Day celebration](#) held by City of Boynton Beach on Saturday, April 23. We will be there with giveaways and brochures alongside many great organizations in our community.

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

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

