



May 2022 Newsletter

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Monthly Conservation Note

The Right Tools

Down in Miami-Dade County, nothing can drive us crazier than seeing heavy machinery running amok in a remnant pine rockland. First, it usually means eminent destruction, or at least another senseless violation that almost never results in a good outcome. Second, for decades we trained ourselves to think that pine rocklands are fragile (and in some ways they are!), and that once disturbed they could never be restored. But sometimes, we can use heavy machinery to do good things in pine rocklands. When we heard about the US Fish and Wildlife Service using a skid steer to do hardwood reduction in the National Key Deer Refuge we were skeptical. But then they asked us to go down there and help them out. So we did,

and we learned some things, like heavy machines are way more effective than chainsaws in some heavily degraded areas suffering from decades of fire suppression, like on parts of No Name Key. And that there is a lot of broken up limestone within what otherwise looks like intact pine rocklands. So we brought a skid steer to a restoration project adjacent to Homestead Air Reserve Base and had some really encouraging results. Now we are deploying heavy machines in Florida City to kick-start pine rockland restoration in an area long thought to be a "lost cause". Read more about this exciting effort just below.

George Gann
Founder and Executive Director



Early machine in Redland pine rockland.



Skid steer in pine rockland on Big Pine Key.

Florida City Pineland Preserve Restoration in 2022

We are excited to announce that we have initiated new, massive restoration work on 9.2 acres within Florida City Pineland Preserve as part of our Pine Rockland Initiative. This preserve is a roughly 24-acre site owned and managed by Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program, which has provided the funding for this restoration work.

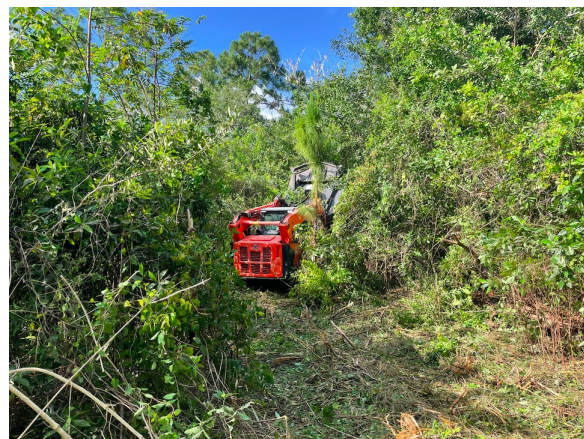
Numerous federally and state listed endangered and threatened species have been recorded for this preserve, including the federally endangered Small's milkpea (*Galactia smallii*) and federally threatened Pineland deltoid spurge (*Euphorbia deltoidea* subsp. *pinetorum*) and Everglades bully (*Sideroxylon reclinatum* subsp. *austrofloridense*). Additionally, the endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterfly (*Strymon acis bartrami*) has been observed in close proximity at the Navy Wells Pineland Preserve.

Currently, our efforts are focused on the mechanical removal of Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebithifolius*) which has completely overtaken the eastern edge of the preserve. We are using a skid steer to clear nonnative, invasive hardwood trees. In another area of the preserve, we are decreasing native hardwood plant cover to restore the forest understory, an important component, where many of our endangered species thrive.

Join us at our upcoming [volunteer day](#) on June 11th at Florida City Pineland to see for yourself! Information on the volunteer day is found under "Volunteer Opportunities" at the bottom of this newsletter.



Left to Right: Tim Joyner (Miami-Dade County), Jorge



Mechanical clearing in action at Florida City



Before mechanical clearing of Brazilian-pepper at Florida City Pineland.



After mechanical clearing of Brazilian-pepper at Florida City Pineland.



Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Janice Duquesnel, Mish Tworkowski, Arlene Ferris, and Rada Azizi

Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: Barbara McAdam and Valerie Seasholtz.

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

While we get funding for some great projects, those funds rarely cover all of our costs, so we really do need your support to continue our important work.

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.



[Pearl crescent](#). Photo by CJ McCartney.

DONATE

"Meet Our Team" Spotlight

Welcome, Dr. Lauren Trotta!

We are excited to announce that Lauren B. Trotta, PhD, has joined IRC as a Biodiversity Conservation Fellow thanks to support from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

In this role, Dr. Trotta will facilitate the effort to conduct a 20-year review of the IRC's Rare Plants of South Florida, a treatise on the status of South Florida's rarest plants published in 2002. 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.

Originally from Connecticut, Lauren earned her BS in Biology from Providence College in Providence, RI before moving to Gainesville, FL, where she earned her MSc and PhD in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida. Lauren's previous research experience focused on understanding the drivers of floristic diversity in Miami-Dade's urban pine rockland habitat fragments. She is excited to continue contributing to rare plant conservation in this role with the IRC.



Grow With Us



GROW WITH US!
Now Hiring!

FIELD TECHNICIAN

Our Ecological Restoration Team is growing! We are looking to hire two additional field technicians to work on our Pine Rockland Initiative in Miami-Dade County. This is an entry level position, perfect for recent graduates or others looking to gain field experience while learning how to restore this important, imperiled habitat.

Those interested should email a copy of their resume or CV with a letter of interest to dbhatt@regionalconservation.org

**Institute for
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Conservation**

We are a nonprofit organization focused on conservation here in South Florida. You are a passionate field technician who wants to make an impact on local ecosystems that need our help. Together we can accomplish huge restoration efforts on imperiled ecosystems! If you're looking for an exciting new opportunity, check out our [job posting here](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking forward to participating in **Make A Difference (MAD) Week** again this year! This is an annual week-long event with a GLOBAL IMPACT hosted by the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER). SER is a global non-profit organization that works to advance the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate, and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.

We have "MAD Week" volunteer opportunities in both Miami-Dade County and Palm Beach County on Saturday, June 11. See more information on each below!

"MAD Week" at Florida City Pineland in Miami-Dade County

Join IRC at Florida City Pineland Preserve on **Saturday, June 11 from 9am to 12pm** for a restoration volunteer day! We need your help removing non-native and invasive plants from this critically imperiled habitat. Get involved and actually see huge restoration efforts take place before your eyes at this ~24 acre pine rockland preserve.

For more information and to register, visit [VolunteerMatch](https://www.volunteermatch.com).



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IT'S MAD WEEK!

DATE: June, 11th 2022
LOCATION: Florida City Pineland Preserve
TIME: 9AM - 12 PM
RSVP: Register on VolunteerMatch.com

This event is part of the Society for Ecological Restoration's Make A Difference Week. Together we can give back, learn more, and do good. Help IRC and MDC remove non-native, invasive plants and trash from this preserve.

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UNITED STATES ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2021-2030

"MAD Week" at South Beach Park in Boca Raton in Palm Beach County

Join IRC and the City of Boca Raton on **Saturday, June 11 from 9am to 12pm** for a restoration volunteer day at the beautiful South Beach Park in Boca Raton! Volunteers will help us remove non-native plants from the dunes and pick up trash along the beach.

For more information and to register, visit [VolunteerMatch](https://www.volunteermatch.com).



Get involved

DATE: June, 11th 2022
LOCATION: South Beach Park, Boca Raton
TIME: 9AM - 12 PM
RSVP: Register on VolunteerMatch.com

This event is part of the Society for Ecological Restoration's Make A Difference Week. Together we can give back, learn more, and do good. Help IRC, City of Boca Raton, and Neglected Plants to remove non-native, invasive plants and trash from this beach.

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Recent Events

IRC's Ecological Restoration Team Leader, Alex Seasholtz, was a pallbearer in the "Going Home" performance art piece event by **Nick Gilmore** held at Everglades National Park. The performance honored



the journey of a 16-foot floor beam cut from a Dade County pine, which was salvaged 100 years later as the home where it was used was demolished. IRC was honored to be a part of this unique, symbolic event.

IRC's Executive Director, George Gann, was a featured speaker for "River of Grass & Beyond: Exploring the Biodiversity of Everglades National Park". He joined Michelle Collier of Everglades National Park and Cara Capp of National Park Conservation Association to discuss and celebrate the abundant biodiversity of Everglades National Park.

To watch a recording of the webinar, [click here](#).

Plant Biodiversity of Everglades National Park
May 25, 2022

George D. Gann
Founder and Chief Conservation Strategist
The Institute for Regional Conservation
www.regionalconservation.org

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