



Institute for Regional Conservation

November 2023 Newsletter

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Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Barbara Levy, David Beale, Maria Dutra, and Lisa Young.

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

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.

If you're interested in our NFYN sponsorships, reach out to [Michelle Smith](#).

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

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.



Cardinal Jumping Spider. Photo by Joel Otero

DONATE

Give Miami Day - THANK YOU

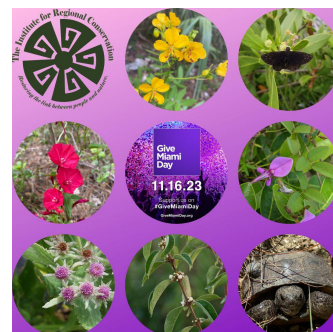
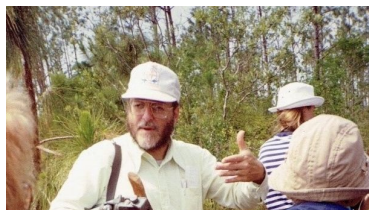
Give Miami Day is one of the nation's biggest 24-hour annual giving events. Thank you to each and every one of you for taking the time to contribute to our organization and our **Pine Rockland Initiative Program**. Thank you to those who had donated in In Memory of Chuck McCartney and a special thanks to Patty Phares (IRC's Board of Director) who set up the Campaign Fundraiser page for us!

Your donation allows us to continue our restoration and conservation efforts.

This year, we raised \$3,960 and *not* including the match or bonuses!

We are very grateful for all of you!

Thank you for your ongoing support. Together, we can work to restore this important habitat and help the many federally listed plants and animals that call Pine Rockland home.



Giving Tuesday - THANK YOU

Gratitude to all those who generously

contributed on Giving Tuesday! The donated funds will be channeled directly into our diverse programs, which, in turn, have a direct impact on supporting our communities. These funds will aid us in eradicating nonnative, invasive species to create space for native ones, enabling us to educate the public on optimal practices, and facilitating the restoration of habitats for numerous endangered and threatened plants, among other crucial initiatives.

Our gratitude extends to each and every one of you, not only during the holiday season but every day throughout the year. Your support is indispensable, and we recognize that we cannot achieve any of our goals without YOU!



From the Field

Interesting Finds with Steven Green, IRC Associate

Steven Green is an IRC Associate and an ecologist Mitigation Resources L.L.C. based in Clermont, FL. He is sharing a two-part series about the northern portion of the Everglades.

Part 1: Everglades Headwaters

This is the first in a two-part series that will cover the Everglades Headwaters and the interesting flora contained within.

When most people think of the Everglades, they picture expanses of marl prairies and sawgrass marshes interspersed with tree islands and pine rockland ridges floating in a seemingly unending sheet of slow-moving water. Marjorie Stoneman Douglas's *River of Grass*. South Floridians surely know that the Everglades terminate at Florida Bay, but have you ever wondered where all that water originates? The upper reaches of the Everglades cover over 3,000 square miles and begin in urbanized metropolitan Orlando. The northern drainage basin limits are roughly demarcated by State Road 50 at the nosebleed-inducing heights of 120'-140' above sea level. Bounded by the Lake Wales Ridge to the west and the Orlando Ridge to the east, rainwater and stormwater runoff make their way into two main creek systems: Reedy Creek on the west side through the



southwestern suburbs and Walt Disney World, and Shingle Creek on the east side through southern Orlando.

Second-Growth Cypress in Reedy Creek Swamp

Reedy Creek and Shingle Creek, with their numerous smaller tributaries, form the headwaters of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and Kissimmee River, which drain into Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades, as most people know them. These two creek systems form expansive basin swamps intermixed with mesic hammocks and pine flatwoods. These basin swamp systems are dominated by pond and bald cypress (*Taxodium ascendens* and *T. distichum*), though as the name “Shingle Creek” would imply, much of the merchantable cypress was logged out decades ago and used as shingles for roofs. Today, hardwood trees including swamp tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* var. *biflora*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and American elm (*Ulmus americana*) are more common components. Some second-growth cypress trees remain, spared on account of their lightning-hollowed innards making for poor quality lumber. Understory vegetation is variable and tied directly to hydroperiod. Wetter portions of these swamp systems contain common emergent species such as alligator flag (*Thalia geniculata*) and pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), while areas where inundation is less frequent contain a wide array of wetland grasses, sedges, and forbs.

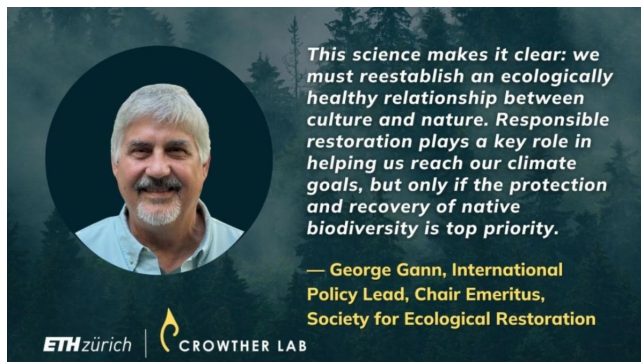
In Part 2 of this series, I will share some of the interesting botanical finds I have made working in these swamps over the past 15 years.

Photos by Steven Green.



Reedy Creek Swamp

Published in Nature journal



George Gann, IRC Executive Director, was part of this crucial paper published in Nature, "Integrated global assessment of the natural forest carbon potential". The paper explores the potential of natural forests to capture carbon and mitigate climate change. The study emphasizes the significance of safeguarding and rejuvenating

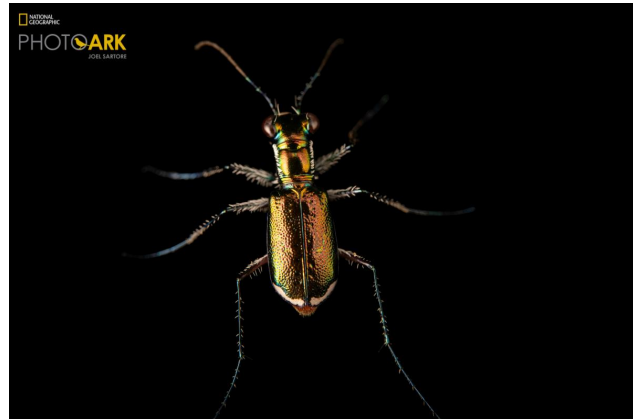
the planet's native forests, points out the unsuitability of transforming grasslands and other native ecosystems into forests, and underscores the roles of Indigenous communities and local populations in shaping restoration choices that have global

implications.

To read the paper, [click here](#).

National Geographic Photo Ark documents its 15,000th species

We are thrilled to share this news from National Geographic Society! National Geographic Explorer and Photo Ark founder Joel Sartore announced that he has photographed the project's 15,000th species: the endangered Miami Tiger Beetle. IRC's Executive Director George Gann received the National Geographic Photo Ark Species Impact



Initiative Grant in April of this year. We have been working to conserve the Miami Tiger Beetle with the grant and in collaboration with other organizations. Miami Tiger Beetles only live in the pine rockland habitats of south Florida. Thank you, National Geographic Society and Joel Sartore, for all you've done to help spread the awareness through photography to help conserve this beautiful beetle, and to push for protection on of biodiversity. [Click here to read more](#).

Photo by Sartore/National Geographic Photo Ark.



Recent Events

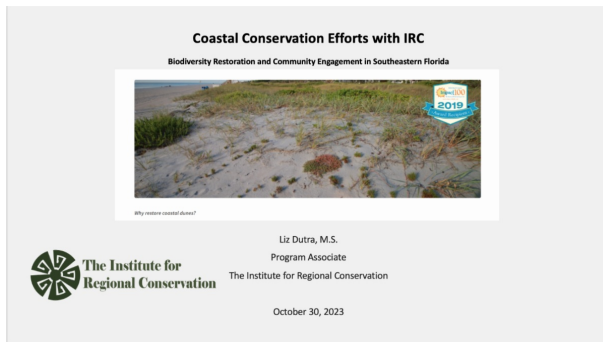
Science and Peace Day Event

Hosted by the Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, the event took place at the Hattie Bauer Hammock Preserve on November 11th.



This event was an environmental education forum that we were happy to be a part of. It offered an interactive experience where attendees could learn more about different organizations at each outreach table, and earn a stamp for their "passports". In addition, they removed debris from tree branches and trunks that had been previously cut down, removed nonnative and invasive plants around native plants that have been previously installed. Some of the nonnative plants removed include **pothos**, **deviltree**, and **Australian umbrellatree**. And staff from the county led a tour through the preserve highlighting the history of the preserve. Check out more photos from the event here: [Science and Peace Day Event at Hattie Bauer Hammock Preserve FB album](#).

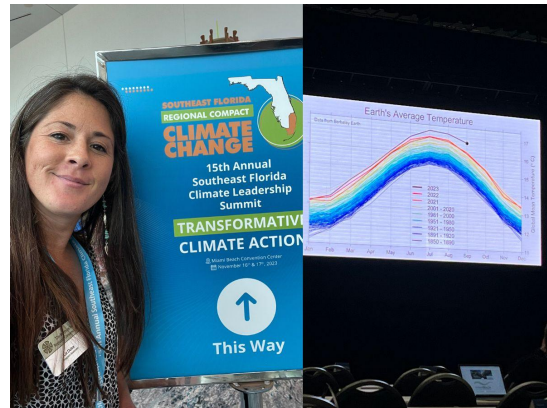
Florida Master Naturalist Class



Liz Dutra, IRC's Program Associate, was a panelist for the Florida Master Naturalist Class on Coastal Conservation. Liz gave a presentation on IRC's conservation efforts with our **Restoring the Gold Coast Program**. Some of the organizations that participated were SeaGrant, South Florida Water Management District, and Reef Institute.

15th Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit

Liz Dutra, IRC's Program Associate, attended the 15th Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit on November 16th at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami Beach, FL. The event was of high importance as attendees from all over the South Florida were invited to hear from local and state governments as well as experts in the field of climate change. Several sessions included: State of the Climate, Critical Role of Insurance in Building More Resilient, Equitable Communities, Its Electric: Conversation on electric strategies, and Negotiating Resilience: Partnering with the Private Sector. To learn more about the conference **[click here](#)**.



Follow us on Social Media

The best way to stay up to date on all things IRC is to follow us on social media! Every week we spotlight native plants for "Wildflower Wednesday" and give a glimpse into one of our many unique projects from our "From the Field Friday" posts. You can also follow our socials where we share about our event photos and lots of relevant **information** about the **environment** and beyond.

So, if you haven't already, follow us on **[Instagram](#)**, **[Facebook](#)** and **[LinkedIn](#)**!



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