



Institute for Regional Conservation

November 2025 Newsletter

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Conservation Note Belém and The Long Game

For those of you keeping tabs on the 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) earlier this month, you've heard of the city of Belém, Brazil. The city is now symbolic of the effort to elevate the importance of tropical forests, Indigenous Peoples, and the protection and restoration of biodiversity in the climate agenda. As with all Climate COPs, it was only partly successful, politically, and the media seemed more focused than anything on the challenges of hosting a massive event full of white-collar delegates in the middle of the Amazon, including torrential rain, oppressive heat, and an accidental fire breaking out in the high-level Blue Zone. Instructions from the Brazilian government included, "Don't wear a suit!"

Belém is also an important part of the origin story of IRC. Forty years ago, IRC founders Robert Heinzman, Donna Shore, and I, together with four colleagues, were in Belém as part of our founding Amazonas '85 Expedition – we were all in our early to mid-twenties. Our team met with Darrell Posey, an American ethnobotanist based in Belém at the Emilio Goeldi Museum. Darrell was already well-known for his work with the Kayapó and other Indigenous groups in the eastern Amazon. In February 1988, IRC held a high-level meeting at Florida International University in Miami: Tropical Forests – Strategies for Wise Management, and we invited Darrell to attend. Darrell saw an opportunity and asked if we could fund and facilitate the participation of two young Kayapó chiefs, Paulinho Paiakan and Kube-I Kayapó. The rest is history, literally.

With support from delegates of the Environmental Defense Fund and National Wildlife Federation, Darrell, Paiakan, and Kube-I traveled from Miami to Washington D.C., where the two Kayapó testified to officials at the World Bank and U.S. Treasury Department, among others. The result was the indefinite postponement of \$500 million in loans to construct hydroelectric dams that would have flooded Kayapó territory. The Brazilian government was furious, and Darrell was fired from his post, arrested, and threatened with imprisonment and expulsion. Both Kayapó were harassed by the Brazilian government and others with interests in developing the Amazon. Later that year the Brazilian rubber tapper and rainforest activist

Chico Mendes was assassinated by a cattle rancher in Acre, in the southwestern Amazon. I had met him just months before as he traveled through Miami to Washington, D.C., also to testify on behalf of the Brazilian rainforest.



Darrell and Paiakan at Florida International University, 1988



IRC Founders on the Transamazonian Highway, 1985

So much has changed yet so much remains the same. Violence against nature and nature activists continues around the world. Legal harassment and censorship are normalized or increasing in many countries, including the United States. But on a positive note, global institutions like the World Bank and many national governments have indeed changed and serious money is beginning to flow away from destruction toward the protection and restoration of nature. An estimated 3,000 Indigenous leaders from around the world were present at COP30 in Belém, which resulted in increased commitments to formalize and secure land tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The voices of Youth, Women, and other previously unheard groups are being heard now more than ever.

Forty years ago was a moment in time, when society began to really think about its impact on people and ecosystems around the world. It resulted in the Earth Summit of 1992 and the three Rio Conventions on climate, biodiversity, and land degradation. Today is another moment in

time, when we reflect on what our planet and our lives will be like in the future. We must aspire to something better than what we see now, to recover the lost abundance of nature and to empower young people, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities to have dominion over their own lives and their own futures. It is the longest game; it never ends but is always full of opportunity. To all of you who have supported us and collaborated with us along our circuitous path since 1985, thank you.

George Gann
Founder, Executive Director

Upcoming Event This Saturday!



The poster for Beach Dune Restoration Day features a collage of images: a person planting a seedling, a group of people working on a dune, and a wide view of the beach. The text on the poster includes the YPAD logo, the event title, date, time, location, and contact information.

ypad
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION OF DELRAY

Beach Dune Restoration Day

Join Us!
Saturday **December 6**
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

400 S Ocean Blvd.
North section, cross street Laing St.
Delray Beach, FL 33483

RSVP encouraged. Questions? Contact:
ldutra@regionalconservation.org

Logos for the following organizations are displayed at the bottom: Delray Beach, YPAD, Institute for Regional Conservation, Blue Flag, and Delray Beach.

Join us for a Beach Dune Restoration Day this Saturday, December 6th at 9am.

IRC is excited to partner with YPAD which stands for the [Young Professionals Association of Delray Beach](#). This local group will be joining us for a hands-on Restoring the Gold Coast event at Delray Public Beach. All are welcome to join in the fun!

We need your help to restore native beach biodiversity by planting native species and removing overgrown seagrasses that threaten the federally endangered Beach Jacquemontia — where the largest remaining population in Palm Beach County!

No experience is needed — just bring your enthusiasm! Wear comfortable outdoor clothing, closed-toe shoes, and a hat, and don't forget a reusable water bottle. We'll provide all tools, gloves, and materials.

Bring a friend and be part of protecting our coastal ecosystem!

RSVP encouraged. For questions, contact ldutra@regionalconservation.org

To register for the [event click here](#).

Give Miami Day a Success!



The Institute for
Regional Conservation

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
DONATION



We would like to give a special thanks to our Give Miami Day donors. Because of the numerous threats the Pine Rocklands face and IRC is operating without federal support we once heavily relied on, **your donation means more than ever.** Our team feels both energized and deeply grateful especially

Your support directly restores essential ecological processes, such as fire. It aids in protecting the last remaining fragments of this rare ecosystem throughout Miami-Dade County and beyond.

You didn't just donate — **you chose to take action for one of the most endangered habitats in Florida.** And thanks to The Miami Foundation's bonus pool, your contribution went even further.

Together, we are restoring landscapes, preventing local extinctions, and giving future generations a pine rockland ecosystem that they can still experience for generations to come.

From all of us at The Institute for Regional Conservation,
thank you for believing in this mission and helping keep it alive.



Recent Events

Kelly Williams and Andrew Forsyth BioBlitz



Left to right: Mindi Ogden, Liz Dutra,
George Gann, Susan Lerner, Keith Buttry

An informative cocktail party on the evening of November 13, 2025 at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach launched the Kelly Williams and Andrew Forsyth BioBlitz. This event brought together the foundation's members and supporters for an evening of drinks, conversation, and early reflections on the community science initiative.

A few days later the BioBlitz was held on November 16, 2025 at Midtown Beach in Palm Beach. Where community members were invited to join Foundation staff and local naturalists in an early-morning survey of the island's coastal ecosystems. Participants of all ages used citizen-science tools such as iNaturalist and eBird to document plants, birds, and other wildlife along



Volunteers using tools to BioBlitz the dune at Midtown Beach, Palm Beach

the shoreline, contributing valuable biodiversity data to global conservation databases.

This second BioBlitz builds on an earlier community survey in March 2025 held at Phipps Ocean Park which the first of its kind under. A BioBlitz can establish an ecological baseline and in this case ahead of the Phipps Ocean Park's planned restoration and redevelopment.

Through these participatory efforts, the Foundation aims to map and monitor native species over time, inform future restoration work, and foster public engagement in safeguarding Palm Beach's natural coastal habitats.



Thank you to all who have supported IRC's programs with a \$20 or larger donation in the last month: Mary Rose.

Special thank you to our board member Bill Petry and Patty Phares for their recent donations.

Thank you to our **Monthly Sustainers** who donate \$25 or more each month: John Campanola, James Duncan, Maria Rowley, Lindsay Bohner and Valerie Seasholtz.

A special thank you to all our event sponsors and ticket purchasers!

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.

Consider supporting our efforts which allow us to provide important conservation services such as improving our free online resources, increasing protection of rare plants and animals, restoring native

If you're interested in being a sponsor of Natives For Your Neighborhood, please reach out to [Stacy Brown](#).

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



[Butterfly milkweed](#)
[\(Asclepias tuberosa\)](#)

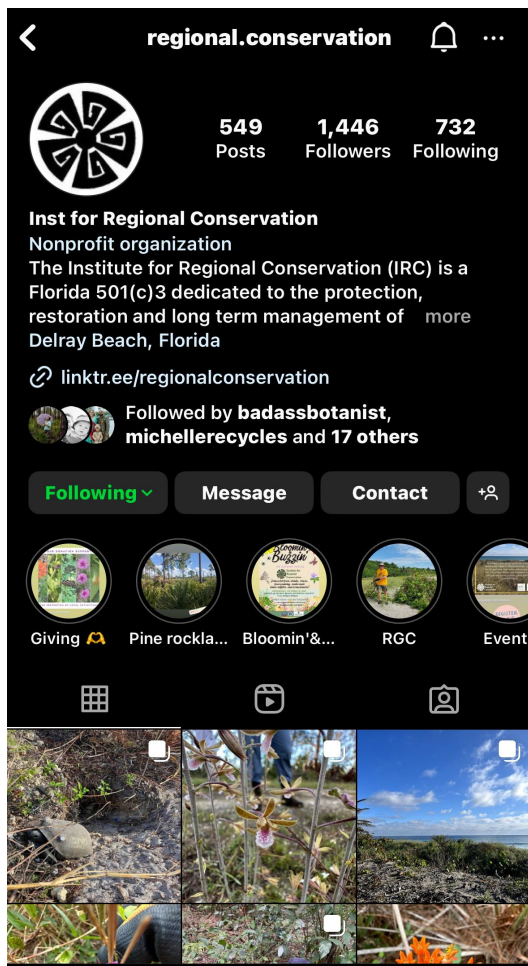
Photo credit: Michael Kohner

ecosystems, and advocating for better public policy. Click the button below.

PLEASE DONATE

Your donations empower us to enhance our free online resources, safeguard rare plants and animals, restore native ecosystems, and champion more effective public policies for conservation.

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 our event photos and lots of relevant information about the environment and beyond.

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

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](#)
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