



Institute for  
Regional  
Conservation

## September 2020 Newsletter

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### Monthly Conservation Note

#### Celebrating IRC's Role in the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

Next year will mark the beginning of the 2021-2030 **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**. Earlier this month, I was able to attend the online global launch of the official Strategy, which I had had the opportunity to comment on in my capacity as International Policy Lead for the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), one of IRC's key partners. We were excited to see that the **International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration**, which was produced by SER, IRC, and SER-Australasia, was the very first document cited in the official **Strategy**.

This is a huge honor, to know that this critical guidance document will be used to help steer the Decade. Published just one year ago this month, the International Standards has already been cited more than 50 times in peer-reviewed literature, downloaded more than 10,000 times, is in

the top 5 downloaded documents in the history of the journal *Restoration Ecology*, and is ranked in the top 5% of all research outputs globally scored by Altmetric. We are amazed, and proud of our contribution.

Join us by jumping into the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration! The Decade is organized to encourage restorative activities by everyone, of all walks of life, all over the world. Consider partnering with us on this critical endeavor, which resonates with so many of our programs, from Restoring the Gold Coast, to the Pine Rockland Initiative and Natives For Your Neighborhood.

We look forward to your ideas!

**George Gann**

*Founder and Executive Director*



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON  
**ECOSYSTEM  
RESTORATION**  
2021-2030





**Thank you** to all who have supported IRC's programs in the last month.

The Katz Family Foundation, Central Park Taekwondo, and Barbara Lange.

Thank you to the **North American Butterfly Association's Miami Blue Chapter (Miami Blue NABA)** for sponsoring Natives For Your Neighborhood. NABA Miami Blue is a nonprofit organization that focuses on the conservation of butterflies through

activities such as butterfly gardening, educational presentations, and conservation advocacy

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.

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

**DONATE**

## Restoring the Gold Coast Update



This September, IRC was able to hold two small scale volunteer days as part of our Restoring the Gold Coast program.

On Tuesday September 22, we worked with the City of Boynton Beach and the Surfrider Foundation to restore native biodiversity in the dunes of Oceanfront Park. Thank you to **Impact 100 PBC** and the **Palm Beach County Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation** for sponsoring this event! For photos from this planting, [click here](#).

On Saturday September 26, we continued our restoration efforts at Atlantic Dunes





Park in Delray Beach. Participants helped us remove invasive species and plants natives in areas where invasive species had been removed. Thank you to [Erin Deady Law](#) and [Central Park Taekwondo](#) for sponsoring these restoration activities! For photos from this event, [click here](#).

Pictured are planting events at Oceanfront Park (top) and at Atlantic Dunes Park (bottom).



## Pine Rockland Initiative Update

Since 2012, IRC has been conducting restoration activities on the US Department of Defense SOCSOUTH facility, adjacent to the Homestead Air Reserve Base. This work focuses on restoring pine rockland habitat for two federally endangered plants, Small's milkpea ([\*Galactia smallii\*](#)) and sand flax ([\*Linum arenicola\*](#)). Currently, we are winding down major work on the control of invasive plants, including Category I and II [FLEPPC](#) species, and reducing native hardwood cover that has exploded in the absence of fire. We are planting small islands of pine rockland species that are depleted or absent at the site, including saw palmetto ([\*Serenoa repens\*](#)), Krug's holly ([\*Ilex krugiana\*](#)), and coralbean ([\*Erythrina herbacea\*](#)), conducting conservation mowing as a fire surrogate in areas where native pine rockland groundcover has recovered, and conducting direct seeding trials for pine rockland grasses and wildflowers. The restoration of this site is key to gaining an understanding of how to restore severely degraded pine rocklands, and pine rocklands where the substrate has been completely destroyed. We are excited by our results, and want to thank Alex Seasholtz, Donnie Faughnan, and Christian Bartell for their excellent work over the last year.

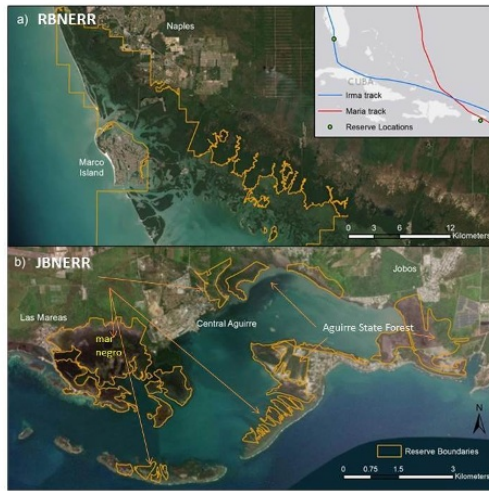


Pictured: conservation mowing (top); outplants of new native plants (middle); direct seed trial plot (bottom).



# A Collaborative Project Between Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

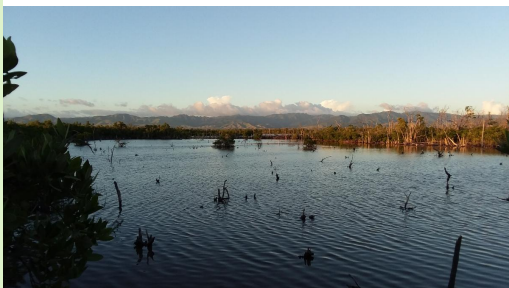
from IRC Research Associate Michael Barry



It seemed like bad news to the Institute for Regional Conservation's (IRC) research associate Mike Barry when the newly appointed governing board for South Florida Water Management District cut all funding for exotic control in Picayune Strand State Restoration Project. Mike had been a key specialist for exotics identification and mapping for the past 15 years in this part of south Florida. Never one to be idle, Mike used his free time well by saying "yes" to interesting and rewarding volunteer work with a collaborative project between Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (JBNERR) in south Puerto Rico and Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (RBNERR) in southwest Florida. Both reserves were heavily impacted in the 2017 hurricane season, when Irma hit RBNERR and María damaged JBNERR. The reserves share important ecological similarities, such as dominance of mangroves along the coast; but there are also differences in resource use needs and land use within the watersheds. Since Mike has been a close partner with RBNERR for the past decade and an expert in sub-tropical landscapes, research coordinator Brita Jessen reached out to see if he would be interested in a 10-day trip to scout the post-Maria landscape of south Puerto Rico and compare it with southwest Florida post-Irma.



The scoping work Mike participated in indirectly led into a collaborative three-year proposal made by scientists and coastal managers at RBNERR and JBNERR, Florida International University, the University of South Florida, and Duke University's Nicholas School for the Environment entitled "Resilience of the Mangrove Coast: Understanding Links between Degradation, Recovery, and Community Benefits". The purpose of this project is to better understand how the combined effects of hurricane disturbance, prior land-use legacies (e.g., freshwater hydrological alteration), and climate change in general (changes in precipitation, sea level rise) can lead to irreversible regime shifts, resulting in the loss of mangrove ecosystem functions and the services they provide to the wider community. Mike's contribution to the project team



was to help identify similar impacts of acute events (like hurricanes) and long-term stress (like sea level rise) in both reserves.

To read the full article about this collaborative project, [click here](#).

## "Meet Our Team" Spotlights

### IRC Employee - Alex Seasholtz

Alex joined as Crew Leader for the Pine Rockland Initiative program in 2019. He graduated from Florida State University with a B.S. in Social Science and later pursued a degree in Aquaculture from Hillsborough Community College. As a South Florida native he grew up with a deep appreciation for Pine Rocklands and all natural South Florida environments and hopes to expand the quality of our remaining forests.



He has been working with us for just over a year and has helped lead our crew to make strides in pine rockland restoration in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. He is also CERPIT certified by the Society for Ecological Restoration. Thank you Alex for all of your hard work in and out of the field. You are truly appreciated!

### Research Associate - Mary Truglio Fesmire



Mary is the founder of and currently leads the Imperiled Butterflies of Florida Work Group (IBWG), which addresses critical issues facing threatened, endangered and imperiled butterflies in Florida. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife, Watershed and Rangeland Resources from the University of Arizona, and has 15 years of experience working with Florida's threatened, endangered and imperiled wildlife. For 12 years she led regional and statewide implementation activities for threatened and endangered species for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), and is a co-author of Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan. She was also responsible for administering marine ecosystem grants through the State Wildlife Grants program.

She has experience surveying, monitoring and managing

habitats for a multitude of taxa, including imperiled butterflies, gopher tortoises, Miami tiger beetles, wading birds, Bonneted bats, burrowing owls, and shorebirds. Mary worked as the Butterfly Conservation Coordinator for Florida at the University of Florida from 2016-2018, and continues to lead the IBWG collaborating with all agencies and entities to identify species and management needs for Florida's imperiled butterflies. She does genetic research on the imperiled Florida duskywing (*Ephyriades brunnea*) in order to evaluate the level of population connectivity across a network of remnant critically imperiled Pine Rockland fragments in south Florida, in order to inform habitat management and restoration actions necessary for the conservation of a wealth of invertebrate and pollinator species.

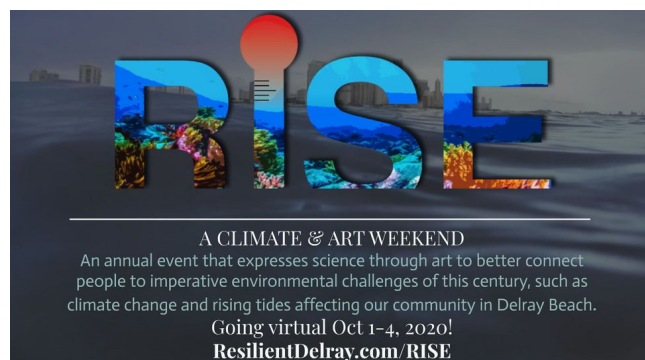
Mary recently accepted a position with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System. She is based out of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge but is under the Inventory and Monitoring Section and has responsibilities at Refuges throughout the Southeast and Caribbean. Congratulations, Mary!

## Upcoming Events

### Delray Beach Presents - RISE: A Climate and Art Weekend

The City of Delray Beach will host a series of virtual events October 1-4 to educate residents about the challenges presented by climate change. RISE will start with a Kick-Off event on Thursday and continue through the weekend with a full schedule of activities that include speaker presentations, panelist discussions, artist interviews, First Friday Art Walk, story time for children, live shark feedings, and so much more! For a full list of events, [click here](#).


If you attend any live gallery events on Friday, we encourage you to wear your IRC volunteer shirts!



### Pine Rockland Working Group Virtual Symposium

Since 1998, people who manage, research and conserve pine rocklands have





VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

**PINE ROCKLAND  
WORKING GROUP**

**22 Years Later: Past,  
Present & Future of Pine  
Rocklands**

Free registration is open now!  
Lectures & field trips begin in October

Featuring pine rockland art from: [KimHeise.com](http://KimHeise.com)

[sites.google.com/view/prwg2020](https://sites.google.com/view/prwg2020)

convened every other year to learn from one another about how to best manage this globally critically imperiled ecosystem. This year, the meeting will be a virtual experience with invited talks October 19-23, 10-minute field trips on October 26-29, and an update on the Pine Rockland Business Plan on October 30 . Speakers will describe what they (or their agency) have accomplished over 22+ years working in pine rocklands. Members of the public may attend any of the free webinars. See [this website](#) for more information and to register.

Be sure to tune in for an update on IRC's Pine Rockland Initiative from George Gann on Wednesday, October 21 at noon!



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

