



**Cypress Chapter of the IWLA (CCIWLA)**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**September 17, 2025**  
**ZOOM**

**1. Approval of Minutes**

- Motion by Betty, seconded by Tom, to approve the draft minutes of the June 18, 2025 meeting.
- Motion passed unanimously.

---

**2. President's Report — *Marshall Jones***

**a. Everglades Water Levels**

- This year has been positive for water levels.
- Important to highlight that the river of grass often benefits from lower water levels.

**b. Glyphosate Spraying**

- Glyphosate use remains a concern.
- Marshall recommended natural management methods such as fire.

**c. Wildlife Cameras**

- 12 cameras installed across six islands.
- Proposal for CCIWLA to act as official caretaker.
- Cameras record water table, flora, wildlife activity, sea level, and ponding depth.
- Vegetation cleared to improve triggers.
- Cataloging of wildlife encouraged; cameras on all islands will maximize diversity monitoring.
- *Betty noted* that the Tribe already uses water stage monitors and will add air quality monitoring.

**d. National Academy of Sciences Meeting**

- Meeting held today with several board members in attendance.
- Marshall plans to attend future sessions.
- Betty led a field trip beforehand.

- Growing awareness that WCA water levels may be maintained at reservoir levels, contrary to restoration goals of historic conditions.

---

### **3. Executive Director's Report — *Mike Elfenbein***

(Presented via Canva PowerPoint)

- **SFWMD WRAC Meeting:** Lake O Turbidity Curtain pilot project; hopes for Aquaculture and Cypress IWLA involvement.
- **Alligator Alcatraz:** Weekly updates; Betty and her team recognized for leadership.
- **Florida Cattlemen's Association (Marco Island):** Attended to understand ranchers' needs; intends ongoing participation.
- **Scrub Jay Surveys (July 1–3):** Conducted with USFWS, Chad Allison, and Rain Frog Ranch. Identified three groups (10 birds).
- **Florida Sportsman's Conservation Assn. Dinner:** Attended; airboat group focus.
- **July 15:** Attended C-43 ribbon cutting with Diamond.
- **Marco Island Summer School (July 15):** Participated; concluded with Gov MOU and ACoE MOA signing.
- **Deer Reintroduction Project (July):** Planning underway with IOTR funding. Permitting on track for November reallocation.
- **July 29 (Washington, DC):** Participated in "Make America Beautiful Again Act" initiative from Dept. of Interior.
- **Trailer:** Delivered to Panther Refuge.
- **Aug 11:** Everglades Legislative Field Trip (airboats and pythons).
- **Aug:** Visited Miccosukee Embassy in Tallahassee.
- **Lake Jackson:** Opportunity for improved accessibility given proximity to Tallahassee.
- **Meetings:** DEP and DOACS.
- **Proposals:** Submitted two to FDEP with Aquaculture; invited to submit two more (Lake Istokpoga & Lake Kissimmee). Chapter would retain 10% of funds.
- **Grants:** Secured USGS grant for deer collars and monitoring; IOTR covering remaining costs. Challenge coin drafted.
- **Documentary:** "Hard Truths of Conservation" in development.
- **Habitat Management:** Planted 3.5 miles of aeschynomene for deer forage (perennial, high-protein, resilient to flooding).

- **Sept 5:** Attended County Coalition quarterly meeting on Lake O, St. Lucie, Caloosahatchee, and Lake Worth Lagoon.
- **Stakeholder Partnerships:** Meeting with Ag, counties, and municipalities.
- **Sept 36th Annual Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation Banquet & Auction (DC):** Discussed MABA priorities.
- **Sept 16:** Solar GPS tracker project (22g ear tags). Currently tested on hogs. Decision due by month's end whether to use tags or collars for deer project.
- **Food Plot:** Seeds sprouted within two weeks.
- **Looking Forward:**
  - Wilderness Bill now has 18 sponsors from multiple states.
  - *Deer Friends* "Adopt a Deer" fundraising initiative approved (motion by Tom, seconded by Betty, passed).

---

#### **4. Treasurer's Report — *Tom Oates***

##### **a. Financial Overview**

- Chapter remains solvent.
- Transitioning accounts from Wells Fargo to 5/3 Bank; Mike has signatory access. Consider adding Marshall and others.
- 990 return filed.
- Project expense tracking important for reporting/charity ratings.
- Photographer for airboat/python event paid.

##### **b. Insurance**

- D&O insurance renewed through August 2026.

---

#### **5. Committee Reports**

- Jesse Lee commended for contributions to deer relocation planting efforts, along with Tom and other volunteers.

---

#### **6. Old Business — *2025 Chapter Activities***

##### **a. Membership Appreciation Picnic**

- Location: Mack's Fish Camp.

- Activities: skeet shooting, airboat rides, fishing.
- Tentative date: Saturday, December 13, 2025 (11:00 AM–4:00 PM).

**b. Cypress IWLA Fun Day**

- Location: Buffalo Tiger.
- Date: January 17, 2026 (11:00 AM–3:00 PM).
- Fundraiser with educational components. Betty will explore airboat poker run; can also manage food.

**c. Pioneer Event:** Immokalee Cattle Drive (March). Heather to follow up.

**d. Information Sharing:** Explore when/how to share Chapter matters with partner entities (e.g., Brett via Angler Action).

**e. Annual Report 2025:**

- Content due October 15.
- Members to send Nora links to relevant work/projects.

**f. Balloon Cleanup:** Marshall collected six balloons in a single day.

---

**7. National 2026 Meeting**

- July 17–18, 2026.
- Discussion of attendance and possible Chapter sponsorship of travel, lodging, and registration.

---

**8. New Business**

**a. Director Renewal:** Motion by Marshall, seconded by Betty, to renew Nora as Director of Science and Outreach. Motion passed.

**b. Meeting Structure:** Discussion of holding Board-only meetings separate from membership meetings. Current consensus: keep combined meetings for now, with option to schedule separate Board sessions when needed.

---

**9. Member Comments**

- Betty: Highlighted environmental impact of Alligator Alcatraz. Weekly interdenominational vigils now have international reach.
- Betty: Emphasized Everglades management beyond National Park boundaries; noted constraints in Blue Shanty differ from WCA 3A.

- Marshall: Appreciated Betty raising issue at NAS meeting; noted five of six tree islands already impacted by water.
- Group: Recognized need to monitor soil quality and parameters in addition to nutrients; expand modeling beyond WQ data.
- Marshall: Reported results from his 13-year soil study (published this year). Study includes cores from north of Kissimmee to Florida Bay, including plant data. Scientist to return in January with DC delegation for sampling demonstration. Marshall will provide links to share.

---

## **10. Public Comment**

(None)

---

## **11. Adjournment**

**Time:** 8:40 PM

**Next Meeting:** December 17, 2025 (Zoom) Gathering at 6:45 PM, Call to Order at 7:00 PM

Attendance Sept 17, 2025 Cypress IWLA meeting

Name	Position	In attendance?
Marshall Jones	President	yes
Mike Elfenbein	Executive Director	yes
Tom Oates	Treasurer and Secretary and Board Member	yes
Betty Osceola	Vice-President and Board Member	yes
Brett Fitzgerald	Projects Chair and Board Member	no

Jesse Lee	Chair shooting sports and Board Member	no
Heather Cleckler	Board Member	no
Diamond Bergeron	Board Member	no
Nora Demers	Director of Science and Outreach and recording secretary	yes
Gretchen Hoke	Member, Rain Frog Ranch	yes
Justin Rhoades	Colleague of Marshall Jones	yes