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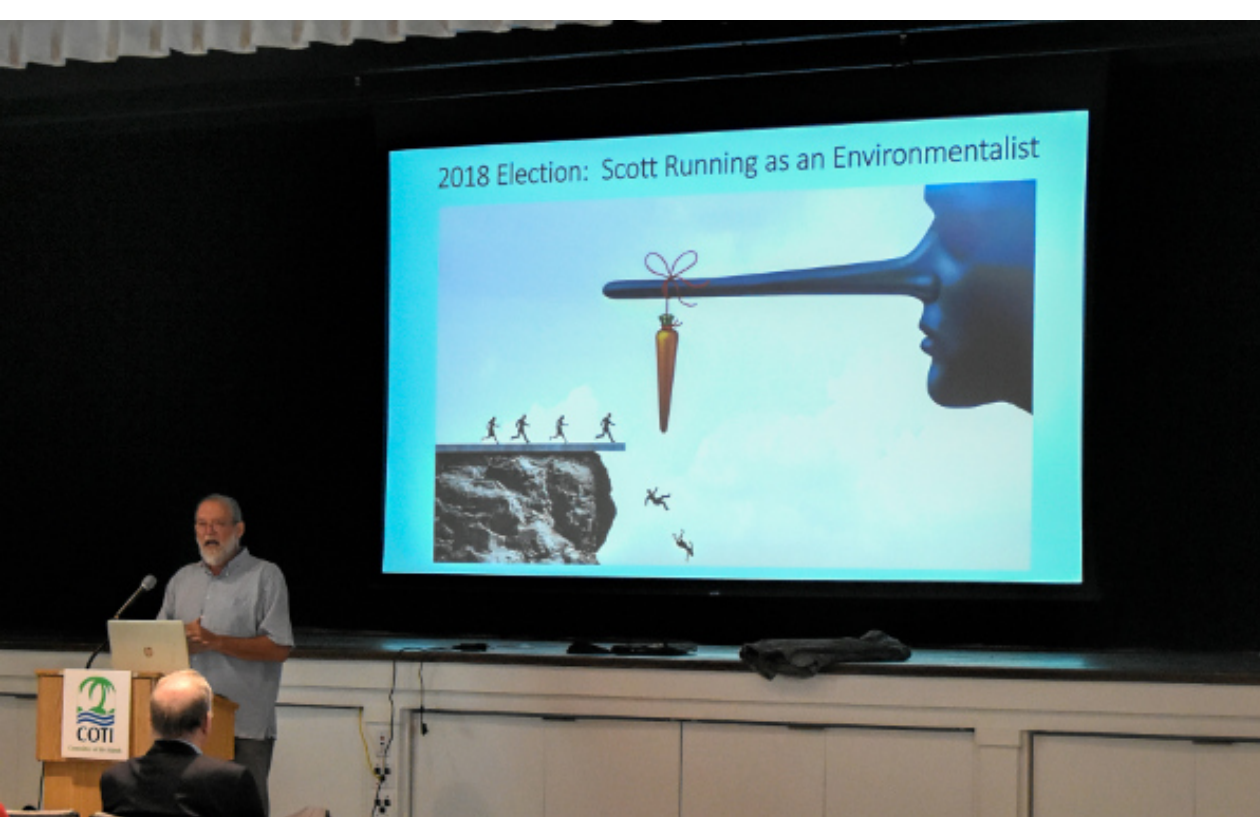
## COTI Elects New Board, Hears About Environment at Annual Meeting



COTI Board (left to right): Erhard Joeres, Malcolm Martini, Vice President Jan Holly, Treasurer Susan Tucker, Martin Packard, Maryann Bell, Joe Salatino, President Mike Miller, Barbara Joy Cooley, Mike Gillespie, Larry Schopp, and Peter Walcott (not pictured: Linda Robison, Secretary). Photo provided

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Keynote speaker David Guest. Photo provided

At its 43rd Annual Meeting this past week, COTI elected the following new members to its Board of Directors: Maryann Bell, Barbara Joy Cooley, and Malcolm Martini. Reelected to a second term were Martin Packard, Linda Robison, and Susan Tucker. COTI also elected the following officers: Mike Miller, President; Jan Holly, Vice President; Susan Tucker, Treasurer; and Linda Robison, Secretary.

### Keynote Speaker On Environmental Issues

In other developments at the meeting, keynote speaker David Guest spoke to issues concerning the environment. He explained how for years Florida governors had pushed for conservation land acquisition with the support of the legislature. But beginning in 2009 attitudes changed, and the legislature slashed funding for the Land Acquisition Trust Fund and its beneficiary, the Florida Forever program. That, he said, is what led to Amendment 1, the 2014 Land Legacy Amendment to the state constitution that was intended to reinstitute meaningful funding for land acquisition and restoration. However, that hasn't happened, and Guest is now lead counsel in a case to compel the legislature to provide that funding.

Guest also described the troubled history of the Everglades, for years drained and polluted to serve the interests of cattle

ranchers north of Lake Okeechobee and sugar growers south of the Lake. He is skeptical about claims that the storage reservoir planned for the Everglades Agricultural Area can adequately filter out the pollutants entering from Lake Okeechobee and fears that over time regulators may be forced to lower water purity standards for water entering the southern Everglades and Florida Bay.

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