

**Division C Category 6: Video - Institutional**  
**Calusa Waterkeeper “Words from the Waterkeeper”**

**ENTRY**

**Research/Situational Analysis:** Calusa Waterkeeper (CWK) is a nonprofit organization with the mission to protect and restore the Caloosahatchee River and estuary from Lake Okeechobee to the coastal waters with a goal of drinkable, fishable, swimmable water for everyone. The organization provides science-based research and public health education about harmful algae blooms (HABs). CWK was a relatively new organization to the Waterkeeper Alliance, having only joined five years ago during which time it also went through a name change. Due to its limited budget, it struggled to grow name recognition and audience reach. In 2019, thanks to a small grant, CWK reached out to CONRIC PR & Marketing for public relations support to brand CWK as trusted experts in clean water. Though they were putting out a lot of messaging, they knew they needed a strategic approach to develop and deliver a clear and concise message. The organization’s board and its 240 members were passionate, active and driven to strengthen and grow its reach in order to protect Southwest Florida waterways. With the organization’s goals to share its mission and impact positive changes in the community and legislation, they partnered with CONRIC to develop a strategic communications plan with video strategy to span June through Oct. 2019. The partnership with CONRIC focused on branding, outreach and public awareness of CWK’s research findings, events and public health warnings related to toxins in local waterways. To start, CONRIC’s vice president of marketing evaluated a number of documents published by the organization to gather **secondary research**, including upcoming initiatives, the strategic plan, the monitoring and evaluation plan, and the workplan. This **research** identified the common messages and themes CWK was putting out in various forms and on various platforms. CONRIC conducted **primary research** by interviewing the executive board and evaluating all CWK social media accounts, media outreach efforts and exposure to identify brand voice, tone, topics and audience. In addition, **primary research** was conducted on other Florida Waterkeepers websites, social media accounts and video content to learn which messages or content resonated well with interested parties.

**Planning:** Based on research and the goals to position CWK as the expert in the market and reach more people with their information, one of the **strategies** developed was to create a video blog series featuring Calusa Waterkeeper and biologist John Cassani as the spokesperson for the organization. Videos would introduce John, the CWK logo and messages to many Southwest Floridians. Based on John’s workload, we agreed that a reasonable **goal** was bi-weekly videos. John would present research findings and water sample readings while informing community members with key messages and events. This was a very inexpensive and broad outreach **strategy** for a nonprofit with a small budget. Production costs were kept to a minimum and social media provided free distribution channels. CWK had never done a video like this in the past, so we were anxious to see how the audience would respond. We set two clear **objectives**. 1) to reach a minimum of 5,000 people on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube with the video series from June through Oct. 2019 and 2) to have a minimum post engagement of 50 people on all of the videos during the life of the campaign. The majority of CWK’s social media audience is on Facebook, so we identified the **target audience** based on followers and fans of the page as a majority (two-thirds) female demographic, age 25-65+, who speak English and live in Southwest Florida, mostly in Cape Coral and Fort Myers. As fans or followers of the page, they’re interested in health, environmental issues and water quality. Based on the budget and technical skills of the CWK executive board, it was determined filming on a smartphone or similar mobile device was the best **tactic**. We would write video outlines, coach John on filming and edit the videos in house. Once approved, our distribution **tactic** included posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube with hashtags to gain an audience outside of the current fans and followers. Videos were also included in CWK’s digital newsletter. In order to build the brand, our tactic

was to open and close the videos with branded intro and outros including website and phone number. Throughout the video, we used color coded lower thirds to identify important information, in red, versus regular updates, in blue or green. Social media account information, phone number, email and website were all provided to encourage people to interact with CWK.

**Implementation:** In order to develop a successful, authentic video campaign, coaching John was key. John and CWK Executive Director K.C. Schulberg visited the CONRIC office on May 29, 2019, to discuss timelines, content and coach John on filming and message delivery. The VP of marketing pitched the series name Words from the Waterkeeper (WFTWK), which John and K.C. both loved. A content outline was then developed. Biweekly outlines were shared with the executive board of CWK for their input and feedback. Each video would open with the branded intro and transition to John standing in front of a SWFL body of water of his choice to ensure authenticity. We coached John to tell his viewers why he was there and a little about the location. We directed John to provide updates on topics that audiences on social media would find of value, including pollution reports, bacterial readings from water testing sites and hot-spots, including red tide, blue-green algae, and fecal indicator bacteria. Next, John would give updates on news/legislation, when relevant, community events, CWK events, ways to engage with the CWK and, occasionally, an educational piece. After our initial meeting and outline review, we filmed the first WFTWK behind the CONRIC office along Whiskey Creek to give John hands-on training on how to film and what to say and do on screen. Our digital team edited the video and after three rounds of revisions, the first WFTWK was approved and published on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube on June 10. CWK's team published the video on Twitter on June 11. Our team kept a watchful eye and were happy to see viewers genuinely appreciate and enjoy the video as evidenced by positive comments and feedback. The same day the first video was published, the next video outline was in review. John would film and deliver a flash drive with a completed video every other week. Our team edited and shared the videos for review prior to distribution. The approved videos were published by CONRIC on YouTube, Facebook and IGTV while Calusa Waterkeeper posted the YouTube link on Twitter and shared it in their newsletter. Relevant hashtags were used to increase video reach. Initial outlines did not include a timeline with due dates, but subsequent vlog outlines did in order to keep all parties on track. Overall, we were able to produce a video every other week that shared key messages with the target audience.

**Evaluation:** CONRIC and CWK published nine, three- to seven-minute WFTWK videos across platforms from June 10 through Oct. 15, 2019. We used Facebook, Instagram and YouTube view counts and comments and Twitter impressions to determine the success of the videos. Based on those analytics, Facebook was the strongest platform, which was expected based on their large audience base of 6,800+ fans, producing 11,471 views over nine videos. Twitter was the next highest with an audience of 1,400+ followers resulting in 2,162 impressions, followed by Instagram with 242 followers and 339 views and YouTube with 38 subscribers and 262 views. Our set **objective 1)** to have Words from the Waterkeeper videos reach a minimum of 5,000 people across all social media platforms from June through October 2019 was surpassed by 180%. We nearly tripled that objective with 14,234 total views and impressions over the campaign. Our **objective 2)** to receive a minimum of 50 posts engagements during the campaign was surpassed by 40% with 70 total comments received. Thoughtful comments and questions identified that people were watching the videos and were engaged to learn more.

**Budget:** A budget of \$3,750 for 22 hours of public relations services was allocated for the WFTWK video campaign. An initial consult with our CMO and VP of marketing took two hours of time. It took another two hours of their time to develop a name for the video series, timeline and key messaging. The VP of marketing, marketing coordinator and digital director spent two cumulative hours on each video for planning, strategy, editing and distribution, for 18 total hours. CONRIC surpassed set objectives and stayed within the limited budget.