

CALUSA WATERKEEPER

Waterkeeper Job Posting

Position Title	Calusa Waterkeeper
Organization	Calusa Waterkeeper, Inc. (CWK)
Location	Greater Fort Myers Area (Lee County), Florida. Home office, telecommuting with frequent fieldwork and in-person engagement throughout the Caloosahatchee watershed and Southwest Florida
Residency Requirement	Must reside in or relocate to Lee County within 60 days of Start Date and maintain local residency throughout employment
Long-Term Commitment	CWK seeks a Waterkeeper prepared to make an initial 3-year commitment, with the goal of remaining with the organization for 5 years or more
Employment Status	Full-time (40 hours per week); occasional evenings, weekends, and travel required
Reports To	Board President, in coordination with the Board of Directors, committees, staff, legal counsel, and partner organizations
Classification	Exempt
Compensation	\$65,000 - \$80,000 per year, commensurate with experience
Benefits	Paid Time Off (PTO) & holidays, health insurance stipend, mileage reimbursement, professional development

About Calusa Waterkeeper

Founded in 1995 as the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association, Calusa Waterkeeper, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, conservation, and restoration of the Caloosahatchee River and its watershed. CWK's jurisdiction covers four counties in Southwest Florida and encompasses 1,000 square miles of water. Through advocacy, education, community engagement, legislation, and science-based programs and research, Calusa Waterkeeper strives to ensure clean water for current and future generations.

Position Summary

Working with a dedicated staff and a team of volunteers, the Calusa Waterkeeper is the eyes, ears, and voice of the Caloosahatchee watershed. This position is the organization's primary public advocate, spokesperson, field presence, and science-informed leader for water quality, pollution response, watershed protection, education, and community action. The Waterkeeper will patrol and monitor waterways, respond to citizen concerns, elevate credible science, advocate for compliance with environmental laws, engage residents and decision-makers, and help grow a strong volunteer Ranger network across the watershed.

This role requires a person who is comfortable in both field and public settings: collecting data, documenting pollution concerns, speaking to media, preparing clear written comments and reports, working with volunteers, attending public meetings, holding polluters accountable, and professionally advocating for the protection and restoration of Southwest Florida's waters.

Required Qualifications

- Demonstrated understanding of aquatic ecosystems, watershed issues, water quality concerns, environmental regulations, and the social/political context of water protection.
- Ability to work independently, manage multiple priorities, meet deadlines, and maintain accurate records while working remotely and in the field.
- Demonstrated ability to set priorities, make sound decisions, align people around shared goals, and deploy limited organizational resources for maximum mission impact.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to write clear public comments, reports, educational content, and professional correspondence.
- Comfort and skill with public speaking, community engagement, media interviews, and representing an organization in public settings.
- Ability to work respectfully and effectively with diverse communities, volunteers, agencies, elected officials, partner organizations, donors, and members of the public.
- Experience or comfort operating in and around motorized or paddled vessels; willingness to obtain any required boating safety certification if not already held.
- Valid driver's license, reliable transportation, and ability to travel throughout the watershed region.
- Proficiency with common office and communication tools such as Microsoft Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, shared cloud files, video meeting tools, and social media or website content platforms.

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in environmental science, biology, marine science, ecology, hydrology, public policy, nonprofit advocacy, or a related field is preferred or an equivalent combination of education and relevant experience.
- Knowledge of Southwest Florida water issues, including the Caloosahatchee River, Lake Okeechobee discharges, estuarine ecology, harmful algal blooms, nutrient pollution, fecal indicator bacteria, seagrass, oysters, and climate/sea level rise concerns.
- Experience with fieldwork, water quality monitoring, scientific data collection, or environmental documentation.
- Experience with nonprofit advocacy, environmental organizing, coalition work, legislative or regulatory processes, or agency engagement.
- Experience training and managing volunteers, interns, or community science programs.
- Experience with GIS, databases, dashboards, water quality data visualization, statistics, or public-facing data tools.
- Grant writing, fundraising, donor/member engagement, or technical writing experience.
- Boating safety certification, first aid/CPR training, or willingness to obtain relevant certifications within a reasonable time after hire.
- Experience working with attorneys, legal documentation, administrative challenges, or Clean Water Act/environmental law issues.

Essential Responsibilities

1. Field Patrols, Water Quality Monitoring & Science

- Regularly patrol the Caloosahatchee River and connected watersheds by land and water to observe, document, and report water quality concerns, pollution sources, harmful algal blooms, ecosystem impacts, and other emerging threats.
- Conduct, coordinate, and improve routine water quality monitoring, including field sampling, laboratory coordination and testing, data recording, quality assurance, and adherence to approved policies and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Maintain organized field notes, photographs, chain-of-custody records (when applicable), sampling results, and other documentation needed for public education, advocacy, grant reporting, and potential legal or administrative action.
- Track and interpret relevant water quality indicators and regional conditions, including freshwater flows, salinity, fecal indicator bacteria, harmful algal blooms, nutrient-related concerns, seagrass/oyster habitat indicators, and other parameters.
- Support cleanup events and restoration-related field projects, including site selection, volunteer coordination, documentation, and reporting of results.

2. Pollution Response, Compliance & Enforcement Support

- Receive, investigate, document, and respond to citizen pollution complaints or water quality concerns in a timely and professional manner.
- Identify existing and emerging threats to local waters and work with the Board, staff, volunteers, attorneys, agencies, and partners to determine appropriate responses.
- Review or oversee review of relevant permits, discharges, agency notices, and water management actions, including Lake Okeechobee and watershed discharges, to identify potential compliance or water quality concerns.
- Advocate for enforcement of environmental laws and regulations when credible evidence of serious violations or harm is suspected or observed.
- Prepare clear summaries, reports, documentation packets, or referrals for agencies, legal counsel, the Board, or partner organizations as needed.

3. Advocacy, Policy & Public Leadership

- Serve as a visible, credible, science-informed advocate for swimmable, fishable, and healthy waters throughout CWK's jurisdiction.
- Write comment letters, public statements, reports, briefing materials, and action alerts on priority water issues.
- Attend and speak at local, regional, state, and federal public meetings, hearings, workshops, and coalition meetings when CWK's voice is needed.
- Build constructive working relationships with residents, local businesses, local governments, state and federal agencies, universities, partner nonprofits, civic organizations, homeowner associations, and commercial and recreational water users.
- Represent CWK professionally in situations involving controversy, conflict, negotiation, or disagreement with agencies, elected officials, developers, commercial interests, or other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate sound judgment, professionalism, and ability to navigate complex and sometimes controversial public issues while maintaining credibility and constructive relationships.
- Set priorities, make sound decisions, align people around shared goals, and deploy limited organizational resources for maximum mission impact.

4. Education, Outreach, Media & Communications

- Serve as a primary spokesperson for CWK and respond to media inquiries in coordination with the Board President and communications/marketing support.
- Prepare and deliver presentations for community groups, schools, homeowner associations, civic organizations, festivals, conferences, and public events.
- Develop or support educational materials and outreach content for presentations, newsletters, blogs, press releases, social media, videos, displays, website updates, and public reports.
- Translate scientific and regulatory information into accessible, accurate messaging that help residents understand water quality issues and solutions.
- Help raise public awareness of the Caloosahatchee, Lake Okeechobee, San Carlos Bay, Pine Island Sound, Matlacha Pass, Estero Bay, Charlotte Harbor, and connected watersheds.

5. Ranger Program, Volunteers & Community Partnerships

- Help manage and grow CWK's Ranger/volunteer program, including recruitment, onboarding, training, retention, scheduling, communication, and recognition.
- Train volunteers in safe field practices, water quality observation, sampling support, reporting protocols, outreach methods, and use of CWK forms or data tools.
- Support programs such as water quality monitoring (FIB), air/water testing (ADAM), Vertical Oyster Garden (VOG), Eyes on Seagrass (EOS) initiatives, cleanups, and other science and outreach projects.
- Cultivate community partners and volunteer leaders in geographic subareas across the watershed to expand CWK's eyes, ears, and public presence.
- Promote a respectful, inclusive, mission-focused volunteer culture.

6. Asset, Data, Safety & Administrative Management

- Help maintain CWK field assets, including boat(s), trailer(s), vehicles if applicable, laboratory/field equipment, sampling supplies, safety gear, and outreach materials, in accordance with budget and organizational procedures.

- Track inventory and coordinate purchasing or purchase requests for water quality testing, air testing, field safety, outreach, and laboratory supplies.
- Follow safety protocols for boating, fieldwork, sample handling, volunteers, and public events; recommend updates to safety procedures as needed.
- Provide regular updates to the Board President and/or Board of Directors on field activities, complaints, data trends, advocacy priorities, program needs, budget needs, and upcoming opportunities.
- Support fundraising and grant efforts by providing technical content, field stories, data summaries, presentations, and donor/member engagement as requested.

Working Conditions & Physical Requirements

- Work is performed remotely, in office/lab settings, at public meetings/events, and outdoors in field conditions across the watershed.
- Fieldwork may involve heat, humidity, sun exposure, rain, insects, uneven terrain, boat ramps, docks, shorelines, and changing weather or water conditions.
- Must be able to stand, walk, bend, lift, carry, load, and transport field, lab, and outreach materials. Some equipment may weigh up to 50 pounds, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- Must be comfortable working on or near water and traveling by vehicle and boat for patrols, sampling, events, meetings, and outreach.
- Evening and weekend work will be required for public meetings, events, sampling schedules, community presentations, and urgent water quality issues.
- Occasional overnight travel may be required for conferences, training, regional/state meetings, or Waterkeeper Alliance activities.

Equal Employment Opportunity & Reasonable Accommodation

Calusa Waterkeeper is an equal opportunity employer. CWK is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), age, marital status, disability, political affiliation, personal appearance, family responsibilities, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Qualified individuals with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation during the application and hiring process. Applicants needing an accommodation should contact the hiring manager or Board President to discuss their needs.