**13. Video**

**Wetlands Habitat Grows at Port Everglades**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iA8Kuo87FY**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iA8Kuo87FY)

The nursery-grown wetlands habitat at Broward County's Port Everglades demonstrates how economic development and environmental preservation can work hand in hand. South Florida TV personality Jen Herrera discovers how it happened in this informative documentary.

**1. What are/were the entry’s specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

Port Everglades is now able to construct much-need berths for cargo ships after working with environmental organizations to develop a thriving wetlands habitat that supports wildlife and ecological quality in the center of an urban, industrial seaport. The Port invested $15.8 million to complete a 16.5-acre Upland Mangrove Enhancement mitigation project to replace 8.7 acres of an existing overgrown, shallow and choked plant habitat adjacent to port docks that can now be expanded. Mangroves are a protected species and critical to Florida’s ecosystem.

While this project is considered a win for the environment, even by environmentalists, we were still concerned that the public would object to destroying 8.7 acres of environmentally sensitive adult mangrove plants. In addition, the wetlands habitat is located within a secured area that is not accessible without Port security identification.

We were faced with the challenges of how to position a potentially negative perception into a positive story, while demonstrating transparency behind security fences.

But . . . we also had the opportunity to proactively tell our story.

**2. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization’s overall mission?**

Mission Statement: Port Everglades is Florida’s powerhouse global gateway. A respected leader in trade, travel and financial stability, we create economic and social value by working in partnership with world-class clients. We achieve advancements focusing on efficient facilities, trade and cruise expansion, jobs growth, safety, security and **environmental stewardship** for our **customers, stakeholders and community.**

Environmental stewardship is a core objective of Port Everglades’ mission statement.

The video is a vehicle to visually demonstrate how the port meets, and exceeds, this objective.

Customers, stakeholders and the community were our primary and secondary audiences.

**3. What were the communications planning and programming components used for this entry?**

We wanted to tell the wetlands enhancement story in a credible manner that viewers could easily understand. Port officials attempted to share this story during speaking engagements and in press releases and printed materials, however audiences did not seem excited by the content. And, while still photography helped people understand the project, video helped them understand the project’s magnitude.

Consider these statistics from an article in Forbes that describe the impact of video, especially via the internet, over the written and spoken word:

* 59% of company decision makers would rather watch a video than read an article or blog post.
* Digital marketing expert James McQuivey estimates that a single minute of video content is the equivalent of 1.8 million words.
* Adding a video to marketing emails can boost click-through rates by 200-300%.
* 64% of customers are more likely to buy a product online after watching a video about it.

The construction of the wetlands enhancement project had several milestones that we publicized through social media and traditional press releases. But we waited until the enhancement project was deemed a success by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the land deed was officially transferred to the State.

The primary audience for the video was the local community, who may have garnered a negative perception or the project due to removing 8.7 acres of environmentally sensitive mangroves.

The secondary audience was port customers and stakeholders who witnessed the construction, but who may not have understood that the wetlands enhancement was the linchpin to the larger Port Everglades expansion project.

**4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed in this entry?**

Throughout the two-year lifespan of the wetlands enhancement project, we used fact sheets, press releases, publications and social media to tell the story. Our largest audiences were those who attended our speaking engagements and took group tours of the port with their business or community organizations.

We took still photographs and video at various milestones as the project progressed that were posted on social media.

Once the Florida Department of Environmental Protection deemed the mangrove enhancement project successful and the land was officially transferred to the State, we moved forward with creating a comprehensive video.

While writing the script for the video, we discovered that we also had to include information about the port’s economic impact and the larger port expansion project. This information, while lengthening the video, made it a stand-alone piece that could be viewed by school-age groups as well as business executives without any preamble.

Through our media relations efforts, our staff formed relationships with some of the staff at our local ABC affiliate who had recently left the station to form their own video company. The videographer and producer, Judy Reich, is the proprietor. Jen Herrera, formerly an ABC anchor, freelanced for this video and now works for our local NBC affiliate.

Two port staff members from the Corporate Communications team coordinated and directed the video project. Port officials participated in the interviews.

Filming took place over two days. The entire project from writing the script through final approvals took approximately three weeks. The project cost was $3,600.

**5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?**

We took the video on the road, showing it at speaking engagements and as organizations visit the port for tours. We also posted it on our YouTube channel and embedded it in a recent Earth Day post on Facebook.

YouTube generated 361 views

Facebook generated 490 views

A common reaction among port users was that they knew we were growing mangroves to mitigate for construction, but they did not understand how critical it was to the overall port expansion project.

Many port users expressed a sense of pride that their port was taking such innovative measures to protect the environment.

Florida Power & Light, which has a power plant in the center of the port, has offered to build an observatory at the site that will be managed by the South Florida Audubon Society.