

Participatory Modelling of Mutton Hole Wetlands

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Abstract: Participatory 3D Modelling (P3DM) was used to investigate past and present local community use of Mutton Hole Wetlands, outside Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland. In the past the wetlands formed part of a neighbouring cattle station but now have been included in a Conservation Area that is owned by the State. There is strong support from the scientific and local communities for the future use of the wetlands for bird surveys, teaching and eco-tourism and as a result Northern Gulf Resource Management Group will produce a business management plan to attract development funding. This has required community consultation to identify the aspirations of the different interest groups.

Only parts of the wetlands are accessible by vehicle and comprise a complex system of waterways, flora and fauna, and as a result the majority of the Normanton community has little knowledge of the structure of the wetlands or the biodiversity they contain. A 3-dimensional model was used to simplify the consultation process by providing a boundary object for discussion, to encourage maximum community involvement.

Building the model initiated engagement with community members, facilitated discussion between young and old, highlighted the importance of the wetland to the community, and enhanced cultural exchange. The ultimate aim was to generate information for a management plan for the wetlands with local stakeholder involvement that would promote Aboriginal culture, emphasise the environmental values of the monsoons in the Gulf, increase income generation for the town and utilise the wetlands more sustainably.

Key words: *Boundary object, community consultation, P3DM (Participatory 3Dimensional Modelling).*

Abstract only