

Community
Understanding
and
Participation

Understanding and Participation - Summary

Our regional goal for understanding and participation is:

To have a well-informed and motivated SEQ community, actively participating in, promoting and practising sustainable natural resource management.

Desired outcomes associated with this goal are:

Resources and information are readily accessible to all members of the community

Educative components are integrated into the use and management of natural resources

Understanding, commitment and participation is fostered through cooperation, collaboration and partnering between stakeholders

Opportunities are provided for building and improving the capacity of the community to understand and become involved in natural resource management.

Four *key strategies* have been identified to achieve the desired

- U1 Identify stakeholder needs and improve access to information**
- U2 Facilitate and evaluate education activities/programs, and incorporate into all natural resource management projects**
- U3 Facilitate and resource effective partnerships and networks to address identified natural resource management priorities**
- U4 Enhance the natural resource management skills base of stakeholders**

Priority Actions required to implement these strategies include:

- Develop a framework that enables access of knowledge.
- Learning, education and extension are essential components of the development and implementation of all natural resource management projects.

- Develop a framework that identifies capacity building needs/requirements and builds upon existing capacity building programs.
- Develop and implement all natural resource management projects based on partnerships and partnership agreements, MoUs, etc.

1.0 Our goal for understanding and participation

To have well-informed and motivated community, actively participating in, promoting and practicing sustainable natural resource management.

The rationale behind this goal

Sustainable natural resource management will depend on the wise and often voluntary action of natural resource users, together with support and action from the local community. An important element of this process is an understanding of natural resource management issues, which results from the sharing of relevant information within and between stakeholder groups.

As a 'supporting' theme, understanding and participation is a vitally important component of each of the four resource themes, biodiversity, water, land and coasts and seas. Increasing levels of awareness, through engaging the community, provides the stimulus for achieving informed natural resource management in South East Queensland. It is important to realise that without sharing relevant information, skills and practices between all stakeholders, effective management of our environment will not occur.

2.0 Desired outcomes

- Resources and information are readily accessible to all members of the community.
- Educative components are integrated into the use and management of natural resources.
- Understanding, commitment and participation is fostered through cooperation, collaboration and partnering between stakeholders.
- Opportunities are provided for building and improving the capacity of the community to understand, respect and become involved in natural resource management.

3.0 Issues concerning understanding and participation

Despite rapid advances in the increasing knowledge of the community about natural resource management issues and processes, there is still a perceived lack of awareness and understanding of integrated natural resource management practices.

A number of issues may influence the level of understanding a community has:

- **Information availability and accessibility**

State and local government agencies, educational institutions, industry bodies, cultural groups, community groups and individuals all play a role in capturing, processing and communicating information. This information includes:

- the condition of natural resources;
- trends in natural resource condition;

- natural processes and the impact of human activity on these processes;
- existing groups/organisations and strategic plans/programs (including ICM plans); and
- best management practices related to natural resource management.

The incorporation of such information at all levels of decision making and the acknowledgment of present levels of understanding amongst various sectors is essential.

However information is often unavailable for a number of reasons, including:

- the data does not exist;
- it is inaccessible due to restrictions;
- the community is unaware that it is available, or are unsure how to access the information; and/or
- it is in a format that is not relevant, useful or up-to-date.

The situation of not knowing what information is out there can lead to a duplication of effort, time and resources, and is counterproductive.

- ***Educative components in NRM projects***

Too often when designing projects, the education and awareness component is not well planned and integrated, but is often an afterthought once the project is underway or nearly completed. This leads to:

- a haphazard approach, producing poor results and inadequately resourced component of natural resource management; and
- poorly coordinated, and ineffective in transmission of project results.

This eventually results in inadequate information dissemination and stagnation of natural resource management practices and priorities.

- ***Working in isolation from other groups***

Working in isolation results in wasting time, effort and scarce resources through duplication, and failure to build upon shared knowledge with other groups.

Promoting understanding and participation

Activities relevant to the promotion of understanding and participation in natural resource management include:

- collation, analysis and dissemination of regional information
- development of tools, methods, skills
- identification, development and promotion of the use of best management practices, tools and methods
- strategic and outcome based planning
- development and application of appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools and procedures
- regional reporting
- community engagement aimed at generating understanding, support and participation
- consultation with, and participation of indigenous groups and raising of cross-cultural awareness in the community.

Providing communities with the opportunity to develop, learn, interact and become involved in natural resource management issues is critical to the successful implementation of this strategy.

4.0 Strategies required to achieve the outcomes

Four *key strategies* to achieve the desired outcomes have been identified:

U1	Identify stakeholder needs and improve access to relevant information
U2	Facilitate and evaluate education activities/programs, and incorporate relevant educative components into all natural resource management projects
U3	Facilitate and resource effective partnerships and encourage networking to address identified natural resource management priorities
U4	Enhance understanding and improve the natural resource management skills base of stakeholders

U1 Identify stakeholder needs and improve access to relevant NRM information

How is the implementation of these actions being coordinated?

Currently, there is no central mechanism for collating identified needs and requirements. The community has to access several State government Departments and local government. However, for each priority issue area or theme, it may be possible to develop a central point of coordination for stakeholder information needs, collation and dissemination.

What are existing plans and programs?

There are myriad of activities aimed at identifying stakeholder needs and improving access to information. Some of these include:

Regional

- DNR Programs – Waterwatch, Saltwatch /DNR Publications – Fact Sheets
- DPI programs – Grass Check, Soil Check
- DPI – Understanding Soil Ecosystem Relationships (info Package) Prime Notes CD ROM
- Healthy Waterways Program – BRMG

Local

- ICC – Vegetation Mapping and Ecological Assessment
- Education Centres
- Brisbane Forest Park – Schools education programs/activities
- Councils – Publications, Presentations /technical advice

Actions Required

Code	Actions	Current Activities	Priority/Locality
	Education		
U1.1	Undertake an audit of education resources, skills base and practices.	DPI Scoping Study to identify fish/fish habitat information requirements – in regard to planning and infrastructure development	Regional A
U1.2	Assess community, government and industry understanding of natural resource management issues.	IPA training and awareness	A Regional
U1.3	Prioritise community, government and industry information, education and training needs and implement the necessary programs to address these needs, and fill gaps.	NRM Education catalogue, and website publications	A Regional
U1.4	Form and enhance networks to share and review education products, practices and skills.	DPI/UQ Rural Extension Centre training Future Profit group workshops Formation of producer groups to promote Best Management Practice (eg. Topcrop) LCM groups	Currently happening - ongoing
U1.5	Develop a readily accessible database of past, current and proposed understanding and participation activities.		B
	Natural Resources		
U1.6	Identify sources of natural resource data on condition and trends and <i>State of the Environment</i> information for South East Queensland.		Site Specific Issues
U1.7	Review of government policy on access to information to ensure availability and use is maximised.	Regional Managers of Government forums to foster the exchange and sharing of information	A Regional
U1.8	Provide adequate physical and financial resources to improve access and dissemination of information.	DPI Extension Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DNR Facts ● DPI Notes Prime Notes CDROM	A Regional
U1.9	Ensure equitable and effective distribution of information about Best Management Practices, Code of Practice, and natural resource legislation.	DPI Call Centre and Information Centres Future Profit Workshops QGAP Offices	A Regional
U1.10	Continue to develop and maintain a regional inventory of existing community organisations, landholder and environmental groups.	Queensland Conservation Council – currently undertaking inventories	C- Update
U1.11	Develop and maintain a skills and learning opportunities register.		
U1.12	Continue to develop and maintain a regional inventory of all existing		

	community organisations and environmental groups.		
	Biodiversity		
U1.13	Develop information/action plan that improves awareness among stakeholders of the current status of biodiversity.		B Region
U1.14	Develop a community/government nature conservation network, to facilitate the collection, collation and dissemination of information. (See B1.1)		
	Water		
U1.15	Identify and involve key stakeholders with an interest in the use of water bodies. (See 3.2)		A
U1.16	Develop/ maintain a skills and learning register and continue to develop/maintain a regional inventory of all existing community organisations and environmental groups. (See W3.7)		C
	Land		
U1.17	Improve understanding within industry and community of the type and locality of land uses dependent on natural resources. (eg. Open Space and Extractive Industries.)		A Region
U1.18	Ensure land resource data are available to local government and other stakeholders. (See L2.1)		
	Coasts and Seas		
U1.19	Develop a handbook or other resources that detail all the agreements and incentives offered by State and local government to encourage wetland conservation. (See C2.8)		
U1.20	Investigate and pursue opportunities for providing interpretative facilities in appropriate locations in public wetlands. (See C2.9)		
U1.21	Improve understanding and awareness of the current status and vulnerability to human interference of coastal issues, eg. coastal wetlands, shorebirds, rocky reefs, seagrass, etc.		A – Region C - Region
U1.22	Develop and implement education strategies for key fauna and flora (Also see C1.5)		B Regional
U1.23	Ensure data to be gathered (as identified in coasts) is made available to all users in a relevant format (ie.		

	acid sulfate data, wetlands changes, etc.) (See C2.1, C3.1, C3.2)		
	Integrated Planning		
U1.24	Remove impediments to the sharing of NRM data between agencies and other groups (See P1.4)		B Regional
U1.25	Undertake inventory of resource management projects (by catchment) to establish relationship between related initiatives (See P1.5)		A

U2 Facilitate and evaluate education activities/programs and incorporate relevant educative components into all natural resource management projects

How is the implementation of these actions being coordinated?

There is no central regional coordination of this. Each of the Key State Government Agencies develops and implements its own material. Local government also does this. There is scope for considerably more coordination and integration of educational activities associated with various NRM projects and between these and the children and adult education programs.

Existing major initiatives include:

Regional

- Access to Learning Opportunities for Landcare Projects – (cooperation between DNR, LCMC, TAFE Qld, Education Qld)

Local

- BFP – Schools Education Program
- DPI – University of Qld Rural Extension Centre training facility
- Councils –
- BCC – Bushland Care Program
- Redland Shire Bushcare Program
- Ipswich CC – Demonstration Sites – weed control; Land management Seminars
- Integrated Catchment Management and Local Government – Training and Education Program (DCILGP, LGAQ, DNR, Community)
- DNR – Extension Officers, Workshops in Forest Management Education;

Actions Required

Code	Actions	Current Activities	Priority/Localities
U2.1	Develop government and non-government extension activities and practical, on the ground programs, (eg. pest management, farm forestry, fire management) to fulfill the NRM needs of SEQ.	DPI/UQ Rural Extension Centre courses Future Profit workshops DPI Extension activities including the Fisheries Extension Strategy	B Site Specific Regional
U2.2	Develop action-based natural resource management programs that can be implemented at a local level while forming part of a coordinated regional approach.	DNR Action Education programs – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterwatch • Saltwatch • Pasturewatch 	B Site Specific Regional
U2.3	Establish guidelines and monitor performance to ensure that South East Queensland natural resource management		A/B

	stakeholder communication and consultation methods are appropriate and ethical.		
U2.4	Ensure NRMS information appropriate to the SEQ region is integrated into curricula at all levels of the formal education system in the region. Allow for the flexibility of this information to change as understanding of NRM issues changes in response to new information.	DNR NRM education modules and other publications for the formal education sector Education TAFE and school learning modules	B
U2.5	Provide teacher support, resources and learning opportunities for the delivery of NRM topics through the school curriculum	DNR NRM Education NHT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEEN • L-SEEN 	B Regional
U2.6	Develop, share and enhance techniques to monitor and evaluate education programs both quantitatively and qualitatively.		B Regional
U2.7	Incorporate participatory monitoring and evaluation components in all NRM education activities	NHT Project – Integrated NRM Education	A
U2.8	Develop education and information products that reflect successful on-ground activities highlighting environmental, economic and social benefits.	These codes of practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Environment code of Practice for Agriculture • Sustainable Cane Growing in Qld • Farmcare Guidelines (Qld Fruit & Vegetable Growers) 	
U2.9	Develop an accredited and environmentally sound ecotourism training program		
	Biodiversity		
U2.10	Develop conservation extension programs to increase community understanding and ownership of the region's biodiversity resources. These programs should provide advice, education and training on all nature conservation activities and issues. Such advice should directly assist landholders in preserving biodiversity.	Land for Wildlife Bushcare support/facilitation Case studies (eg. Helidon Hills project) Rural extension activities Property management plans Future Profit workshops/plans	
U2.11	Integrate, at agency level, biodiversity conservation extension services with other extension programs (eg. catchment management, property management, LandCare, Rural extension services, Bushcare)		A – Whole of Region
U2.12	Develop environmental education programs to raise community awareness of biodiversity issues, threatening processes and strategies for improved actions.	Large Cities and Shires	A – Smaller rural councils (not covered by current funding sources)
	Water		
U2.13	Promote the adoption of a 'freshwater protection' ethic.		
U2.14	Expand community education programs		

	on relevant environmental education topics such as riparian vegetation management, best farm management practices, management of stock access to waterways and minimising sources of pollutants in urban stormwater.		
U2.15	Develop and promote 'Waterwise on the Farm' program with peak body support and link with property planning, landcare and catchment planning activities.		
	Land		
U2.16	Promote and facilitate whole farm planning based on sustainability of a property's natural resources. (See L3.5)	Future <i>Profit</i> program	A
U2.17	Develop environmental education programs to demonstrate to the community the economic and social benefits of improved and sustainable land management.	Integrated NRM Education NHT project will fund one person in SEQ)	A
	Coasts and Seas		
U2.18	Expand community education programs on relevant environmental education topics to raise community awareness of coastal values.		A - Region
U2.19	Facilitate education and extension programs dealing with coastal management and incorporate into coastal management projects.		
	Integrated Planning and Coordination		
U2.20	Promote programs/projects that involve the community in a coordinated approach to catchment management.		C-Region
U2.21	Encourage the establishment of Land Care and Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) groups across the region, and enhance and promote the technical and extension support provided to these groups. (RFGM 2.51)	Employment of landcare coordinators and facilitators to cover the whole region	A Region

U3 Facilitate and resource effective partnerships and encourage networking to address identified natural resource management priorities.

How is the implementation of these types of actions being coordinated?

The DNR is developing a statewide framework for the further implementation of community-based NRM management. This includes an assessment of the most appropriate organisational models and structures and the capacity -building needs of the various participatory sectors (State, local government, industry and community).

Existing major initiatives include:

- Access to Learning Opportunities for Landcare Projects – includes Professional Partnerships and NRM Education – result of cooperation between DNR, NHT, LCMC, TAFE
- Qld and Education Qld.
- Land for Wildlife (EPA)
- DPI – ‘Building Rural Leaders’ Training
- DPI facilitated ‘Best Practice Management’ groups of landholders (eg. ‘Topcrop’ groups and NHT sponsored farmer groups promoting conservation cropping) – exchanging and developing natural resource management skills and methodologies
- QFF – ‘Farmers in the Classroom’
- Councils – Advisory Committees

Actions Required

Code	Actions	Current Activities	Priority/Locality
U3.1	Identify in a coordinated and integrated manner existing and developing community, government and industry networks and partnerships for natural resource management, particularly with common/compatible NRM issues/concerns and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Allocation Management Plans Integrated Catchment Management RFGM Regional Managers of Government forums Future Profit groups 	A Regional
U3.2	Foster partnerships between networks and groups with common or compatible natural resource management issues, concerns and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future Profit groups Farmer groups developing and promoting Best Management Practice (eg. Topcrop) ICM Groups 	A Regional
U3.3	Use effective partnerships and networks to address physical and financial resources support and information sharing deficiencies.		A Regional
U3.4	Establish regional and sub-regional environmental advisory bodies in governments to allow greater input by relevant community interests and organisations into environmental planning and protection processes.	SEQROC Environmental Network BCC Bushland Committee WESROC Urban Consultative Committee	A – Whole Region
U3.5	Build recognition and understanding of indigenous issues and contributions in the community.		A - Region
U3.6	Identify needs for cross cultural natural resource programs and facilitate networks and partnerships.		A/B Regional
U3.7	Through effective partnerships and networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and respect the views of all owners in terms of the value and significance of cultural places; Access information on traditional, historic and cultural natural resource management practices. 	DPI's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy (particularly in the Fisheries management area)	Ongoing Priority
U3.8	Identify and provide the resources required for the above.		B Regional
	Biodiversity		
U3.9	Develop a community/government nature conservation network for the South East Queensland for the protection and restoration of the natural biodiversity of the region. The network		

	needs to develop agreed priorities and provide ongoing strategic guidance and education to all stakeholders. (See B1.1)		
U3.10	Enhance community and landholder involvement in wildlife and habitat conservation, particularly through support for programs such as 'Land for Wildlife', devolved grant schemes and voluntary conservation agreements.	NatureSearch Local government rate relief Land for Wildlife	A – Local governments which do not have voluntary conservation agreements or similar programs
	Water		
U3.11	Identify local social and cultural values and incorporate these into water resource planning and management.		B Regional
U3.12	Establish appropriate forums between water resource managers, users and educators.		
	Coasts and Seas		
U3.13	Promote community and indigenous involvement in documenting wetland values and in managing these values on public and private land.		B Regional
U3.14	Identify and incorporate indigenous management technologies in management plans and, where subject to indigenous ownership of intellectual property, enable participation in management planning and implementation.	Being investigated in the RWQMS	Regional
U3.15	Encourage community awareness and monitoring of wetlands and associated wildlife through programs such as the Integrated Catchment Management Program, Coasts and Clean Seas, Fisheries Action Program, Waterwatch and Waterwise, and promote community involvement in managing local wetlands.		
U3.16	Facilitate community participation in the planning, decision-making and implementation of management plans for our coasts and seas.	Public Consultation process under RCPMP	B Regional
	Integrated Planning and Coordination		
U3.17	Develop and implement formal coordination mechanisms for information exchange between ICM Committees. (Also see P2.2)		

U4 Enhance understanding and improve the natural resource management skills base of stakeholders

How is the implementation of these actions being coordinated?

The DNR is developing a statewide framework for the further implementation of community-based NRM management. This includes an assessment of the most appropriate organisational models and structures and the capacity building needs of the various participatory sectors (State, local government, industry, and community). Other organisations and bodies are also ensuring that they include components of community participation.

Existing major initiatives include:

Regional

- BFP – Schools Education Program
- DNR – Saltwatch, Waterwatch, Pasturewatch;
- DPI – Future Profit; Building Rural Leaders Training

Local

- Access to Learning Opportunities for Landcare Projects
- Catchments – Adopt a Waterway (Pumicestone)
- ICC – Parkland Care Program, Bushland Care Program

Actions Required

Code	Actions	Current Activities	Priority/Locality
U4.1	Communicate the relevance and value of being involved and identify means to enable effective participation.		B/C Regional
U4.2	Provide opportunities for the community (individuals, groups/organisations) to obtain training and skills for more effective natural resource management. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group skills – leadership training, negotiation and conflict resolution, management; and ▪ NRM skills – eg. monitoring/evaluation, property management. 		A Regional
	Biodiversity		
U4.3	Develop and implement training programs in various aspects of coastal and biodiversity management for industry and community.		
U4.4	Develop community/government nature conservation network, to provide ongoing strategic guidance and education to all stakeholders. (See B1.1)		
	Water		
U4.5	Facilitate community participation in the planning, decision-making and implementation of management plans for the Region's water resources.		
U4.6	Identify, acknowledge and involve stakeholders with an interest in the use of water bodies.		
	Coasts and Seas		
U4.7	Encourage community awareness and monitoring of wetlands and associated wildlife through programs such as the Integrated Catchment Management Program, Coasts and Clean Seas, Fisheries Action Program, Waterwatch and Waterwise, and promote community involvement in managing local wetlands.		A Regional
U4.8	Facilitate community participation in the planning, decision-making and implementation of management plans for our coast and seas.		B Regional
U4.9	Establish innovation schemes aimed at conserving wetlands in private ownership and in fostering community ownership.		B Regional
	Integrated Planning and Coordination		
U4.10	Promote programs/projects that involve the community in a coordinated approach to catchment management.		C - Regional