

Seasonal Flood in wetland with socioeconomic view in Phu My, Kien Giang, Vietnam ? a case study

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Phu My is located in the Ha Tien Plain, a shallow basin, in the southwest corner of the Mekong Delta. Floodwaters create a large area of grasslands where the Phu My Lepironia Project has been implemented. The project started in 2004 in response to several failed attempts to change the plain for rice paddy fields and shrimp aquaculture; and a partnership between researchers, experts, and local village community has established so that the wetland resources can be used and managed for the purposes of environment conservation and income generation for local people. The project covers the area size 2,890 hectare of wetland with Lepironia grasses (*Lepironia articulata*). Local community people participate to this project to collect and dry the grass stems to produce high-quality handicrafts for sale. It is reported that their average income has increased as much as 500%. Yet, their main income source is still rice cultivation, which is affected by acidic water and seasonal floods. Although flooding prevention system and three dykes to prevent saline water intrusion have been built, it is not certain how much local people understand and respond to such information as they are Khmer and not full-literate in Vietnamese language. This study discusses a balance and relation between wetland conservation, extreme climatic conditions such as floods, and the local traditional cultural values for future sustainability and resilience.

Keywords: wetland, flood, Lepironia, sustainable rural development, Vietnam