



# FUNGIS News

**FUNGIS - Far North  
Qld GIS User Group  
ABN 24 188 148 957**

*Don't be left in the dark!*

April 2006 edition

## Welcome back to the FUNGIS newsletter

In brief:

- With this issue, the recent newsletter drought has been broken and it is anticipated that future publications will be forthcoming at more regular intervals ... apologise for the delay, and stay tuned.
- Reuben has a few words to say ... check out the Chair report.
- Cyclone Larry burdened some of the membership with additional GIS support tasks and provided the concept for this years annual FUNGIS get-together .. Alistair provides some insight.
- Planning for this years conference/seminar is underway and it is likely that the FUNGIS executive will soon be seeking out members who may wish to assist with organising and running the event ... it's an opportunity for members get involved and support your organisation!
- Thanks to Guy Carpenter, of ATGIS, an exciting new FUNGIS website has been developed and will soon be unleashed for your consumption ..... whet your appetite 'cause it looks great.
- FUNGIS members are working hard.... check out some of the feature articles in this edition.
- If you are interested in getting more involved with FUNGIS refer to the back page for contact details.

## Tropical Cyclone Larry

Once again, FUNGIS has forged ahead of it's industry colleagues and is providing co-ordination and some leadership with regards to provision of spatial information post-Cyclone Larry. In the early days after the event, the FUNGIS yahoo group email forum copped a hammering with members seeking to ensure others had access to spatial information as required. The dominant themes were access to street maps and post-cyclone imagery.

Aside from the flurry of emails, FUNGIS members worked together to help coordinate supply of existing ground control points for the rectification of aerial imagery, contracted to capture the Cyclone affected areas after the event. FUNGIS members provided also feedback to the Queensland Government Spatial Imagery Co-ordinator, Keith Wilson, with regard to the perceived need for areas to be acquired and provided technical input regarding desired imagery scale, based on our understanding of local needs (eg. future wildfire mitigation). The FUNGIS executive also helped to communicate the need for on-the-ground information back to the agencies responsible in Brisbane.

Following the disaster phase, the FUNGIS Executive has been working hard in collaboration with SSI, James Cook University and Cairns City Council to bring to North Queensland the FUNGIS 2006 Annual Seminar in the form of an Emergency Spatial Information Management Workshop/Debrief. The intent of this event is to relate the value and availability of spatial information during emergencies, explore the problems experienced during Cyclone Larry and develop a series of recommendations regarding spatial information planning for future emergencies to submit to the spatial industry broadly in the form of a summary reference document.

The dates for FUNGIS 2006 have been set as 18-19 September, immediately preceding the SSI National Conference and the location for FUNGIS 2006 will be Cairns. Stay tuned for further details on 'Sandbags and Sandals - An Emergency Spatial Information Management Forum in the Tropics'.

Cheers, Alistair.

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Babinda - nowhere to turn



Tom Orr in his backyard in Wongaling Beach. Both the clothes line and house are intact.



## Report from the Chair

Dear Members,

Welcome to the limited edition FUNGIS NEWS. With the history of FUNGIS in mind we felt that a hard copy edition would be an appropriate way to announce the imminent arrival of our upgraded, FUNGIS friendly website.

As we left the last century FUNGIS members were entertained and kept out of the dark with the “backyard press” FUNGIS Newsletter, delivered by the postie. As the purpose of FUNGIS demanded we have naturally progressed to the wwwdot as our main means of communication.

In recent years the wwwdot has had some success for distributing FUNGIS newsletters, communicating industry events and networking. But we are yet to achieve the goals we set ourselves in its use and make this use commonly beneficial to members. Industry networking, data access and knowledge, technology awareness and the effective communication of these are the primary drivers for FUNGIS.

The interactivity and usefulness of our new look website is intended to bring about increased member participation and the opening up of communications. Over the next year we will role out the components of the new website. Each of the Executive Committee Task Groups (see article page 6) will be responsible for their sections of the website with plenty of opportunity for members to get involved. The wwwdot is fast becoming our industry’s primary communication and product distribution tool. I tell myself regularly “it will work for you if you make it”

Another activity which members scored highly during last years AGM directions survey is the importance of the FUNGIS Annual Conference. Most of the 70+ delegates who attended each of the last two FUNGIS annuals would agree that they were far from an industry junket. Thanks to cyclone Larry, this year’s event is shaping up to be another unique FUNGIS experience which will be of value to all.

As this is the first Chair Report for the 05/06 FUNGIS year you might ask “have we now a chair?” Yes we have. We left last years AGM Chair less and after the past 6 months of rotating the position amongst the exec Reuben Sinclair (that’s me) at the March 6 exec meeting offered and was accepted into the position.

The position of Chair comes with its challenges. Let me assure you that after 15 years of good work FUNGIS will only continue through active participation and some sacrifice from its members. The efforts from a few to carry FUNGIS through some tough times is inspirational (for me) and with this in mind I ask all members to keep the FUNGIS mission in their sights when conducting their day to day business as GIS users and creators. There are a number of GIS projects I have been involved with in my workplace that would not have been as successful if it were not for the existence of the FUNGIS network.

Over the next few months leading up to the AGM I will be actively engaging non FUNGIS member GIS users and developing users of our region with the hope that they will become members and contribute to FUNGIS. I consider this as crucial to fulfilling our constitutional objectives of making the northern community GIS savvy and beneficiary’s of this technology.

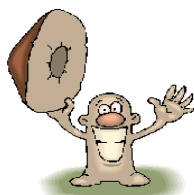
Let’s map our way forward together, embrace the challenge and enjoy the process. Who puts the FUN in GIS? The FNQ GIS User Group does.

Cheers  
Reuben Sinclair



Reuben out and about in the field

***“Let me assure you that after 15 years of good work FUNGIS will only continue through active participation and some sacrifice from its members”.***





## FUNGIS Website Update

The FUNGIS website has undergone a massive transformation and is now built on an open source content management system called 'Joomla'. This wonderful idea is the work of Guy Carpenter, who has been welcomed back to FUNGIS with open arms. The new website will allow all members to add content in any format themselves without needing programming expertise. Once the content is submitted, any nominated member can check and approve the content and .... wha-la the website is updated.

Before we launch the new site though, we want to iron out a few bugs and would like to get some of our reference material into a common area. Executive members are busy right now transferring their hard work onto the new site.

Some features you will be able to enjoy in the new site include:

- an online calendar of local events
- who's who in the zoo – find out who is your industry representative on FUNGIS
- want to be involved in FUNGIS activities - join a work group
- want to know the latest on this years conference – jump onto the conference page

Some additional developments on the horizon include:

- the migration of Email groups/yahoo groups to the new web site, so we can all keep in touch with the latest data, jobs and gossip;
- the development of a live online chat page within the FUNGIS website, to enable open forums to be discussed online; and
- to ensure we don't lose the fun in FUNGIS, we will also incorporate a funnies page to put a smile on your face.

The strength of FUNGIS is in its people, so if you want to be involved in the website, email us on [admin@fungis.org](mailto:admin@fungis.org) to join in the fun.

We look forward to unveiling the new website as soon as possible.

Lisa Newton (on behalf of the Communications task group)

## Collaborative Aerial Mapping Project

A joint mapping venture recently undertaken by the Mareeba Shire Council has delivered a new range of valuable spatial information products. This cost sharing initiative is providing affordable digital imagery and elevation data valuable for a variety of Local Govt. activities.

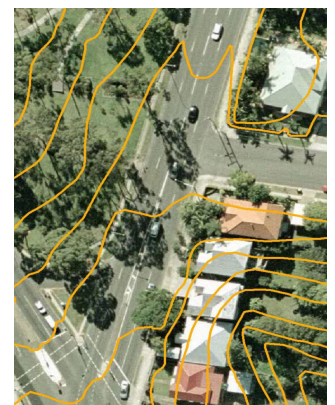
With the collaboration of Webmap Pty Ltd and the Dept of Natural Resources there are now high resolution ortho photos (18cm) over the following rural towns and urban growth areas across the Mareeba Shire: Mareeba, Bibbohra, Mt Molloy, Mt Carbine, Chillagoe, Dimbulah, Mutchilba, Irvinebank, Watsonville, Koah, Speewah, Kuranda and Myola.

Other deliverables from the project include medium resolution ortho photos (60cm) over south eastern parts of Mareeba Shire and areas of the Southern Tablelands covered by the Cairns, Atherton and Bartle Frere 100K map sheets.

It is hoped that the north eastern area covered by the Rumula map sheet will be captured during the 2006 flying season. Parties interested in collaborating with the 2006 capture should contact Reuben Sinclair 4091 8605 at their earliest convenience.

This data has value to a number of industries and business activities. In the past the high cost of acquisition has been prohibitive. So not only is there savings through cost sharing but the data is also available to business through joint venture partner Webmap at a price more affordable than previously possible.

Business enquires should be directed to Webmap Pty Ltd (Ph. 07 3327 9701) with further info available at [www.webmap.com.au](http://www.webmap.com.au)







## New GPS transmitting base station network

Mossman Agricultural Services have utilised the Queensland Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation Sugar Industry Innovation funding to install a GPS transmitting base station network.

AgGuide, Sumner Park Brisbane, and Mossman Agricultural Services (MAS) have forged a partnership to deliver three major technologies to the sugar cane region of Mossman, Daintree and Julatten.

- 2cm RTK GPS accuracy
- "hands free" steering technology for Tractors, Cane harvesters and Haul outs
- Cane Yield Monitoring

The four major obstacles were the terrain, the way the farms are spread across the region, selecting technology that would help all the farmers and lastly cost.

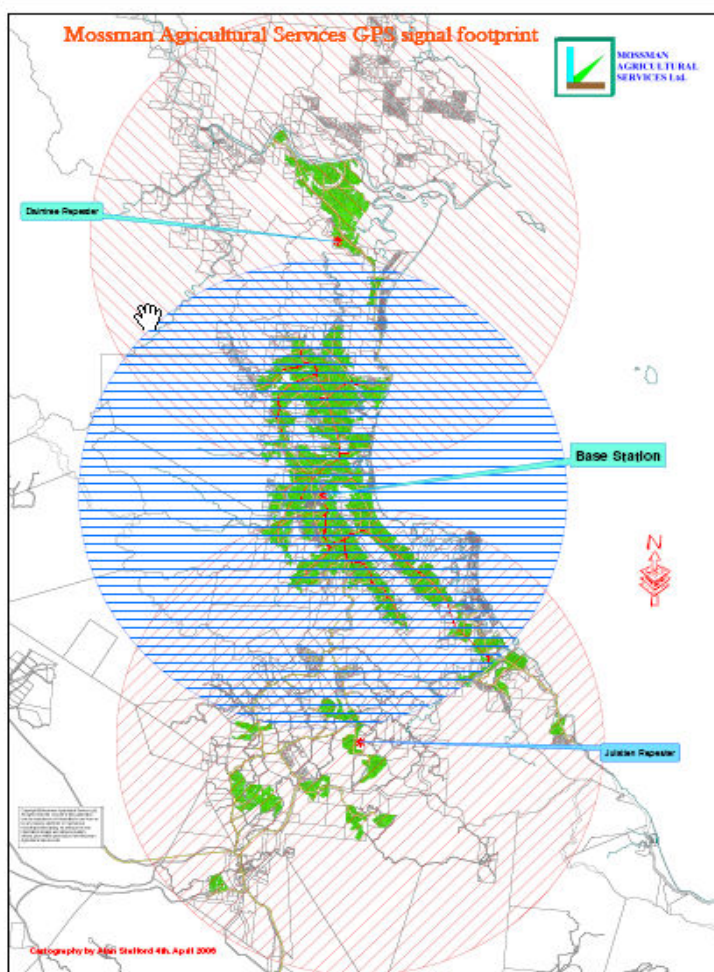
A GPS system was the first task. AgGuide, as a Queensland manufacturer of "hands free" steering systems and also having extensive GPS knowledge was brought in to investigate how to cost effectively deliver 2cm RTK to all the farmers. There had already been evidence elsewhere within the cane industry of farmers installing large numbers of base stations to cover small regions because of the use of under-powered radio systems. MAS, through better community planning have saved their farmers potential costs of over \$100,000.

The technology chosen was the AgGuide Base Station System. At the heart of the ABSS is the latest Topcon HGGDT GPS receiver board (GPS Navstar + Glonass Turbo board) and a 35Watt Pacific Crest UHF radio, which is used to deliver the RTK corrections to tractors up to 15km away from the base station. Remote radio repeater stations are being set up in Daintree and Julatten to qualify coverage over the entire farming footprint. The GPS + Glonass receiver has been selected because it provides access to the US GPS Navstar 24 satellite constellation as well as an additional 17 satellites from the Russian "Glonass" constellation.

For any farmer who has used a RTK system around trees they will understand the frustration of waiting at the end of their rows because of satellite dropout, which in layman's terms is "not enough satellites". The 35W UHF transmitter not only delivers a longer range but also has enough power to punch through tree lines. The "hands free" steering of tractors, harvesters and haul outs is set to deliver cane farmers an increase in yield and overall efficiency by steering the vehicles down the same tracks year after year.

Other organisations, such as the Local Council and Surveyors will be able to benefit from this installation.

Contact Daryl Parker, 07 4030 4176 or [dpmassag@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dpmassag@bigpond.net.au) for further details.





## Australia Day Achievement Medallion for GIS work

Andrew Stevenson, a Leading Fire Fighter with Air Services Australia Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), at the Cairns Airport was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Medallion for GIS work. The medallions are presented around Australia Day to officers who have made a noteworthy contribution to the work of their department during the past year, or given outstanding service over a number of years. The selection of the award recipients is at the discretion of the Head of the Commonwealth Department or Agency.

So how does an unassuming Leading Fire Fighter achieve this ... especially for GIS work in Zambia?

To meet a need at ARFF, Andrew studied Computer Science at James Cook University graduating in November 2002. As anyone in the know will tell you, this course also involves GIS, in which Andrew has a strong interest, and talent.

Add Andrew's brother Ian, the operations manager with Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) in Zambia, whose duties, amongst other things, involve reactive and proactive reduction of poaching in lower Zambezi.

As any GIS person worth their salt will tell you, GIS is the solution, and Andrew is worth his salt

In early 2003, Andrew volunteered to create a GIS for CLZ which would provide them with a primary tool to assist in the conservation of wildlife and the reduction of poaching. To progress this offer, Andrew developed a 26 page project document which was submitted to CLZ, the Zambian Wildlife Authority and other stakeholders. This offer was subsequently accepted and Andrew traveled to Zambia whilst on leave and between 15<sup>th</sup> August and 15 November 2003, commenced work on building the GIS.

The initial GIS was put into use in late 2003, and has been in continuous use since that time. Andrew has since expanded its' capabilities working from Cairns and revisited Zambia in early 2005 to make further improvements.

The current GIS, continually and voluntarily developed over several years, provides an enormous collated, visual array of information for conservation and law enforcement requirements, ranging from planning to interdiction of poachers and a primary tool to assess key performance indicators of conservation management strategies. This GIS has contributed to the significant reduction of poaching.



Leading Fire Fighter, Andrew Stevenson, accompanied by son Luke, being presented with his award by Andrew Clark General Manager Aviation Rescue & Fire Fighting



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**We're on the Web!**  
**www.fungis.org**

## **Results of the Directions Survey conducted at the 2005 FUNGIS Conference:**

The 2005 Survey sought to clarify FUNGIS directions from members' points of view. Twenty-seven survey responses prioritising the five options provided were returned. Priorities for direction were indicated as follows:

1. Gaining personal skills and knowledge of GIS technologies, data availability and industry developments through workshops, seminars and educational activities.
2. Being involved in changes and linkages in your local GIS community that will improve the way GIS is used and taken up by a broader sector through education and facilitation of improvements in the way we work together.
3. Enjoying light social and technical networking and activities with members of the local GIS community.
4. Influencing state and federal directions in GIS Development, Data Acquisition and Availability through belonging to a respected and politically influential GIS organization.
5. Forming strong associations, networks and influences with other state and national professional industry bodies.

Written comments indicated that members generally find the annual Conference to be a valuable activity, particularly in relation to face to face networking. Comments were also made about the potential value of training sessions.

## **ACHIEVING THE FUNGIS MISSION**

### **Help yourself and others by getting involved**

The FUNGIS Executive Committee has formed several working groups to help move our objectives along. These committees now labeled as 'Task Groups' will constantly evolve as need and member participation dictates.

Below are the Task Groups that are under formation or in action.

FUNGIS members are asked to join these groups and assist where you feel you can be of value. To register your interest in helping out please contact the Task Group Contacts below.

#### **1. Communications:**

- Lisa Newton (lisa.newton@nrm.qld.gov.au) - coordinating other task group roles in managing the new you beaut FUNGIS website.
- Bob Pettit (robert.pettit@epa.qld.gov.au) – The FUNGISNews, August Edition and developing interactive news section of new website.

#### **2. Conferences:**

- Alistair Hart (alistair\_hart@health.qld.gov.au) - FUNGIS ANNUAL
- Reuben Sinclair (reubens@atgis.com.au) - FUNGIS ANNUAL
- Meagan Smith (admin@fungis.org) - AGM
- Geoff Hunter (Geoff.HUNTER@nrm.qld.gov.au) - liaison between cairnsspatial2006 (SSI) & FUNGIS

#### **3. Profession Development/Workshops:**

- Bob Peever (bpeever@bordnet.com.au) , Anne Stapledon (anne@ledanet.com.au)

#### **4. Data Access:**

- Caroline Bruce (Caroline.Bruce@csiro.au) – developing data access section of new website.
- Liesl Harrold (Liesl.Harrold@treasury.qld.gov.au) – developing data access section of new website.

#### **5. FUNGISEd (education):**

- **VACANCY** - liaison with education sector to further develop FUNGISEd task group.  
Any enquiries to Reuben Sinclair (reubens@atgis.com.au)