



Participatory monitoring of water levels with worrying citizens in a recreational area in the Netherlands

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In the recreational area of Loosdrecht, the water board decided to apply flexible water level management: letting the water level be determined by rainfall and evatranspiration between predefined limits. This caused the citizens to worry for the wooden foundations of their houses and possible limitations of the possibilities for water recreation. This eventually lead to lawsuits by private citizens, interest groups and the municipality against the water manager. In this tense situation we started with participatory monitoring: placing water level instruments at the properties of those citizens that wanted to participate in the measuring. 15 citizens participated, including the ones that filed the lawsuits. At all of these sites the water level was gauged automatically. 8 of the citizens also measured the water level by hand with devices supplied to them by the water manager. During 1 year, all the measurements were collected and processed and discussed with the citizens in 2 meetings. At the end of this year, the the citizens expressed the growth of their understanding of the hydrological situation, the understanding of the different points of view and their trust in eachother.