

# エコシステム

Ecosystem  
Conservation  
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## 自然再生

社会・経済の土台をつくる

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日本は、経済や社会の基盤となる自然が大きく失われてきました。持続可能な社会をつくるためには、これまでに失ってきた自然を再生する必要があります。国や地域の計画の中に自然を保護・再生し、活用することを位置づけて、そのための土地を計画的に買い取っていくことが重要です。

Japan has lost tremendous areas of nature which is the foundation of our economy and society. Because of this loss, we should promote restoration of nature. It is very important that we establish a policy to protect, restore, and utilize nature in each regional development plan and in the national land use plan. We should then acquire lands based on those long term plans.

# Restoration of Nature

## Building the Foundation of Economy and Society

Throughout the world, large areas of nature have been lost and many species of wildlife have become extinct because of population explosion and unrestricted expansion of economic development. According to biologists, there have been five periods of mass wildlife extinction since life began on earth. We are now causing the sixth mass extinction. We humans have relied on relatively stable environmental conditions for our survival for the last ten thousand years. But many scientists now fear that those stable environments may not last into the next century. Under these circumstances, restoration of nature is being actively promoted in many regions of the world not only in the United States and European countries but also Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania. Restoration of nature is now a global movement.

Thanks to the worldwide restoration movement, both quantity and quality of nature has been improving. As a result, benefits from nature (its ecological services) have been conserved and improved. In turn, it has contributed to improving economic and social effects such as stabilization of local climate, prevention or reduction of natural disasters, improvement of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, development of tourism, and improvement of quality of life.

At tremendous cost to nature throughout Japan, we have given top priority to economic development (with its focus on short term profits and conveniences) since the beginning of the opening of the country for modernization. Because Japan has converted large parts of its natural lands into developed lands for the last 170 years, many species of Japanese wildlife are now in danger of extinction. Also, as Japan continues to

imports the majority of its food, lumber and fossil fuels, it adversely impacts global nature, especially the survival of many wildlife species. We need to fundamentally reevaluate our economic and social systems so that we can regain a healthy natural ecosystem.

Activities to restore nature have been gradually increasing in Japan. However, the total area of restored nature is miniscule when compared with the total area of lost nature throughout Japan. To continuously receive ecosystem services, we must steadily promote ongoing restoration projects and moreover we must implement large scale restoration projects all over Japan. Japan is facing a turning point as it already is experiencing a new trend of population reduction. By treating this decline as a new opportunity, we can restore Japanese nature for the next 100 years, reversing the destructive trend of the last 170 years.

It is our generation's most important responsibility to protect and restore nature that supports our daily lives. First of all, we must educate our Japanese people about the value and importance of nature that gives us ecological services. At the same time, all of us who receive benefits of ecological services should bear the cost of protection and restoration of nature by introducing, for example, an 'Environmental Tax'. Such a tax would be an investment in a healthy and sustainable land and people.



The Everglades National Park in Florida, U.S.A. is a protected wetland that produces economic benefits of \$5 billion annually.



The Dearne Valley, U.K. Abandoned coal mines have been converted to natural areas helping create new employment with add values of agricultural production.



Osaka Bay used to be surrounded by sandy beaches, tidal mud flats and seagrass beds. Now they are all land filled and converted to factories and industrial parks. This is a typical example of how Japan has lost its nature.



Suncheon Bay, Korea, has been extensively restored to its old natural status. As a result, more than 3 million tourists visit there every year.

禁無断転載 海外との情報交流促進のため、要約を英文で掲載しています