

エコシステム

Ecosystem
Conservation
Society-Japan

11 No.154

November
2017

空いた土地 使わない土地 —もとの自然を取り戻す—

- | 人口が減ることはいいことも、困ることも
- | 持続可能なまちづくり
- | 個性豊かで持続可能なまちへ
- | 自治体による土地の買い取り
- | まちづくりの土台は地域の自然

人口減少を迎える今こそ、くにつくり、地域づくりの基盤となる自然を、自治体買い取り、自然再生することが大切です。
Japan is in the midst of a serious population decline. It is important to understand that the time is now for municipalities to buy lands and to restore their nature because nature is the foundation on which we build our country and local communities.

Abandoned Lands, Unused Lands: Recover Nature on Them

Over recent years, in Japan, the acreage of abandoned farmlands, unmaintained plantation forests, and empty lands without known owners has been increasing. Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced in 2015 that there are 423,000 hectares of abandoned farmlands in Japan. In fact, because people are moving to large cities from rural areas, it is estimated that more than 570 rural communities will disappear within the next 10 years. This trend will continue for the foreseeable future. Even in urban areas, empty lands are projected to increase in number in the future.

Under these circumstances, Japan urgently needs to rethink its social and economic systems and its land-use methods concerning how to develop communities. The reason why abandoned lands and unused lands have been increasing in Japan is because Japan has been experiencing a rapidly decreasing birth rate. Regarding the disappearing farmlands, demands for domestic agricultural products have been decreasing due to the population decline. Food importation due to free trade policy has also contributed to the loss of farm activity.

In Japan, it is important to actively restore nature on lands that are abandoned or unused. And we must pay more attention to the idea of "Green Infrastructure" that utilizes natural areas as parts of infrastructure. If we do so, we will be able to reduce and prevent natural disasters and CO₂ emission and improve landscapes and scenery as well as water quality/supply and air quality. We will be able to enjoy more of and a higher quality of nature's diverse functions.

Today, in the United States and in European countries, many

communities have adopted policies that utilize various benefits from nature and ecosystems (such as wetlands and forests) when they make their city plans. They protect and restore unique natural environments to increase biodiversity which is the foundation for their lives. They intentionally incorporate green infrastructure in their infrastructure development plans. By using green infrastructure, they achieve unique and attractive communities.

As we go into the future, it is important for communities to take hold of the idea that they should "protect their own communities by themselves" because they cannot expect much help from outside. To achieve that goal, it is necessary that each local community actively buys its abandoned lands that are its own valuable assets for protecting nature. It may also be necessary for local communities to work with land trust NGOs in order to supplement their land acquiring activities.

A new tax program is urgently needed that helps private and non-governmental organizations, such as land trust organizations, to acquire lands for public benefits. It is also necessary to create a new system that supports organizations that receive land donations by reducing taxes and procedural burdens. These organizations can reasonably expect that they will receive more land donations in the future as population decreases.

Japan is in the midst of a serious population decline. But it is also a good chance for the national and local governments to buy lands and to restore their nature.



Japan is experiencing a rapid population decline. Uninhabited areas and areas with a half or less of the current population will increase throughout the country. This provides an opportunity to revise land use practices



By using green infrastructure, Karlsruhe City, Germany, achieved an attractive and sustainable community



In Cape May, New Jersey, U.S.A., 185 hectares of coastal grasslands have been restored. They act, together with coastal sand dunes, as buffers to prevent damage from high tides. They also promote tourism and improve economic activity



In Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan, Kuromatsunai Town and a land trust NGO bought land together

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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