

Employee-involved activity on conservation of biodiversity by utilizing the “Sony Forest”

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Sony has been promoting the conservation of biodiversity including the corporate greenery activities strongly. In Japan, Sony EMCS Corporation Tokai TEC Koda Site (hereinafter the Koda Site) and Sony Semiconductor Kyusyu Corporation Oita Technology Center have earned the certification under the Social and Environmental Green Evaluation System (SEGES). The case of activity on “Sony Forest” in Koda Site is introduced as following.

The "Sony Forest" is a highly authentic secondary forest located on the premises of the Koda Site. The company uses this corporate green space to educate its employees and make contributions to the local community. The Koda Site is located in Koda Town, Nukada County, Aichi Prefecture, and situated at the south western end of the mountain foothills extending from Nagano Prefecture. With parts of it bordering the biologically diverse Hikoza Park and public mountain forests, the area has huge ecological potential. Of the total area of about 181,000 square meters, 42% - or about 76,000 square meters - constitutes a green zone. The "Sony Forest" occupies about 58,000 square meters of it.

When constructing a new plant, Akio Morita, who co-founded Sony and later became its chairman, sought to embody the concept of Sony's Founding Prospectus: Create a stable work environment where engineers who have a deep and profound appreciation for technology can realize their societal mission and work to their heart's content. He considered that a greenery-rich industrial park like the ones in the U.S. west coast would be an ideal environment for employees. Based on this idea, he chose Koda where nature was well preserved and established Sony Koda (as it was called then) in this location. Carrying on Morita's will, employees of the Koda Site have committed themselves to promoting greening efforts ever since the company's foundation.

To restore nature in the land that was developed when the plant was built, the employees have planted trees themselves and held workshops on greenery activities to build up knowledge while doing their regular work.

Devoted to two purposes - corporate contributions to the local community and the conservation of nature - the "Sony Forest" offers a number of facilities, including athletic playground equipment, nature trails and observation decks, which are meant for local residents, especially children, to enjoy. This is based on the notion that human intervention will make for ecologically richer forests or, in other words, making effective use of forest resources will lead to the conservation of the natural environment. It also relates to the tradition of "SATOYAMA (rural agricultural area)," which the Japanese have long cherished.

Since company-owned green spaces are susceptible to the impact of fluctuating business performance, ensuring the continued existence of these green spaces requires adding value to them. Value-added, well maintained mountain forests are easy to manage. That is the primary reason why the employee-led conservation efforts for the "Sony Forest" have continued until today.

The Koda Site has earned Excellent Stage 3 certification for five consecutive years since 2005 under SEGES for its earnest environmental activities such as the maintenance of green spaces, employee-involved conservation efforts and contributions to the local community mentioned above. Since 2008, the site has been engaged in a project to restore the "Sony Forest" as SATOYAMA, with the focus on biodiversity. Taking biodiversity into consideration, it is important for us to work closely with other projects in the region. Currently, the Koda Site is taking part in the "Owl Project," which Toyota Motor Corp. is pushing in its "Toyota Forest." A group led by employees is now addressing the challenge of conserving biodiversity in the region.