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Project Report for FY2014

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<http://www.cosmo-oil.co.jp/eng/envi/eco/project.html>



Japan: (NPO) Red Pine Forest – Satoyama Regeneration

Partner: (NPO) Laboratory of Earth Conscious Life

Three Eco Tour sessions to gather fallen leaves (Shibakaki)

Our project is enlisting the help of volunteers to clean up the Japanese akamatsu red pine forests near Ina City in Nagano Prefecture while simultaneously conducting surveys of the ecosystem. Our know-how to restore the value of Japanese red pine forestland is being used to help restore Japanese red pine forests throughout Japan. In fiscal 2014 we conducted Eco Tour sessions in May, October, and November and we had “shibakaki,” an activity to clear away the fallen leaves and dead branches accumulated in the red pine forest, as well as we cleared away poorly growing trees. Our biodiversity survey indicated that areas where we conducted shibakaki activities had greater biodiversity than areas where we did not.



Large rakes for shibakaki activity

Japan: Acorn Forests

Partner: (NPO) Laboratory of Life Conscious Life

The seedlings planted on land ravaged by forest fires are growing and wildlife is returning to the area

This project mobilizes volunteers to help restore “satoyama” (mountainous land near residential areas) in Tomi City, Nagano Prefecture from forest fire damage while conducting ecological surveys. With the 3-year tree planting effort now complete, we are now focusing our efforts on trimming the underbrush to help the forest grow. In August, we trimmed grass and removed vines that were strangling the saplings. In addition, Professor Hiroshi Nakamura at Shinshu University conducted a biodiversity survey. He discovered that biodiversity was most prominent in the border region between the grassy field on the land that suffered forest fire damage and the forestland. Thus, he concluded that instead of replacing all the grassy areas with forest, it would be better to preserve the area with the highest biodiversity by maintaining the grassy fields.



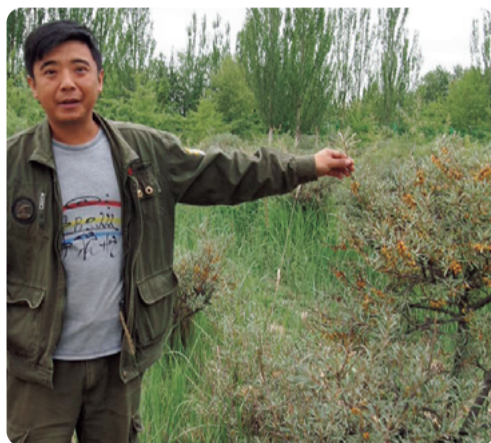
Efforts at removing the vines entangled the saplings

China: Silk Road Afforestation Project

Partner: (NPO) 2050

Planting 90,000 seedlings on the Loess Plateau helped alleviate desertification

In an effort to alleviate desertification along the Silk Road and on the Loess Plateau, we have built a seedling nursery for sea buckthorn, a plant well-suited to the local climate, and have been providing seedlings for afforestation. In fiscal 2014, we planted 90,000 trees over 30 hectares of land in Lanzhou city, Gansu province. Sea buckthorn, Salicaceae, Chinese arborvitae, and other tree saplings are raised on the 33-hectare seedling nursery. Sea buckthorn planted several years ago have grown well and are now producing fruit. A tree planting tour from Japan was conducted there for the first time in the last 3 years. We had volunteers from all over China and it implied that tree planting is becoming more and more common in China.



The sea buckthorn plants are producing an abundance of fruit

Japan: Seed Planting School

Partner: Furano Seed Planting School (LLP)

Provided 9,575 of seedlings for afforestation in Hokkaido

The Seed Planting School gathers tree seeds and seedlings (juvenile trees that have germinated from seeds), nurtures their growth and provides the resulting larger seedlings to organizations that engage in tree planting in Hokkaido. In order to restore the original vegetation, we are raising pines (*Picea glehnii*), oaks (*Quercus crispula* Blume) and other plant varieties that grew in the area prior to the forest fire and are conducting sapling raising and seed planting events. In fiscal 2014, we supplied 9,575 seedlings, and a total of 595 individuals participated in planting seeds and seedlings. It has been two and a half years since the “Sato Oya Seed Planting Project: Nurturing Life and Minds” in 2011. In August we conducted a tour to plant the saplings we had raised.



Oaks raised in a seedling nursery

China: Qin Ling Mountains Forest and Ecosystem Recovery Project

Partner: College of Life Sciences, Northwest University

Stable population of golden snub-nosed monkeys due to biodiversity recovery

The Qin Ling Mountains are a veritable treasure trove of rare wildlife where critically endangered species such as the golden snub-nosed monkey and the giant panda can be found. This project aims to restore biodiversity to its forests through the afforestation of disused forest roads that impede the movement of animals. In fiscal 2014 students from Northwest University, junior high school students, and local residents planted 5,600 trees. So far, we have planted approximately 95,600 trees along over 70% of abandoned forest roads totaling 194 km, and we are proud of the fact that over 80% of these trees have successfully taken root. A survey conducted by Northwestern University revealed that the habitats of squirrels and other animals have expanded and that the fall in the population of golden snub-nosed monkeys has been stopped.



Digging a large hole to plant a seedling in

Japan: Great East Japan Earthquake Recovery Support

The sea is longing for the forest, the forest is longing for the sea

Partner: (NPO) Mori wa Umi no Koibito

Thirty-nine children participated in the three nature experience events we have held in Kesennuma City between summer and winter

Although the habitats along the Sanriku coast recovered quickly from damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, construction designed to protect the shoreline and speed recovery from the disaster has led to a reduction in the number of areas suitable for nature experience events, leading to the serious problem of children losing their connection to nature. Thus, we held a program that allows children to experience and learn about nature by raising oysters using nutrients derived from forests. We held three nature experience events between July and the following January, including a sleepover during the summer and a day-trip in winter. Participants learned about the link between nature and humans in Kesennuma by touring the oyster rafts, learning about the food chain, and catching, cooking, and eating their own fish.



Participants rowing a Japanese-style boat on their way to oyster rafts

Nature experience events: Afan Woodland in Kurohime and Fukko no Mori Treehouse in Higashi Matsushima

We provide opportunities for children who have little contact with nature and children who were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake to interact with nature and experiences that will inspire them to live true to themselves. At the Afan Woodland event in Kurohime, Nagano Prefecture, 11 children and their parents from a school for the blind and a special needs school were invited to participate in experiential learning events that emphasized the senses of touch and hearing. The children utilized their unique sensitivities through touching trees and grass and experiencing the coolness of the water. Another nature experience event in the forest and sea areas surrounding the "Fukko no Mori Treehouse" in Higashi Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture, was attended by approximately 40 people.



Experiencing the forest with their entire bodies (Afan Woodland)

Additional support guaranteed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

In order to protect the abundant tropical virgin forests and habitats in Papua New Guinea, we are providing agricultural and husbandry technical support designed to lead to stable food self-sufficiency and cash income. In fiscal 2014, our local support operations site obtained corporate status. We plan to apply to the Department of Environment and Conservation to obtain protected status for approximately 30,000 hectares of virgin forest area. In December, our project received high praise from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was approved for additional support from the organization. We are continuing with a variety of research projects, including providing agricultural support, developing livestock feed, and developing specialized products using local resources.



Local staff members providing agricultural support to local residents

Junior high school, high school, and university students posted articles on Minamisanriku Town on Facebook

In Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture, which has been engaged in recovery activities focused on coexistence with its natural environment since the Great East Japan Earthquake, we are holding events to help local residents as well as junior high school, high school, and university students in local community and nearby Sendai City learn about initiatives being conducted by local businesses and individuals in order to help train people who will be involved with future recovery activities. In fiscal 2014, we held two-night and three-day sleepovers in August and November that were attended by a total of 31 people. Participants observed and learned about a variety of initiatives and issues such as fields in which liquid fertilizer manufactured at biogas facilities is utilized and large amounts of incinerated ash are accumulating in storage facilities because there is no final disposal site available. On the final day of each event, participants had a presentation session for local residents and uploaded articles to Facebook in order to publicize their activities throughout the world.



Touring a pile of oyster shells (left)/Facebook page (right)

Using leftover vegetables from restaurants and marketplaces as unused resources

With a view to preserving rain forests in the Solomon Islands, we have been providing technical guidance and promoting the widespread practice of sedentary organic farming as a means of enabling local residents to become self-sufficient in feeding themselves and earn cash incomes. In fiscal 2014, the training program was approved by the Provincial Government as a vocational training school. The number of employees was increased from three to five, and they were granted status as civil servants. In addition, carpentry and other courses were also added. Through their understanding of the production (education)-distribution-sales flow, students devised ways to effectively utilize unused resources. The number of varieties of popular honey has increased.



Discarded vegetables to use as fertilizer

Planting 12,260 mangroves to help prevent coastline erosion

We are engaged in mangrove planting projects to help prevent the soil erosion caused by ocean waves. We are increasing the total area of planted trees with the cooperation of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development in a project that has the blessing of Anote Tong, President of Kiribati. Since the local residents recognize the importance of planting mangrove trees, the number of local tree planting activities is on the increase. In fiscal 2014, we planted 12,260 mangrove seeds, greatly exceeding our target. In addition, we have begun an initiative to construct seedling nurseries in order to raise seedlings in an effort to make it easier for the planted mangrove trees to take root and survive.



Mangroves being raised along the Ananau Causeway

12 primary and junior high school students participated at the Mt. Fuji program and 10 high school and university students participated at the Shirakami Mountains program in our Environmental School

The Environmental School was launched to foster "environmental messengers", people with both knowledge and experience capable of taking environmental action and communicating their message to the rest of the world. In fiscal 2014 the School held classes at Mt. Fuji and the Shirakami Mountains. At Mt. Fuji, participants engaged in "eco cooking" and garbage collection as well as trekking in the nearby Aokigahara Forest, while in the Shirakami Mountains, participants learned from the Matagi, the traditional hunting communities in Tohoku area, and waded chest-deep in water as they climbed a mountain gorge. Through their experiences and follow-up discussions, the participants were now able to deepen their knowledge of the natural environment. The Environmental School program was concluded in fiscal 2014, but Mr. Ken Noguchi has begun a new project.



Mr. Noguchi explaining his ideas to children (Mt. Fuji)

Planting 4,420 mangroves to help prevent erosion of the coastline and collected three truckloads of garbage

In the South Pacific island of Tuvalu, we have been planting mangrove trees to alleviate coastal erosion, and raising awareness about waste management among local citizens. In fiscal 2014, we planted 4,420 trees on the Funafuti Atoll — over 1,000 more trees comparing to the last year. In addition, an on-site survey conducted on the Kiaoa Islands in response to a request to plant trees there confirmed that the beaches were being eroded. We conducted test tree plantings of a few dozen trees and held orientations for local residents in preparation for the start of tree planting. The local residents enthusiastically participated in cleanup activities during which we collected three truckloads of garbage.



Branches and leaves sprout from mangrove seeds planted in the area

Continuing efforts to realize "Forests where flying squirrels can live are forests where all animals and plants can live"

This project aims to create satoyama as habitat for wildlife in an area northeast of Mt. Fuji. In fiscal 2014, we began new forest development in areas neighboring those areas where we had already completed tree planting activities. After trimming and clearing underbrush, we planted fruit-bearing broad-leaf trees (two Japanese blue oak trees, two Castanopsis sieboldii, and two Camellia hiemalis) that flying squirrels love. Our surveys of completed areas indicated that although signs of insects and wildlife had increased, there was also damage caused by deer and other animals. We are also conducting a joint-research project with the Yamanashi Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute to find ways of making waste from branches trimmed as part of forest development efforts into woody biomass pellets.



Flying squirrels poking their faces out of a nest box