

THE REALITIES AND PROSPECTS OF FOREST VOLUNTEERING BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN KYOTO MODEL FOREST MOVEMENT

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1. BACK GROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Forest deterioration has been a serious issue in Japan for several decades. The area of abandoned Satoyama and artificial forest has been increasing due to the modern lifestyle and the decline of forestry. Citizen volunteer groups started to get involved with the forest management in 1980s and studies for the citizen forest volunteering have been taking place from various aspects. Recently, the private sector joined the forest management movement as one of their Cooperate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, and almost all prefectures established organizations that arrange cooperative forest management between locals and companies. Since few studies targeting private sector's forest volunteering have conducted, the objective of this study is to find out what has been done by the private sector's forest volunteering and analyze its possibilities and problems. .

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Model Forest movement, which developed in Canada, has a fundamental concept of pursuing sustainable forest management by the partnership and cooperation of various stakeholders. The Model Forest Network has gradually spread in 23 countries, and Kyoto is a part of the network. In 2006, the Model Forest Association was established, and 28 forest sites and 29 companies/organizations joined and engaged with forest management. To begin with the study, the data gathering was conducted based on the materials published by Kyoto Model Forest Association as well as the websites of participating companies/organizations. Then, a survey by questionnaire was carried out on activity representatives of companies/organizations to figure out the details of the forest management activities. Finally, personal interviews were conducted for companies, local governments, and local participants to reveal their insights and opinions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of forest sites has been increasing since 2007 and most sites are located in the southern part in Kyoto which has better public access. 50 % of all the sites contain less than 20 ha, and 20 % sites contain over 100ha area. In the most sites, frequency of forest activities taking place is once to third times in a year, and the total number of annual participants is over 100 people in a half sites. 5 companies/organizations support forest management by not only the volunteering but also the providing the fund for the Model Forest Association. The main body of the activity tends to be employees and their family, locals, and the local governments. In addition, some NPOs, universities, other companies, and citizens have been working together. The common objectives of the activities were to prevent climate change, to maintain better landscapes, and to conserve Satoyama. The main operating tasks were thinning, removing weeds, pruning, and tree-planting. Some recreational activities contained the various use of ecological services and experiencing the Satoyama culture. It indicated that the private sector's forest volunteering is more than just a forest management.

The increase of the sites and the participation of various stakeholders demonstrated the development of the Kyoto Model Forest movement. However, each sites and activities seems to have some problems such as the lack of the evaluation and monitoring process and understandings of past land use and the task's influences on the forest. The activities also tend to be temporary partly because of the low activity frequency. Therefore, approaches and supports especially for participants' enlightenment and sustainable activities will be significant for the further development of Kyoto Model Forest movement.