Toward Coexistence with Nature

Local Recycling of Forest Resources in collaboration with Yusuhara Town, Kochi

Based on the basic principle of realization of coexistence between people and nature and a recycling-oriented society by learning from predecessors, Yusuhara Town promotes forest regeneration to realize true coexistence with forests and pass on the precious global environment to future children.

Expressing empathy for the principle and a commitment to the global environment of Yusuhara Town, the Yazaki Group launched a forest resources recycling project with the town in 2005.

This feature story introduces the forest resources recycling efforts in Yusuhara Town, which were driven by the joined forces among the local government, local residents, and private companies, and the commitment of people involved for the future.

Profile of Yusuhara Town

Yusuhara Town is located in the headwaters region of the Shimanto River, where the forest accounts for 91% of the area of the town. While appreciating the bounty of nature, Yusuhara Town has long made efforts toward the harmonious coexistence with nature. The forest not only has had a great impact on the domain toward the dawn of the new Japan.

In the town, the Ishin no Michi/Dappan no Michi is a road that Ryoma Sakamoto and other SAMURAI used when they left the domain toward the dawn of the new Japan.

Four Seasons in Yusuhara Town

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

Tradition, Culture and History of Yusuhara

Sanndadai (layers of rice paddies on steep slopes) in Kanzakko

Ishin no Michi/Dappan no Michi

Yusuhara Town

Shinku no Mikata


Tsunoyama Kagura (sacred music and dance)

(Intangible Cultural Properties)

Tsunoyama Kagura in the woods for the nurturing of sensitivity amid nature (2010 onward)

Tsunoyama Kagura in the woods for the nurturing of sensitivity amid nature (2012 onward)

Efforts toward Local Recycling of Forest Resources in Yusuhara Town

Proper Management of Forest Resources: Acquisition of FSC certification*1 and promotion of use of the Forest Resources

The Yusuhara Town Forestry Cooperative established the Code of Conduct 21 Sanchu Hassaku*2 in an effort to transform itself into a global forest cooperative toward the age of global environment and recycling of resources and energy. At the same time, the town acquired FSC certification, the first forest cooperative in Japan to receive it.

Development of Human Resources for the Future: Multipurpose utilization of forest resources

The forestation area of Yusuhara Town, which has been jointly improved by the local community and our company, was certified as a forest therapy road. This therapy road was named OAAO*3 Road and has been used for various purposes, including forest kindergarten.

Circulation of Forest Resources: Woody Biomass Community Circulation Model Project

In 2005, the local government, local residents, and companies joined forces with one another and launched the Woody Biomass Community Circulation Model Project. In 2006, the wood pellet factory of Yusuhara Pellet Co., Ltd., started operation. With the aim of promoting the recycling of forest resources, the reactivation of the forest industry, and the improvement and maintenance of the forest in Yusuhara Town, thinnings and mill ends from lumber mills have been pelletized and used as fuel.

Shareholder composition of Yusuhara Pellet Co., Ltd.:

Yusuhara Town: 51%, Yazaki Corporation: 35%, Forest Cooperative: 15%

*1 FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification

This certification is granted to an independent certification body established to assess whether a forest is managed in a responsible and environmentally friendly manner according to the standards and criteria of the international organization, Forest Stewardship Council.

*2 Sanchu Hassaku

This is a set of eight principles for forest regeneration, which was developed by the Yusuhara Forest Cooperative as a symbol for the Sanchu Hassaku (literally eight-point progress) program developed in the late 1980s by Ryoma Sakamoto.

Official website of the Yusuhara Town Forestry Cooperative: http://www.yusuhara.or.jp

*3 OAAO: An abbreviation for One All For One

*4 Forest pellet-fueled air heater

Absorption air heater with wood pellets as a direct energy source, the first of its kind in the world

Construction waste

Wood pellet factory

Environmental Conscience Art Water/Soil Creating Creatives

Wood pellet-fueled air heater

Lumber mill

Lumber and thinning

Restoration of Satoyama Education and Environment

Nature Walking and Eco Tree Forest Therapy

Wood pellet-fueled air heater

Wood pellet-fueled Aroace

Absorption air heater with wood pellets as a direct energy source, the first of its kind in the world

Wood pellet-fueled Aroace

Aroace launched

Forest therapy: OAAO Road (2012 onward)

Yusuhara Pellet Factory

Wood pellet-fueled Aroace

Aroace launched

Wood pellet-fueled Aroace

Wood pellet-fueled Aroace

Yusuhara Pellet Corporation

1989

Shikoku Parts Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Yazaki Corporation, established

2005

Yusuhara Town Forestry Cooperative: 10%

2006

Yusuhara Pellet Corporation established

2008

A wood pellet factory of Yusuhara Pellet Corporation started operation

2010

A wood pellet-fueled air heater launched

2012

Yusuhara Pellet Corporation

Wood pellet factory

Yusuhara Pellet Co., Ltd.

Yusuhara Town: 51%, Yazaki Corporation: 35%, Forest Cooperative: 15%
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Aiming to develop a new form of forestry based on the Sanchu Hassaku

When I first heard of the woody biomass community circulation model project, I was excited about the possibility of creating a new form of forestry as suggested by the unprecedented idea. Since the beginning of the project, we worked with Yazaki to improve the wood pellet production lines, and through our association with Yazaki, we learned of the technology, know-how, and viewpoints that only a manufacturing company like Yazaki can provide. In the future, we wish to deepen our partnership with the company based on the spirit of mutual support.

Cultivating pride in the hometown together with children

Yusuhara Town focuses on cultivating pride in our nature-rich hometown among the residents by deepening the understanding of the significance of global environmental conservation and the forest industry, the core industry of the town. Children, who discover that there are many precious living creatures through cameras installed in the collaborative forest, are amazed at the living creatures they observe with sparkling eyes. Through these experiences, I hope to share the beauty of Yusuhara Town and the value of forests with children.

Remembering the initial principles and commitment

When collaborating with the local community, it is essential for the local government, local companies, and local residents to join forces and share the full commitment to the project. While we are honored to be part of this challenging project and to work with Yusuhara Town and its residents, we also feel a great deal of responsibility. With an eye toward the next 50 and 100 years, I must first understand the purposes of the efforts by Yusuhara Town and then take the initiative in implementing each of them specifically.

Holding out the hopes Resources are too good to waste

In an effort to become self-sustaining, Yusuhara Town promotes efforts to achieve an energy self-sufficiency rate of 100%. The woody biomass community circulation model project was born under the direction of Yusuhara Town after an approach by the Yazaki Group. While some uncertainty existed in the beginning, the ideas and enthusiasm of the company dispelled any concerns. In the future, Yusuhara Town will continue to leverage natural energy using the forests, water, wind, and sunlight to become a self-sustaining, low-carbon town friendly to living creatures.

In order to protect forestry, the key industry of Yusuhara Town

As a forester, I am deeply concerned about the issues faced by the domestic forest industry, such as a lack of successors and falling lumber prices. I sincerely hope that I can contribute to the revitalization of Yusuhara Town by taking the initiative in promoting the various activities of Yusuhara Town. I hope that my involvement in these activities will contribute to the development of successors.

I wish to enliven our community by joining forces with other residents

When the activity to regenerate forests through the collaboration between Yusuhara Town and a private company started, I thought it would open the door to a bright future for the town. Moreover, the fact that people from Yazaki stayed in the town for some years demonstrated their commitment, which in turn encouraged me to become involved. I now participate in the Summer Camp with other local people. In the future, I will continue enlivening the community in collaboration with others.

Always contribute to the local communities

Since we started our business in Yusuhara Town, we have received the generous support and cooperation of many people. The presence of local communities that support the business of the Yazaki Group, including the Yusuhara Factory, is what gave birth to this collaborative project. Based on the corporate policy of the Yazaki Group, we will continue to contribute to the development of local communities through collaboration with all the people involved.