

## (6) Environmental Education

### 6-1) Environmental and Conservation Education in Japan

#### a) Environmental and Conservation Education

The postwar high economic growth has led to a decline in richness and diversity nature in Japan. In urban areas particularly, nature has noticeably disappeared from the neighbourhood and what remains is degraded. For today's children, in contrast to their parents who experienced rich nature in their early years, there are fewer opportunities to fully commune with genuine nature as well as fewer places to commune with nature in the people's urban life environment. Children are also compelled to live their lives with less time for such recreation due to the pressure of a competitive education system that packs their days and hours with extracurricular activities and enrolment in preparatory colleges, etc.

Environmental education has been defined as 'to promote learning by the people to foster understanding and recognition of the relationship between human beings and the environment and to allow the taking action with responsibility'. This concept is basically different from traditional education in the form of subjects such as science and social studies, which merely aim at recognition of natural and social aspects. Conservation education is experiential education for nature as the basis of environmental education. The system of conservation education is formulated for the people, from infancy to the elderly, to develop a sense of aesthetics for natures well as gain knowledge of natural science and its techniques by intentional guidance through conservation activities, communing with nature and nature experiences that form the basis of human thought and action.

The recently popular approach to conservation education, relying solely audio-visual aids and to the exclusion of direct nature experiences, is unlikely to achieve much success. It is important to provide children, in accordance with their individual personality and expressed interests, with a variety of field opportunities to form their own connection with the beauty, novelty, fascination and joys of nature. This approach is especially important in the case of younger children, so as to stimulate their sensibilities foster their curiosity and provide a sound basis for the development of their imaginative powers. As a result of this, it is hoped that children will acquire the ability to grasp issues and solve problems, and in doing so develop an eagerness to work independently for the conservation of natural environment.

#### b) Conservation Education in Schools

In Japan conservation education has yet to become established as a specific subject or curriculum, but is nevertheless is given instruction through the existing subjects of science, social studies, ethical training and through special activities in accordance with the grade of the

pupils. It is hoped schools will develop education plans within the scope these subjects and adopt the range of ideas provided for the production of educational materials and teaching methods, based on the teaching guidelines notified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in accordance with the actual situation of the region or school.

自然保護年鑑刊行会 (1996): 自然保護教育・自然ふれあい活動、自然と共に生きる時代を目指して 自然保護年鑑4、日生社

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History of Environmental Education (Chronological Table)

Year	Japan	Overseas
1931	Enactment of National Parks Law	
1950	Establishment of National Park Association of Japan (foundational juridical person)	
1951	Establishment of Nature Conservation Society of Japan	
1957	Enactment of Natural Parks Law	
1964	Primary and Middle School Teachers' Pollution Control Measures Study Association	
1967	Enactment of Basic Law for Environmental Pollution Control	
1969		Sweden; Revision of Elementary Education Teaching Guidelines (emphasis on environmental issues)
1970		U.S.; Enactment of Environmental education Law
1971	Partial revision of Primary and Middle School Education Guidelines (improvement in education on pollution in social studies) Establishment of the Environment Agency	
1972	Enactment of Nature Conservation Law	Stockholm; United Nations Conference on the Human Establishment of UNEP (United Nations Environment Plan)
1973	Decision by Cabinet on Basic Policy on Conservation on the National Environment	
1974	Establishment of Charter of Nature Conservation	
1975		Belgrade; International Environmental Education conference (Belgrade Charter)
1977	Establishment of Japan Environment Association (foundational juridical person) Promulgation of new Primary and Middle School Education Guidelines (emphasis on environmental issues)	Intergovernmental Conference of Environmental Education of Tbilisi
1978	Promulgation of new High School Education guidelines (emphasis on issues related with environment and human life)	
1982		10th special meeting of UNEP Directors Council (Nairobi Declaration)
1986	Decision by Environment Agency on Long-Term Environment Conservation Plan	
1987		Report of World Conference on Environment and Development (WCED)
1988	Report by Environmental Education Panel of Environment Agency (Seeking for better environment created by everybody)	
1989	Revision of School Education Guidelines (introduction of "living" as a subject)	
1990		U.S.: Enactment of National Environmental Education Act.
1992		Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (Rio de Janeiro) Adoption of Agenda 21, etc.
1993	Promulgation and enforcement of the Basic Environment Law (Promotion of environmental education and learning)	
1994	Establishment of the Basic Environment Plan (Participation of everybody)	
1997		Thessaloniki, International Conference Environment and Society, Educational and Public Awareness for Sustainability (Thessaloniki Declaration)
1998	The Director of the Environment Agency requested the Environment Central Council to inquire "future measures to expedite environmental education and learning." Revision of "Course of Study" (to institute "Period for Integrated Study")	

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (1999) : Textbook for the Group Training Course, Nature Conservation and Natural Parks Management, FY99, "Environmental Education"

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6-2) Various Efforts

6-2-1) Schools, Natural Parks, Natural Monuments, Junior Eco Club, etc,

a) Public Education and Awareness on the Convention on Biological diversity

Public education and awareness on the aims of the “Convention on Biological Diversity”, the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the need for each person to make efforts will be promoted by holding symposiums commemorating the “International Day for biological Diversity (December 29)” proposed by the United Nations to commemorate the day when the “Conservation on Biological Diversity” entered into force, and by information activities such as the compilation and distribution of PR materials.

b) Promotion in School Education etc.

Elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools have so far taught biological diversity (life and types of plants and animals, relation of living things, etc.) and the importance of its conservation mainly in science classes according to the level of the students.

In the present Course of Study, further enhancement of contents is being promoted, while in schools, efforts are being made to deepen the students’ understanding of the mechanisms of living things and diversity through observation and experiments on nearby plants and animals, and learning by experience within nature. Efforts will be made to ensure the improvement of these steps. Also, in higher education, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity have been addressed. Efforts will be made to ensure that considerations be given to the improvement of these steps.

c) Efforts in Social Education

In terms of social education, efforts are being made to deepen understanding and awareness of the conservation of biological diversity through learning by experience such as nature observation events, holding classes on the conservation of the natural environment, establishing social education facilities to commune with nature, and so forth. Future improvement of these endeavours is attempted. The utilisation of such facilities as zoos and museums will be considered.

d) Environment Day

Various events are launched jointly with local governments, non-governmental organisations, etc., centring around “Environment Day (June 5)”, established under the “Basic Environment Law”. At the same time, utilising various information media, PR activities are carried out on

environmental conservation, including the conservation of biological diversity.

e) Survey on Familiar Plants and Animals

The “Survey on Familiar Plants and Animals” implemented with the cooperation of volunteers as part of the “National Survey on the Natural Environment” not only helps an understanding of the distribution of plants and animals, but also promotes public education and awareness on biological diversity. It will thus be continued in the future.

f) Junior Eco-Club

To build a sustainable society capable of environment-friendly the “Junior Eco-Club Project” supports activities which enable children, the future leaders of the next generation, to learn about the local environment and global environment, with friends in the region. As part of its activities, the relation between nature and man is addressed.

g) Measures in Natural Parks

In natural parks, activities are widely undertaken to enhance public awareness on the importance of conservation of natural environment and biological diversity. Those activities include events organised by such facilities as visitor centres to encourage people to come into contact with nature and to learn the mechanisms of nature.

h) Facilities for Utilising Natural Monuments

Touch with natural monuments, which are key natural elements carefully preserved by each region, and deeper understanding of their origin, significance in the local community, etc. provide ideal materials for environmental education in lifelong studies and school education. Therefore, the development of facilities (Eco Museum project) for utilising natural monuments, which will also increase public education, and awareness of the natural environment and its protection will be promoted.

i) Focusing on the “Greenery Day (April 29) and “Greenery Week” (April 23-29), “greening” and fund-raising activities under the slogan of “Greenness”, and nature observation gatherings are held nationwide.

j) All Japan Junior Green Friends Federation

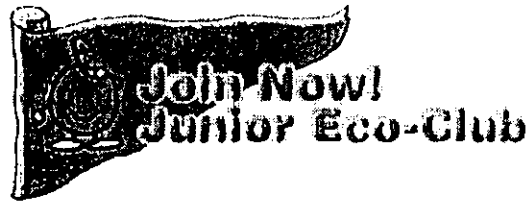
To cultivate a sense of love for nature in the young and to help them develop into healthy, bright members of society, the “All Japan Junior Green Friends Federation” was established. Its purpose is to teach the young, who will be the leaders of the next generation, the concept of

greening, and basic knowledge of forests and forestry by providing opportunities for them to come into contact with forests and wild birds. Disciplined group education will be provided in the suburbs. In addition to supporting the activities of the federation, plans will be drawn up to develop and use schools' forest that are sites for greening activities such as nature watching for children and students, and studies of forests and forestry.

Council of Ministers for Global Environmental Conservation, Government of Japan (1995):  
National Strategy of Japan on Biological Diversity.  
(<http://www.eic.or.jp/eanet/en/pol/nsj/index.html>)

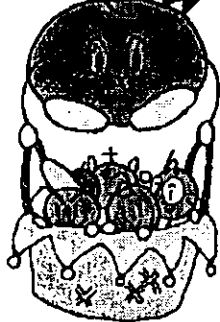
(6) Environmental Education 6-2) Various Measures

6-2-1) Schools, Natural Parks, Natural Monuments, Junior Eco Club, etc,



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• cartoons by Satomi Wajima  
• translation by Maura Hanley  
(modified from Japan)



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Junior Eco-club、 [http://www.wnn.or.jp/wnn-jec/english/whats/join\\_e.html](http://www.wnn.or.jp/wnn-jec/english/whats/join_e.html)

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6-2) Various Measures

6-2-2) Measures in National Forests

In national forests, experience and technologies for managing forests accumulated over many years, and firm organisations and facilities established all over the country are available. Public education and awareness activities which make use of these will further increase an understanding of the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in forests.

For instance, the following activities and projects will be conducted for national forests.

a) Information on forests and forestry are actively provided through opportunities like forest recreation, seminars and training programmes held by companies, etc., and various events held jointly within social education, school education, etc. Officials with enough knowledge and skills on forests and forestry will be sent to these events as forest instructors to help to provide those information.

b) “Forest Fairs” should be held to sell forest products, and to provide information on forests and forestry to those living in cities who have little contact with forests.

c) The “Coming-into-Contact with Forest Promotion Plan (Forest Clubs)” will target citizens to promote their understanding of forests, forestry, and nature through events such as clear-air bathing in forest, experiential forestry and classes to learn forests and forestry.

d) The “Human Green Plan” comprehensively will improve the fields for contacting nature for educating the young in national forests that are scenic and suitable for outdoor sports and promotes activities for popularising and enlightening people on forests and forestry based on those fields.

e) The “Forest School Improvement Work” will comprehensively improve education and training facilities, and forests for experiential forestry in national forests suitable for outdoor study activities in order to ensure extensive use of the fields for education of the young and lifelong learning.

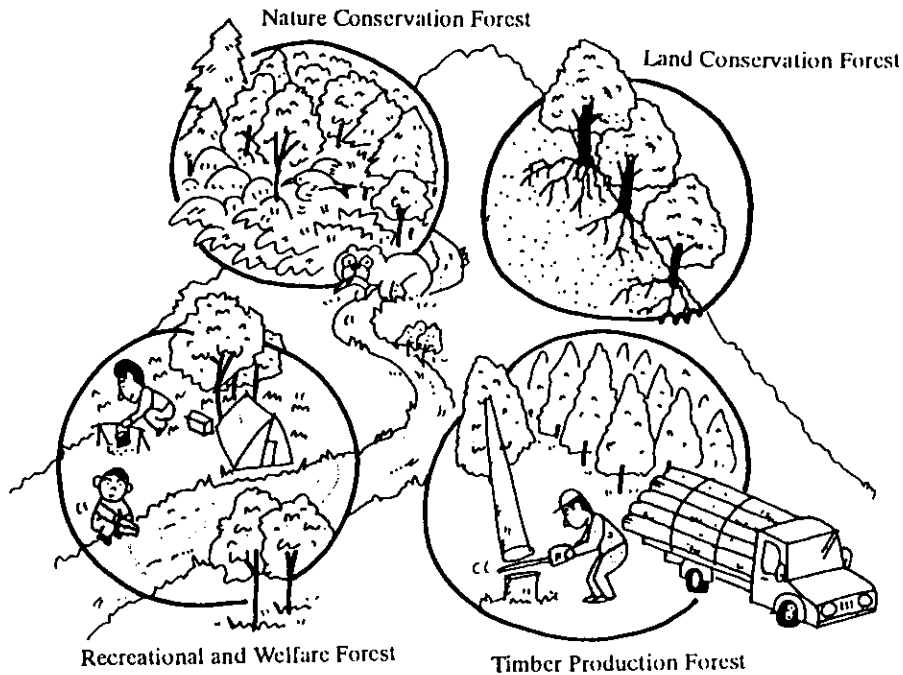
f) The “Management Programme for Buffer Zone of Forest Biosphere Reserves” aims to provide opportunities to learn functions of forests and how to experience them in primeval-like



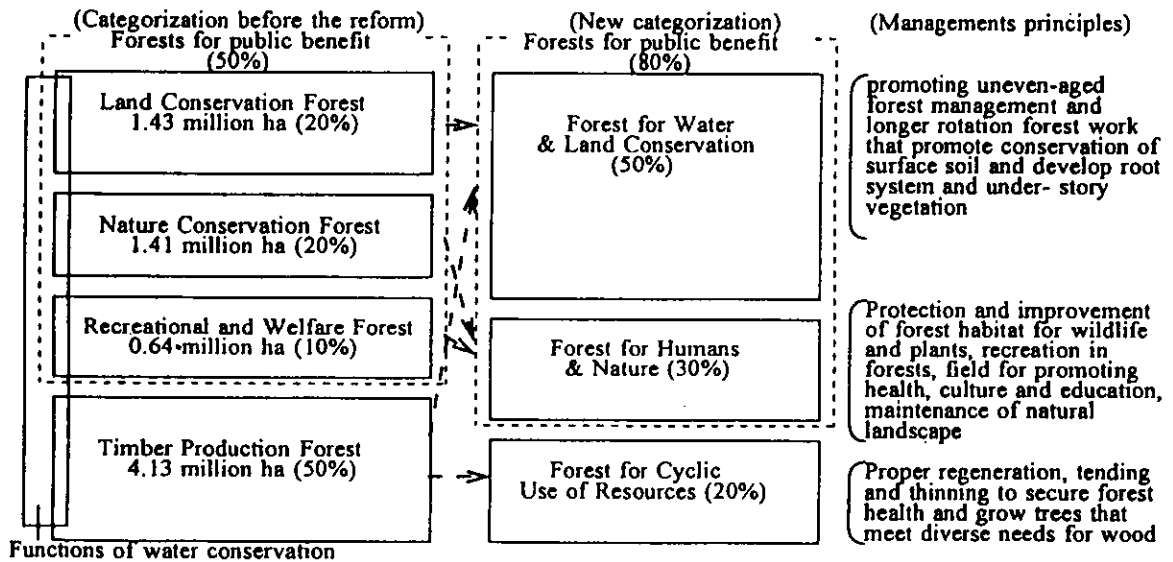
forests in the conservation and utilisation zones (buffer zones) of Forest Biosphere Reserve by preparing educational facilities such as nature observation trails, resting huts, notice boards, etc., and actively promoting public education and awareness by distributing pamphlets and other teaching materials.

Council of Ministers for Global Environmental Conservation, Government of Japan (1995):  
National Strategy of Japan on Biological Diversity.  
(<http://www.eic.or.jp/eanet/en/pol/nsj/index.html>)

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**New categorization of national forests by expected functions**



林野庁監修 (1993) : 平成 5 年度 図説 林業白書、(財) 日本林業協会

Forestry Agency(1999):Annual Report on Trends of Forestry, FY1998,(summary)