



(4) Collaborating with Communities

1. Environmental Preservation Activities in the Kuju Bogatsuru Marshlands

Kuju Bogatsuru Marshland Environmental Preservation Activities

The Kuju Bogatsuru Marshlands are located in western Oita Prefecture and contain approximately 53 ha of high-altitude marshlands surrounded by the Kuju Mountains. Reflective of the varied topography and terrain, the ecosystem is home to rare flora and fauna for which it was registered in 2005 within the Ramsar Convention, an agreement which seeks to protect globally important wetlands.

In order to protect the Kuju Bogatsuru Marshlands and the rare plants found in and around it, Kyushu Electric Power joined with the Ministry of the Environment, the Taketa City government, the "Kuju Nature Preservation Society" and other members of local communities in 2000 to recommence long-neglected controlled burning activities. At present, our activities are primarily administered by the Kyuden Mirai Foundation (established in May 2016), which oversees not only the controlled burning activities but various other environmental preservation activities, such as invasive species eradication and Kyushu azalea conservation on adjacent Mt. Hijiidake (on land owned by the Kyushu Electric Power).

[Controlled Burning Activities]

We carry out controlled burning which maintains the marshland environment by removing shrub and weed overgrowth and promoting new budding plants.

Every year between August and September, we perform perimeter clearing and burning around the main controlled burning area in order to prevent the controlled burn from spreading beyond its intended area, and then in March of the following year, we carry out the main controlled burn within the marshlands.

In FY2016, a group of 414 volunteers made up of people from the local community, Kyushu Electric Power Group employees, their families and others took part in the controlled burning activities.



Perimeter clearing



Main burning (controlled burning)

[Activity Expansion Efforts]

In anticipation of a potential shortage of controlled burning leaders in the future, the Kyuden Mirai Foundation began a controlled burning leadership training course in FY2016 which is aimed at Kyushu Electric Power Group employees. This course is comprised of practical training in such skills as grass cutter operation and classroom lectures about the activity history, safety instruction and the like. In the first year, approximately 30 Kyushu Electric Power Group employees took the course.



Practical instruction



Safety course instruction

[Kyushu Azalea Conservation and Mountain Trail Improvement Activities]

We clear away trees and plants (such as panicked hydrangea) which hinder the growth of the Kyushu azalea (a near-threatened species in Oita Prefecture) and perform other activities aimed at protecting biodiversity.

We also maintain and improve mountain trails so that mountain wildflowers do not get trampled underfoot.

The activity held on November 3, 2016 was carried out with the help of 73 volunteers, including current and former Kyushu Electric Power employees.



Clearing obstructing trees



Mountain trail improvement

2. Environmental Month Initiatives

June has been designated "Environmental Month," and every year a variety of environmental activities are carried out nationwide over the course of the month. We, too, host environmental communication events, and in FY2016 we undertook a variety of community-based activities throughout Kyushu, including promoting environmental education amongst the next generation under the slogan of "Kyuden Environmental Month Eco-Challenge 2016 - Spread the Word! Our Commitment in Our Communities."

[Environmental Education for the Next Generation]

We carried out a range of the next generation-focused environmental education activities aimed at local kindergartners, elementary and junior high school children. Among the various activities were environmental and energy-related on-demand courses, sweet potato harvesting (and planting) and sweetfish fry (juvenile fish) release activities at 22 offices around Kyushu.



Kindergartners and daycare children plant sweet potatoes (Shin-Oita Power Plant)



Juvenile fish release activity (Mimi River Hydro-Power Development Office)



My Environmental Action

"Sweet Potato Harvest Experience"

Hiyoko-no-Kuni Land Daycare
Principal

Hitomi Sasaki



At our daycare we understand how essential it is that children have a zest for life, and we pursue activities that will impart it to them. Two of our annual activities, that we do with the help of Kyushu Electric Power, are sweet potato planting and harvesting, the latter of which is done by parents and children together. The children love being out under a blue sky in the open field, experiencing its colors, smells and textures as they pull sweet potatoes from the dirt, exclaiming, "Look! Look! I got a potato!" And the joy they feel as they open their dirt-black hands, beaming proudly, is shared equally by their parents and all the other adults.

Their harvesting experience gives them a sense of the significance of the grace they say before their meals. It makes them that much more grateful for the food they eat and for the work done to prepare it. And it gives them a deeper appreciation of the value of life.

I hope we can continue these activities so that, through them, we can continue to teach our children about the importance of nature and the value of life.

