Tree thinning and mochi-pounding event at Ricoh Chiba Fureai-no-Mori forest

On December 18, 2010, the Chiba Fureai-no-Mori Conservation Group conducted its 65th activity in Ricoh Chiba Fureai-no-Mori forest in Wakaba-ku, Chiba City, with 32 participants, including employees of Ricoh Japan, Ricoh Technosystems and other Ricoh group companies and their families. Despite the cold wave prevailing across Japan, the volunteers thinned out unwanted trees and comfortably enjoyed the annual mochi-pounding because sunshine abundantly penetrated the forest. With the help of the participants' children, pounded mochi was seasoned and served with *tonjiru* (miso soup with pork). With a sense of accomplishment and gastronomical satisfaction, the volunteer group wrapped up its 2010 activities.

The group started its activities in 2004, when it entered into an agreement—based on Chiba Prefecture's ordinance on conserving rural landscape—with the forest owner, who was looking for help with the maintenance of his cedar forest, which was plagued with rampant bamboo. Since then, the volunteer group has been working mainly in the following three areas: (1) weeding to promote the growth of forest trees, (2) creating space to build recreation facilities, and (3) using the timber from thinned out trees to build the recreation facilities.

Employees and their families who joined the tree thinning event

Forest conservation activities at Tanzawa-Harudake-no-Mori

On August 28, 2010, the Yadoriki Shinboku Group carried out forest conservation activity in Tanzawa-Harudake-no-Mori. This environmental volunteer group of Ricoh employees started its activities in 2001, when Kanagawa Prefecture launched its Forest Development Partnership Program. While initial activity revolved around the conservation of Yadoriki spring, the group has expanded its activities since 2006 to include the management and monitoring of a mixed forest (including zelkova trees) in Tanzawa-Oyama Kanagawa Prefectural Natural Park, as well as the development and management of many bamboo forests in the prefecture. For their latest, or 53rd, activity event, the volunteers changed their activity plan from controlled burning to revetment work at Harudake Stream, due to the health concerns related to the extremely hot weather that day, which was the beginning of fall according to the calendar. The stream, 1.5 m wide and 30 cm deep (near the entrance of Harudake-no-Mori), often causes flash floods and washes away mud and trees in the surrounding area. As recent flash floods had created two stream lines (incidentally, a bridge they built in 2009 managed to stay intact), the volunteers dammed up one of the lines and strengthened the stream bank with rocks. As a result of the hard work, a robust, easy-to-walk steam bank was completed, allowing visitors to easily walk into the stream and enjoy playing in the water.

After the volunteer work it is much easier to walk into the stream and enjoy playing in the water.

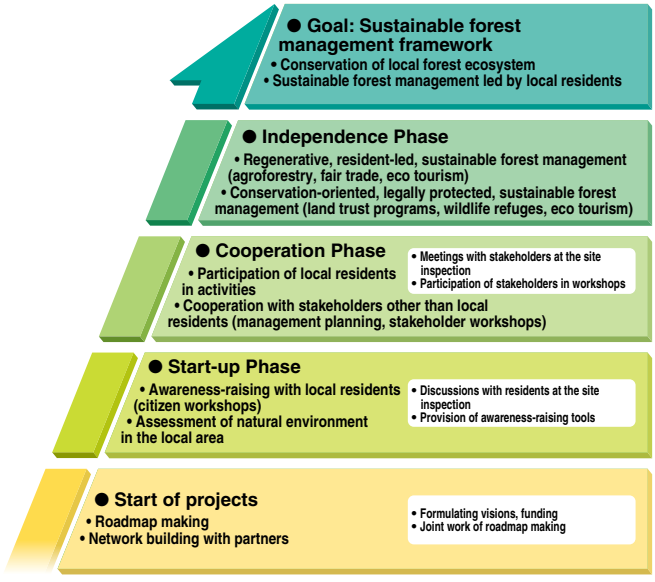
Forest Ecosystem Conservation Projects

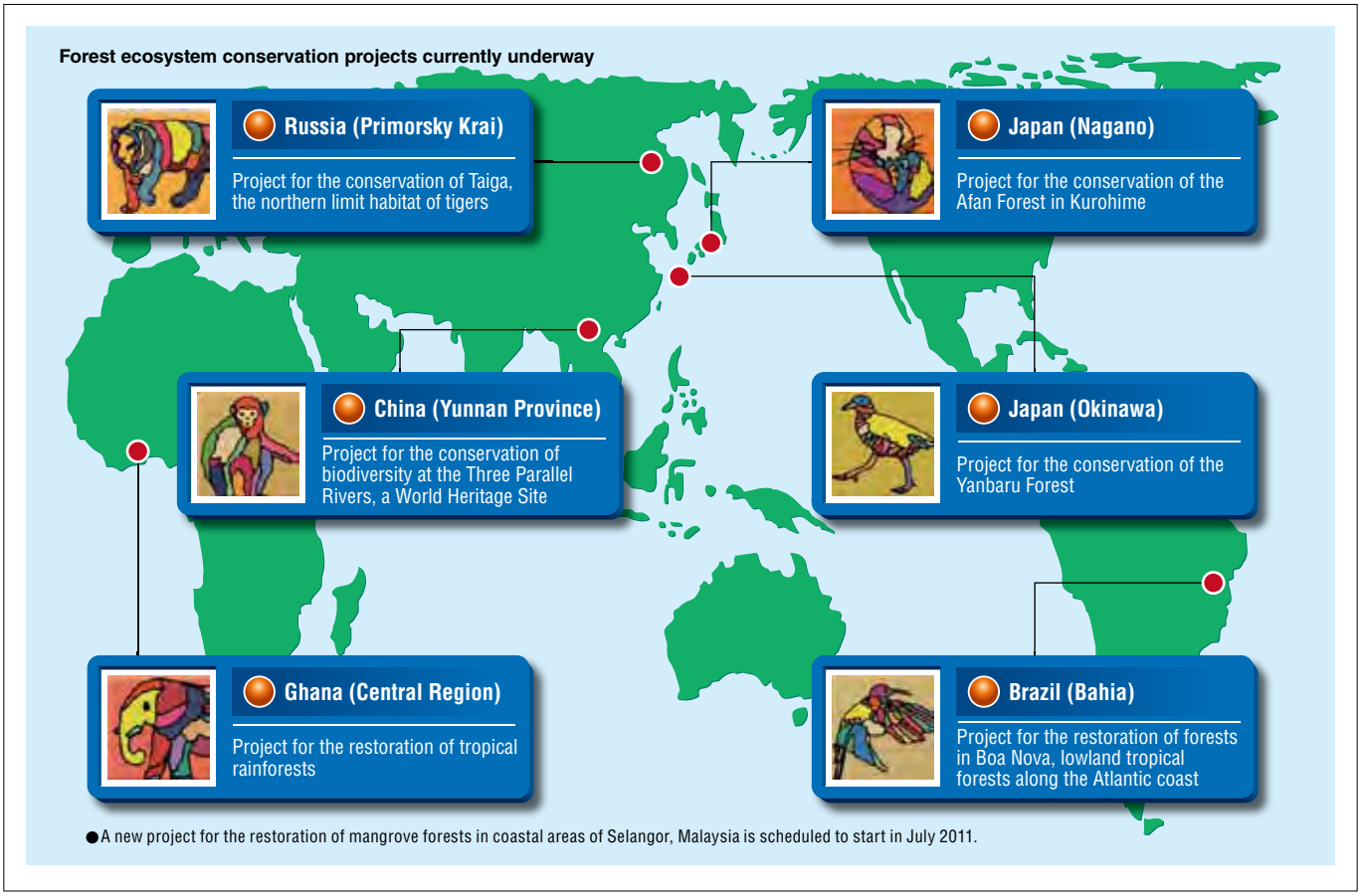
<Ricoh Co., Ltd. (Global)>

Various flora and fauna habitats exist, and unique ecosystems are maintained in forests, lakes and ponds, coral reefs, and oceans. If these ecosystems are damaged, the natural environment that is indispensable for maintaining the life of human beings will be harmed. Ricoh places priority particularly on forest ecosystems with rich biodiversity and has been promoting forest ecosystem conservation projects since fiscal 1999 in partnership with environmental NGOs and local communities. Unlike simple afforestation, the main aims of these activities are to protect the habitats of indigenous species and the life of residents, and to establish a system for sustainable forestry management. The projects are financed by the social contribution reserve that Ricoh established to continuously carry out social contribution activities. The reserve is funded annually based on the approval of Ricoh's general shareholders' meeting and the reserve fund is used for addressing multiple global issues, including global environment conservation and youth-related issues.

Steps to achieve the project goal

Roles of Ricoh





* The progress of each project can be monitored at: http://www.ricoh.com/environment/biodiversity/forest_ecosystem/01_01.html

Supporting forest recovery projects

<Ricoh Co., Ltd. (Japan)>

Ricoh has been supporting the Afan Forest Project since November 2001. The project, organized by the C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust since its founding in 2002, aims to create forests in which a wide variety of species and humans can maintain harmonious relationships. The trust accordingly conducts ecological surveys and research and conservation activities in a roughly 100,000 square-meter forest in Kurohime, Nagano prefecture. Once degraded, forest ecosystems cannot easily recover—sometimes it requires hundreds of years if left to natural capacities only. It is therefore, important for us to help forests recover from their wounds. Envisioning the woodland 100 years from now, the project has been working to restore the ecosystem in the forest by selecting priority trees and facilitating the natural regeneration process. As a result, the variety and the population of forest inhabitants, including Glirulus japonicas (Japanese Dormouse) and other endangered species, have been increasing at a steady pace.


The Afan Forest at the initial phase of the project


The forest is restored as a result of our project.

Boa Nova Green Corridor Project in Brazil

<Ricoh Co., Ltd. (Global)>

Since August 2007, Ricoh has been a supporter of a project to restore lowland tropical forests along the Atlantic coast in the region of Boa Nova in Bahia state, Brazil. The project, led by local and Japanese non-profit organizations, SAVE Brazil and BirdLife Asia, respectively, is conducted as a part of the Green Corridor Project in the Atlantic coast areas. Bao Nova, a region of rich biodiversity, is home to 220 species of birds and other animals. This great wildlife habitat—i.e., the forests in the region—has been increasingly destroyed over the years mainly due to illegal logging, overgrazing, and conversion to plantations. To restore lost and damaged forest, the project members have been working closely with 80 land owners, local civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. Based on the forest resource management plan developed, the project aims to create a sustainable community and achieve a harmonious relationship between the forests and local residents. The Brazilian government has also provided strong support for this project. In addition to the provision of a grant totaling 150,000 dollars for the three years from 2009, the government created a national park in Boa Nova in June 2010. The active engagement of the national government has added momentum to the forest restoration project.


Elementary students learning about the environment during their field trip to the forest