

Community-Based Sea Grass Bed Restoration and Management in Seto Inland Sea: Case of Akou Coast in Japan

Osamu Matsuda

Professor Emeritus

Hiroshima University

Hachihonmatsu-Minami 6-8-13

Higashi-Hiroshima 739-0144, Japan

E-mail Address: matsuda036@go3.enjoy.ne.jp

Akou Coast located in the westernmost part of Hyogo Prefecture, Japan is one of representative sites for environmental restoration in Seto Inland Sea based on the concept of Sato-umi which is a currently topical term referring to coastal ecosystems with harmonized human interaction under community-based management. Since variety of activities on the environmental restoration and education has been developed in this area, local people and varieties of stakeholders joined the community-based or co-management activities. Among variety of activities, an activity on the conservation of Chikusa River watershed and an activity on sea grass bed restoration by marine divers are typical examples. Recently, these activities are integrated as a part of Sato-umi project in Akou Coast which Ministry of the Environment as central government, local government of Hyogo Prefecture as well as the municipality of Akou City supported.

Major targets of this Sato-umi project in Akou Coast are restoration of the deteriorated eel grass bed and unique shore vegetation along the coast. Restoration of decreased resource level of short-neck clam and promotion of environmental education are also important parts of the project. Among many related activities, achievement attained by Misaki elementary school is one of the highlights in which school children raised seedlings of eel grass and planted them in the targeted area after the frequent observation of the environment and ecosystem of Akou Coast.

During the progress of the Sato-umi project, many regional meetings were held in order to share the basic idea of the restoration based on the concept of Sato-umi. On the occasion of Sato-umi Symposium in Akou held in March, 2009, many people of community-based activity groups assembled at Akou City Hall, and discussed about future plan. This indicated the strong involvement of a variety of relevant persons, group and others in Sato-umi project. With a view to materializing future plans, the establishment of an Akou Coast Sato-umi Committee for co-management centered on Akou area is now within reach.



Historically, Akou Coast was well known for traditional salt making industry and local people had made a good use of shallow coastal area. A part of the old salt pan is converted to the public Seashore Park by the prefectural government, in which the Salt Industry Museum was founded. Since the Seashore Park is one of the activity centers for the local people, combined activity of Sato-umi project with the Seashore Park is also expected.