

October 26, 2023

“Toyobo Aya-no-Mori” forest receives certification to be registered as OECM

“Toyobo Aya-no-Mori,” a forest in Aya-cho, Miyazaki Prefecture, owned by the Toyobo Group, has been certified by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) as a site where biodiversity is being preserved, to be registered as an OECM*1. A ceremony to present the certification was held at Seiryō Kaikan hall in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, on October 25.



“Toyobo Aya-no-Mori” forest



At the certification presentation ceremony

The 140-hectare Aya-no-Mori, acquired by the Toyobo Group in 1971 with the aim of self-supplying raw materials for synthetic fibers, is a secondary forest*2, which is close to a natural forest mixed with planted trees such as cedars. According to a survey of the forest’s ecosystem conducted by an external organization in 2022, it has a high level of vegetation naturalness. The forest is home to rare fauna and flora, including endangered species like the mountain hawk-eagle and groups of gigantic oak trees. Following the survey results, the Group signed a comprehensive partnership agreement with Aya-cho in June 2023 to promote joint projects to actively preserve biodiversity in Aya-no-Mori*3.

MOEJ in fiscal 2023 began the certification system for sites where biodiversity is being preserved to attain “30by30,” an international goal adopted at the U.N. Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) to preserve and protect at least 30% of each nation’s land and sea areas. 122 sites in 35 prefectures are the first areas to receive such certification.

Aya-no-Mori has received high marks for its goal for studying how to enable local residents to use the forest, and its efforts to enable sustainable forest management to maintain the forest’s multi-faceted functions such as alleviation of the effects of floods and droughts in the region by adjusting the amount of water flowing through the river, in addition to protecting the habitats of rare animals.

At the October 25 certification presentation ceremony, Yukiko Mochida, General Manager of Toyobo’s Corporate Sustainability Department, and Masakatsu Shirai, President of Toyobo Real Estate Co., Ltd. received the certification from Kentaro Asahi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment.

Toyobo Group is committed to promoting sustainable management of Aya-no-Mori for “nature positive,” an initiative to halt and reverse loss in biodiversity, in partnership with Aya-cho. Doing so will allow Toyobo Group to contribute to ensuring the good condition of water areas, atmosphere and soil, and biodiversity, a goal stipulated in its long-term vision, “Sustainable Vision 2030”*4.

*1: Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures: Land where biodiversity is preserved by the community, corporations and organizations.

*2: Naturally restored forest from seeds that remained underground after the natural forest (primary forest) was lost due to wind/flood damage, wildfires, or tree harvesting.

*3: Toyobo’s press release dated June 6, 2023, titled “[Toyobo signs a comprehensive partnership agreement with the town of Aya, Miyazaki Prefecture](#)”

*4: Toyobo “[Sustainable Vision 2030](#)”

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