

ENLIGHTENING CITIZEN TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON ENVIRONMENT THROUGH A RESEARCH FOR FINDING OUT THE REALITY OF SEABED LITTER

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From the incidence of pollution in Mizushima to the establishment of our Foundation:

Since 1961, a gigantic industrial park was constructed in Mizushima, the southern part of Kurashiki city in Okayama prefecture, facing the Seto Inland Sea. The second half of the 1960s, the environments of the area -above all the air- were polluted seriously, and many patients were occurred. In 1983, the patients took eight main companies in the Mizushima industrial park to the court. The patients reconciled with those companies in 1996, getting some settlement money.

After their reconciliation with eight companies, the Mizushima Foundation was established in 2000 using a part of the settlement money. We, the members of this foundation have worked for the environmental rehabilitation in Mizushima. Our activities contain many various fields such as revival activities for the revival of waterside environment, sharing the information regarding the experiences of the residents in polluted areas with people in developing countries.

Research activities on Seabed litter:

The Seto Inland Sea, one of the popular enclosed coastal seas, has had great value for its excellent scenery and environment. But through the period of rapid economic growth, the industrialization of the coast regions such as the Mizushima industrial park badly destroyed the environment in and along the sea. We have focused on the Seabed litter issue, which is recognized as a "hidden environmental issue", among serious marine environmental issues. The research activities were pursued together with citizens from the viewpoint that the issues are related to waste disposal in the daily lives, recovery of good sea environment, and investigating measures and policies to realize a sustainable society. Our research has been supported by Japan Fund for Global Environment of Japan Environment Corporation since 2000.

Based on these results, we have been holding report meetings annually. In 2003 we submitted the policy recommendation to the municipal governments of Kurashiki and Okayama as we have summarized it to appeal the necessity of reducing the volume of Seabed litters and campaigns to educate citizens in the district. Further, we have a plan to promote the activities for reducing Seabed litters by having good partnerships with municipal governments, fishermen, and citizens. At the same time, we will further continue our researches in the near.