

Shinshu ESD Consortium: FY2021 Achievement Presentation & Networking Meeting

~ Activity Report ~

1. School: Niiharu Municipal Elementary School, Minakami-machi, Gunma
2. Participating students:
(Grade/Number) 28 students of Grade 5
3. Activities
 - (1) Activity name: Let's look into the nature of Niiharu.
 - (2) Objectives:
 - To find out the real situation of Akaya Forest, a home of Japan's rich ecosystem, and sense the natural beauty of the hometown, and try to put into practice what the students can do themselves
 - (3) ESD perspectives & qualities/abilities to nurture
 - 1) Concept components

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diversity (diverse phenomena happening)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairness (everyone matters)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interdependency (interaction)	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration (link and cooperate with each other)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limitedness (everything is finite)	<input type="checkbox"/> Accountability (sense of responsibility)
<input type="checkbox"/> Others ()	
 - 2) Qualities/abilities to nurture

<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to think critically	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ability to cooperate with others
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to draw future visions and make plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attitude to respect linkage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ability to think from multiple perspectives and comprehensively	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attitude to participate willingly
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ability to communicate	
 - (4) Related SDGs
 12. Responsible consumption and production
 15. Life on land
 - (5) Activity description:
 - 1) Let's understand Akaya Forest.
 - Let's hear from officials of the Akaya Project Team, Regional Revitalization Office, Comprehensive Strategy Division of Minakami Township an overview of Akaya Forest.
 - Learn about biodiversity and biological ecosystems, and discuss any questions and thoughts.
 - 2) Set a theme that you want to explore for yourself.
 - Each student thinks what to investigate about ecosystems and the nature of the UNESCO Eco Park.
 - In setting your own theme, seek advice from staff members of the Nature Conservation Society of Japan (NACS-J).
 - 3) Let's start nature observation at Mt. Mikuni.
 - Take a walk around Oizumata and observe the process of returning the man-made forest to a natural forest.
 - Tour of the Box Trap Experiment Station to study the ecosystem of Oizumata
 - 4) Experience Niiharu to feel the wonders of nature.
 - Outdoor experiences (Team building, kayaking on Lake Akaya)
 - Let's experience logging
 - Let's turn the blessings of Akaya Forest into fragrance (aroma extraction experience)
 - 5) Try a woodwork project, making use of trees of Niiharu.
 - Let's make an artistic expressions together



- 6) Let's send out messages about the nature of Niiharu.
 - Put together your findings about your own theme, and share your amazement, discoveries, and thoughts on how to live together with nature.



4. Outcomes

Our school is located in the Minakami UNESCO Eco Park. Even though precious nature is a part of life, that fact is not well known. There are few opportunities to know or think about the benefits. Accordingly, we started with the fifth grade students to let them study what the UNESCO Eco Park is. They learned that the first drop of the Tone River begins at the heart of the UNESCO Eco Park and that the Eco Park is home to the precious golden eagles. They have come to take strong interest in their hometown.

Then, we visited the national forest in Koizumata. There, we learned that in early Showa period, people used the forest trees to make charcoal, and that the forest was subsequently changed to a man-made forest and now efforts are ongoing to turn it back to the natural forest. Having learned that trees are deeply involved in their lives, the students have become interested in the trees of Niiharu.

Accordingly, the students enjoyed first-hand experiences of appreciating the charm of Niiharu through a program that the Minakami-machi local government launched this fiscal year. They discovered many things that they had considered familiar but in fact had had little knowledge about. They were able to experience the new charm of Niiharu.

Through the hands-on activities, students were able to build up own thoughts by interacting with classmates and the people they came to interact with during the programs.

5. Crafting of the teaching methods and organization

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| 1) NACS-J | Learning about Akaya Forest |
| 2) Akaya Fureai Forest Center (Forestry Agency) | -ditto - |
| 3) Minakami-machi Comprehensive Strategy Division | Let's learn about Minakami Eco Park, |
| 4) Minakami-machi Experience Trip | Community Experience: Kayaking at Lake Akaya (Niiharu viewed from lake surface)
Team Building (Everyone cooperates)
Logging experience
Fragrance experience (extracting fragrance from felled trees)
Woodwork using felled tree |
| 5) Learning support volunteers (local people) | Support for cross-subject learnings (general studies and arts & crafts) |