



Good Practice Story Title:

Continued Protection of the Coast,
Miraculous Regeneration

Destination:

Mitoyo, Kagawa

Country:

Japan

Submitting Organization:

Mitoyo City Office

Category (*check only one box*):

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing



Destination description *(150-200 words)*

Mitoyo City, located in the western Kagawa Prefecture on the island of Shikoku, is a beautiful locale surrounded by the Shonai Peninsula, numerous islands, and rural mountains which all overlook the Seto Inland Sea.

Chichibugahama beach is a shallow beach in Mitoyo that extends for one kilometer from north to south. At low tide, the sky is reflected in the tide pools on the sandy beach, creating a scene that looks like a mirror in the sky. Seeing this scene with one's own eyes has become a recent sensation.

Chichibugahama beach has always been a well-loved place to play for local children as a shallow beach thanks to its rare geographical features. Many locals have fond memories of commuting and going to school while seeing the expressions of the sea in the four seasons and the beauty of the setting sun. Both adults and children loved this beach as part of their daily scenery.

However, Chichibugahama beach around 1994 was not the beautiful beach it is now, but a beach where garbage washed up from the Seto Inland Sea, and the sandy beach was sadly always scattered with marine debris. At that time, a large-scale plan to reclaim the coast to attract factories was underway, and the coast faced a crisis of disappearance.

Summary of Good Practice Story *(150-200 words)*

A miracle occurred at this beach when thanks to a single photo, the number of annual visitors increased about 100-fold from 5,500 to 500,000 in six years.

There are many photogenic tourist spots all over the world, but Chichibugahama beach is not just a photo spot - it has brought together the local community while injecting vigor into the tourism industry, and brought hope to the local economy. Behind this is the figure of local residents who once stood up against the crisis of coastal reclamation.

It is very rare for a coast that was at risk of natural extinction to be reinvigorated by the power of the region and reborn as a tourist spot. Furthermore, through



awareness and fundraising activities to convey to tourists the significance of the local efforts, it has become a symbolic model case for achieving both environmental conservation and economic growth.

Issues faced *(150-200 words)*

Until 2017, before Chichibugahama beach attracted widespread attention, Mitoyo was in a situation where the main industries such as manufacturing and agriculture were in decline, and no new industry to vitalize the city could be identified. At the same time, the outflow of population was serious issue. The population was steadily decreasing, and it was projected to decrease from about 70,000 to about 40,000 by 2045.

There were few famous tourist spots, and Mitoyo was not widely renowned. Many residents did not realize the value of their own hometown.

Chichibugahama beach was no exception. Although it was a familiar beach to local residents, there was a lot of garbage drifting from the Seto Inland Sea, and its value was not fully recognized. Many residents did not show interest even when the plan to reclaim the coast for factory attraction that surfaced around 1994, and the beach faced the crisis of reclamation many times.

Solution *(100-150 words)*

Ultimately, none other than the local residents saved the coast from the crisis of reclamation. "Something once reclaimed will never return a second time" was the sentiment among the first people who started cleaning the beach as a form of "modest resistance." People from various occupations, including local fishermen, stood up to protect this beach, and a volunteer group called "Chichibu no Kai" was formed.



Whether it was sunny, rainy, or snowy, they continued to clean the beach. Their strong feelings gradually spread to those around them, and eventually the shore reclamation plan was canceled. The beautiful coast was protected and is now connected to the current Chichibugahama beach. Even after the plan was canceled, the cleaning activities continued.

The reason the activities continued even after the plan was canceled is because there was joy in making their hometown beautiful with their own hands. And because they wanted to preserve this nature for the children of the future.

The activities of Chichibu no Kai, which has protected the coast numerous times from the crisis of development, are still ongoing even after more than 25 years. It took 20 years for their efforts to pay off and for Chichibugahama beach to be in the spotlight.

The turning point was a photo submitted to a photo contest held by the local tourism association in 2017.

A fantastic scene where the sky is reflected in the tide pool like a mirror - it was another expression of Chichibugahama beach that had gone long unnoticed, even though it was a long unchanged natural feature of the beach.

The tourism association focused on the potential of this photo and actively promoted it. This triggered the number of visitors to increase about 100-fold in just six years.

Thus, Chichibugahama beach, which the region has continued to protect, has transformed into a tourist spot that attracts many people. Related facilities, services, and employment have appeared, and a new industry, the tourism industry, finally took root in Mitoyo.



Methods, Steps, and Tools applied (500-600 words)

1. Discovery and dissemination of appeal using social media

The local tourism association quickly noticed the appeal of Chichibugahama beach and collaborated with local amateur photographers. They studied the tide level, weather, and light conditions to ensure that visitors could take their own water mirror photos, and disseminated the optimal photo timing via social media.

2. Cooperation between local businesses and the community

The number of local businesses who sympathized with the attitude of Chichibu no Kai, which has been cleaning the beach for many years, has increased. As an effort to reduce plastic, there has been an increased in the number of shops that are considerate of the environment and have introduced paper straws and gotten rid of plastic cups.

3. Increase in population and tourism industry's contribution to the local economy

As the number of visitors to Chichibugahama beach has steadily increased, a new economic cycle has been created in the region. The number of accommodation facilities in Mitoyo City has increased from 28 to 65 in six years, and related businesses such as restaurants, shops, and activities have increased rapidly. As a result, tourism has become one of the main industries in the region, and employment opportunities have expanded.

In addition, the number of people moving to Mitoyo from urban areas is gradually increasing, and efforts to utilize vacant house, such as opening inns and shops, are also progressing. In the midst of a population decline, a model for sustainable regional regeneration through tourism is being realized.

4. Introduction of the Chichibugahama Beach Cooperation Fund System

In 2023, the Chichibugahama Beach Cooperation Fund System was founded to spread awareness and support coastal conservation. Activities of the fund include conveying the significance of the cleaning activities and coastal conservation activities of Chichibu no Kai on local signboards and websites and calling for donations from visitors. The monies collected by the cooperation fund are used for



cleaning tools, surveys of coastal flora and fauna, and creation of environmental conservation teaching materials. The Environmental Learning Book, which summarizes the results of the flora and fauna survey, is distributed not only to visitors but also to children in local elementary and junior high schools.

Achievements and Results *(250-300 words)*

1. Rapid increase in accommodation facilities and tourism consumption

Thanks to the efforts and collaboration between the local residents, volunteers, accommodation owners, food and beverage vendors, and activity conductors, the number of accommodation facilities in Mitoyo has increased from 28 to 65 in six years.

The tourism consumption amount, which was originally close to zero, reached 5.2 billion yen annually in 2022 thanks to visitors who came to Chichibugahama beach, and a full-fledged tourism industry was born in the region.

2. Heightened awareness of plastic reduction

Among the local businesses who sympathized with the activities of Chichibu no Kai to protect Chichibugahama beach, efforts to reduce plastic, such as the introduction of paper straws and reuse containers, spread and awareness as an environmentally friendly tourist spot increased.

3. Expansion of volunteer activities and change in residents' sentiments

Thanks to the many visitors who come to Chichibugahama beach can call it beautiful and comment on the miraculous view, local residents have had an opportunity to realize the charm of their own hometown, where before Chichibugahama beach was not recognized for its value.

A symbol of this change is the spread of the beach cleaning activities by Chichibu no Kai, which started with only seven people in 1996. The cleaning activities resonated with many people, and currently more than 250 people are registered volunteers.



Parents and children, immigrants, tourists, and local elementary school students also participate, and environmental conservation awareness is increasing across generations.

The realization that "the coast we have protected with our own hands is attracting attention from all over the country" has nurtured a sense of pride and autonomy in the region, and the number of residents who are actively involved in events and environmental activities has increased. The issue of lack of successors has also been overcome, and the activities are evolving into a sustainable form.

4. Building a model of a tourist spot that the region and visitors protect together

In 2023, the cooperation fund system was introduced, and a mechanism was established for visitors to contribute to coastal conservation. The "form of co-creation" where local residents and tourists protect nature together commenced, and a new relationship between the region and visitors continues to be fostered.

Lessons Learned and Advice (150-200 words)

1. Protect the limited beautiful scenery

The first step to protect the beautiful scenery is for local residents to share the recognition that nature is not infinite or guaranteed. In order to preserve nature to the next generation, it is essential for each resident to correctly understand the value of the region and correctly recognize its importance.

2. Understanding and continuous efforts of residents produce results

In Mitoyo, local residents and volunteers have continued conservation activities and beach cleaning for over 25 years. This accumulation of these efforts has led to visible results such as an increase in tourists and an improvement in the attractiveness of the region.

3. Tourism development start come from within the region

Even in small, local governments, it is possible to create tourist spots by making use of local resources. What is important is deep involvement of the local community in



tourism development. Only with the feelings and actions of the region can there exist a sustainable model that benefits both tourists and the local community.

4.The consciousness and actions of users are the key to nature conservation

A change in awareness and action is required from tourists, who are the ones that have the benefit of enjoying the nature. Spreading awareness locally and on a larger scale that “nature is not something to be protected against, but something to be protect” will determine the quality of tourism in the future.

5.Importance of a model that balances environmental and regional regeneration

Efforts like Chichibugahama beach are a good example that shows it is possible to balance regional regeneration and environmental regeneration. It is essential for the future of sustainable tourism to continue to build such model cases in various places.

Recognitions and Additional References

- ✓ Cleaning activities by Chichibu no Kai. 29 years of cleaning activities (1996 –2025), 250 members. About 80 people participate in the regular cleaning once a month.
[https://www.mitoyo-kanko.com/Chichibugahama beachhistory/](https://www.mitoyo-kanko.com/Chichibugahama%20beachhistory/)
- ✓ Chichibugahama beach Cooperation Fund System, which started in 2023, won the Minister of the Environment Special Award for its efforts to create a sustainable tourist spot using the cooperation fund.
<https://www.mitoyo-kanko.com/award2024/>
- ✓ Environmental Learning Book (distributed to visitors and schools in the region)
<https://www.mitoyo-kanko.com/site/wp-content/uploads/chichibu-kankyo-gakushuu-BOOK2021.pdf>
- ✓ Chichibu no Kai received the Green Ribbon Medal from the Prime Minister
<https://www.mlit.go.jp/report/press/content/001479705.pdf>
- ✓ Chichibugahama beach was recognized as a moving place that Japan is proud of and won the first Tourism Development Division Award
<https://www.mitoyo-kanko.com/japan-travel-awards-2023/>
- ✓ Chichibugahama beach ranked first in the Jalan Sunset Scenery Ranking
<https://www.jalan.net/news/article/271180/>



- ✓ Mitoyo City won the Hometown Creation Award for its efforts at Chichibugahama beach
https://www.city.mitoyo.lg.jp/hotnews_old/hot06/hot2402/12497.html
- ✓ Chichibu no Kai won the Excellent Award at the 11th Regional Revitalization Grand Prize
<https://chiikisaisei.jp/organization/num-539>
- ✓ The annual tourism consumption amount in Mitoyo City by visitors who came to Chichibugahama beach reached 5.2 billion yen
<https://economicimpact.net/2023/10/14/231014/>



