

## Influence of existing scenery in an on-site forest environment in terms of Subjective Appraisal, Restorativeness, Affect

TAKAYAMA, Norimasa<sup>1\*</sup> ; FUJIWARA, Aki<sup>2</sup> ; SAITO, Haruo<sup>2</sup> ; HORIUCHI, Masahiro<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute, <sup>2</sup>The University of Tokyo Forests, <sup>3</sup>Yamanashi Institute of Environmental Sciences

### INTRODUCTION

Many stressors of urban life are increasingly driving humans to seek some form of stress relief (Frumkin, 2001). Natural environments, including typical urban parks and natural, secondary or artificial man-made forests are generally associated with stronger positive health effects compared with urban environments (Velarde, Fry & Tveit, 2007). For instance, natural scenes bring higher tranquility and a reduced feeling of danger compared to urban scenes (Herzog & Chernick, 2000), while outdoor recreation in a green environment has been shown to relieve stress among urban inhabitants (Li et al., 2008), hence the evidence to date seems to indicate the positive health effect of a natural setting. However, the question of how the existence of scenery as a sight stimulus produces a psychological effect in an on-site forest environment and to what extent remain unclear.

Therefore, during this research conducted in an on-site forest environment (a mixed forest including Larch, Giant dogwood), we set out our research purpose, namely to clarify the psychological healing effect of forest scenery as visual stimuli on respondents.

### METHOD

With eleven male and four female adult respondents respectively, we conducted a viewing experiment to investigate the appraisal (Semantic differential method; abbreviated to SDM; 25-paired adjectives), the affect (Positive And Negative Affect Schedule; abbreviated to PANAS; 16-queries), subjective restorative quality (Restorative Outcome Scale; abbreviated to ROS; 6-queries) and degree of attention restoration (Perceived Restorativeness Scale; abbreviated to PRS; 26-queries) using four types of research questionnaires. The viewing experiment was conducted in the forest inside the Forest Therapeutic Research Institute (Fuji Iyashi-no-mori Institute) and managed by the University of Tokyo Forests in early May 2013. The experiments were conducted one-by-one during fine weather throughout the experimental period (four days). Each respondent was given respectively from the opening session (with well-managed forest scenery) to the closing session (forest scenery covered by tarpaulin) or vice versa to eliminate any order effect.

### RESULT AND CONSIDERATION

Consequently, in terms of the comparison of appraisal, the opening session saw scores higher than the closing session for many measurement indexes and the degrees of score difference were cleared. Conversely, it became clear that a difference would emerge in both the opening and closing sessions, even if it was a measurement index not corresponding to visual senses but directly to other senses. Finally, based on the result of multiple regression analysis, it emerged that the basic links between them included aspects of difference and commonality for the integrated index appraisal such as likableness, comfort, beauty and sense of security when comparing the opening and closing of the forest landscape respectively, and this was an appraisal of concrete environmental factors which resulted in such differences and commonality. Furthermore, in terms of affect, even though neither a positive nor negative affect could be confirmed from statistical interaction when comparing the opening and closing sessions, there was a statistical decline (reduction) in the before (pre-viewing experiment) compared to after (post-viewing experiment). As for the quality of subjective restorative, the interaction between the opening-closing and before - after sessions was confirmed as well as individual statistical differences when comparing before and after in the opening session and opening and closing sessions in the after session sequentially. Regarding the degree of attention restoration, subsequent results of the opening-closing comparison clarified that the criteria of run away, fascination, scope and compatibility were statistically higher in the opening rather than closing session.

Keywords: Attention restoration theory, Positive affect, Negative affect, Subjective restorative outcome, Appraisal, Forest therapy