

Study on natural amenities in off-limits area: imagination of virtual activities received from landscape

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Introduction

In urban areas, there is little space that has been kept natural although it is now recognized that natural elements such as green space, water features or wildlife habitat, etc. increase the value of an environment. However, human influences on natural habitats interfere with restoring natural spaces to their original condition.

It is difficult to maintain such green space and limit its availability to people. In fact, it is often the case that areas with a high level of undisturbed natural habitats are off-limits areas.

For example, storm-water reservoirs for flood control in urban areas are off-limits, concrete-covered, fenced-in spaces. However, a variety of wild fauna and flora manage to make their habitats in some reservoirs. In other words, reservoirs are an example of artificial yet informal urban green spaces, where spontaneous wild vegetation grows. However, clearly reservoirs were not planned as natural spaces.

Although these spaces are off limits, people can enjoy a view of natural growth from the wall of the reservoirs. On the other hand, due to the physical boundary, people cannot get in touch with natural elements due to perceptual constraints.

Viewing such restricted areas has a beneficial effect as a solution for symbiosis with nature because human development and natural preservation are opposed to each other.

This study clarifies people's impressions of the spontaneous and wild vegetation in reservoirs. Moreover, this study considers the affordance research for environment afford provision of behavior to perceiver as seen in the case of flying stone. Flying stone is a concrete block put into a river bed. This paper presents a new way for people to virtually take part in nature-friendly activities. This study explains how imaginary contact with nature by viewing spontaneous vegetation in off-limits, informal urban green space creates satisfaction.

Methods

Research Questionnaire 1

In a Tokyo suburb, 108 reservoirs were selected for this study. We surveyed shapes, size, location, and surrounding environment and explored possibilities of whether the space was a beautiful landscape and from what perspective.

We conducted an awareness survey regarding environment and landscape with 88 residents living around three reservoirs. Correlative relationship was applied to analyze the relationship between question items.

Research Questionnaire 2

Another study was conducted in Kyoto with 175 university students who responded to questions about the image of flying stones on the Kamogawa River. Responses were given as free descriptions. A text mining approach was applied to analyze symbolic representations for water-friendly activities.

Results and Considerations

The results show that most of the reservoirs were concaved and had good views of open space. Therefore, reservoirs have a high potentiality to be urban green space, where people can view spontaneous natural habitats. Reservoirs are artificially made. The results also showed vegetation succession has possibilities for creating transient esthetic appraisal. However, questionnaire results showed that residents who lived around reservoirs feel that the naturally occurring vegetation is not beautiful.

The results of affordance research were as follows. Flying stones provide an image of physical behavior. for getting across a river or playing in the water. The image is a trigger for the imagination of virtual water-friendly activities. Symbolic representation of environmental signatures is a device that affords imaginary familiarity with environmental elements.

Keeping a view of nature in off-limit green spaces leads to an imaginary sense of familiarity with nature.

Symbiosis with nature increases the value of an environment in urban. Image of nature-friendly activities have a commonality of body. Therefore, symbolic representations for nature-friendly activities have a functional role as a landscape appraisal standard.

Keywords: off-limits area, amenity of nature, symbol of water-familiar, affordance