

Green Dream, Green City working with People; The Story of Seoul Green Trust

Byoung-E Yang¹ & Kang-Oh Lee²

History of Seoul Green Trust

Seoul faces an ecological crisis

Seoul Green Trust was established in 2003 by Forest For Life, which is nation-wide forest NGO in Korea. The goal of Seoul Green Trust is to make and maintain the city of Seoul greener and healthier through the participation and support from the citizens.

During the past half century, Seoul has achieved remarkable growth, and become a political as well as economic center of Northeastern Asia. However, we had to pay too much for such growth, including deterioration of the beautiful nature that our ancestors have left us. The area of greenery available to Seoul citizens in their everyday lives is only 4.53m² per capita in 2003, which is just half of the acreage that WHO and FAO recommended. There is only one-tenth of the chance that one may find any type of greenery while walking down the heavily populated streets of Seoul. Approximately 82% of the downtown area in Seoul is covered with impermeable pavement. As a result of pavement, evaporation & transpiration had been decreased 40.7% while surface runoff increased 529% from 1960 to 2002. Global warming and heat island effect lead to an increase in temperatures upto 2 degrees during the last century. It is 3 times than the mean of global climate change at the same period. The city of Seoul is turning bleaker by day, and our children are being robbed of the 'green dream'.

Seoul Green Vision 2020

The main goal of Seoul Green Trust lies is to breathe a green life into the city of Seoul, which has turned gray from urbanization and industrialization. Seoul Green Trust aims to serve more greenery to the citizens of the next generation by promoting a 'One More 3.3m² of Greenery Per Citizen' campaign.

Seoul Green Trust is a non-profit organization through citizen's participation and support. We conduct a variety of citizen participation activities in partnership with the Seoul Metropolitan Government including fund-raising activities to help expand/maintain green spaces.

¹ Professor and former dean of Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Seoul National University. President of Seoul Green Trust

² Secretary general and a member of steering committee of Seoul Green Trust



Figure1. Principles of Seoul Green Trust Movement

We developed a master plan to achieve our mission, so called Seoul Green Vision 2020 as follows;

- All 10 million of Seoul citizens are encouraged to participate in increasing movement of Greenery of 3.3 square meter per citizen; A total of 33 million square meter of greenery is to be secured for the future generations through a 20-year campaign. As a result, Seoul' greenery index is to go up to the level of the minimum standard recommended by WHO.

Table1. How to Secure 33 million square meter of Greenery within Seoul City by 2020

Category	Major target areas of green campaign	Acreage
Greenery around living quarters (dots)	♣Plant trees on 1200 Schools ♣Plant trees on college campus	9.9 mil. m ²
	♣Increase green space 3.3m ² per each of 1 million families in apartments	
	♣Create on eco-park per town ♣Turn sewage disposal plants into eco-parks	
	♣Plant trees on parking lot & rooftops ♣Plant trees on other unused lands	
Green ways and Greenbelts (lines)	♣Plant trees on roadsides ♣Create an apartment-school green network	13.2mil. m ²
	♣Connect forest patches of Han-river ♣Plant trees on closed railroad	
	♣Plant trees along waterways/water-scapes at Han-river and 34 streams	
	♣Connect the northern and southern green axes as well as the forests on the outskirts	
	♣Turn greenbelts into public parks ♣Increase the green index of the new town	
Large-scale eco-parks (patches)	♣Turn Ttukseom into a forest(SFP)	9.9mil. m ²
	♣Develop forest along the gateway to Seoul	
	♣Factory Plantation ♣Renovate old parks	
Total		33mil. m ²

Major Achievements

Seoul Green Trust(SGT) has proposed Seoul Metropolitan Government to convert Ttukseom sports complex into eco-park as the first project to achieve Seoul Green Vision 2020. The government accepted the proposal and started to develop park in 2003. It is Seoul Forest Park with the area of 105ha as big as one-third of Central Park in New York. During construction, SGT invited 5,000 citizens and 70 corporations to join the green campaign of planting trees in the new park. The first project campaign was successful to raise fund of 4 billion won, equivalent to 4 million US\$. Before opening the new park, we had benchmarked and learned how to manage park through citizen participation in Europe, North America and Japan. We decided to incubate ‘park conservancy’ similar to Central Park Conservancy for the new park.

Seoul Forest Park Conservancy

Seoul Forest Park is a unique park. Unlike other parks in Seoul, at the very first stage of establishment of the park, NGO/NPO specially Seoul Green Trust has played an important role such as Park Design, Fund Raising, and Tree Planting with people as described in the previous chapter. And now Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seoul Forest Park Conservancy that is organized in 2005 and supported by Seoul Green Trust are co-managing the park. The Conservancy is ‘a bridge of citizen’s participation’, ‘a coordinator of different interest groups’, and ‘a good partner of city government’.

In the beginning, there were only 4 regular staffs and 12 voluntary staffs in the Conservancy. Now almost 150 voluntary staffs are working regularly once a week or once a month, and approximately, 3000 volunteers from universities, companies, NGOs, schools and local community around year are involving in the management of the park , while the conservancy employs 9 staffs only.

The conservancy takes care of visitor service, volunteer activities, environmental education, event management, fund raising, PR and communication, while the park officer maintains landscape and facilities.

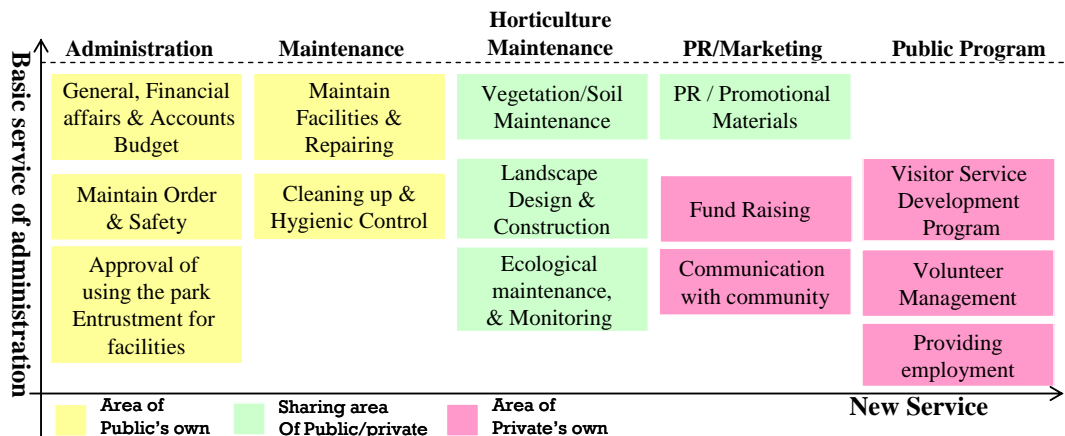


Figure3. Sharing works between City Government and Conservancy in Seoul Forest Park

Environmental Education in Seoul Forest Park

The conservancy has kept a strategy to make partners and friends of the park through environmental education.

In Seoul Forest Park, environmental education program are designed by its spatial, ecological, management characteristics. The major program is ecological & environmental education program. The program is being conducted by eco-guide volunteers as many as 1,000 times per year. The park has more than 150 volunteer staffs not only eco-guide, but also gardeners, cultural docents, photographers and librarians. Eco-environmental education program in the park is divided into five different fields based on natural resources of the park. There are a tree learning program, a insect learning program, wetlands education program and park eco-tour program. Target groups are classified into kindergarten, elementary school, the handicapped, a family and general visitors. Another special environmental education program is ‘Get a dirt in the park’ as a volunteer work program. Corporations and schools work with a group of volunteers to complete horticultural and maintenance projects throughout the park.

We also have a well-developed network with experts, NGOs, city government and corporations.

Figure4 shows an environmental education network of Seoul Forest Park Conservancy.

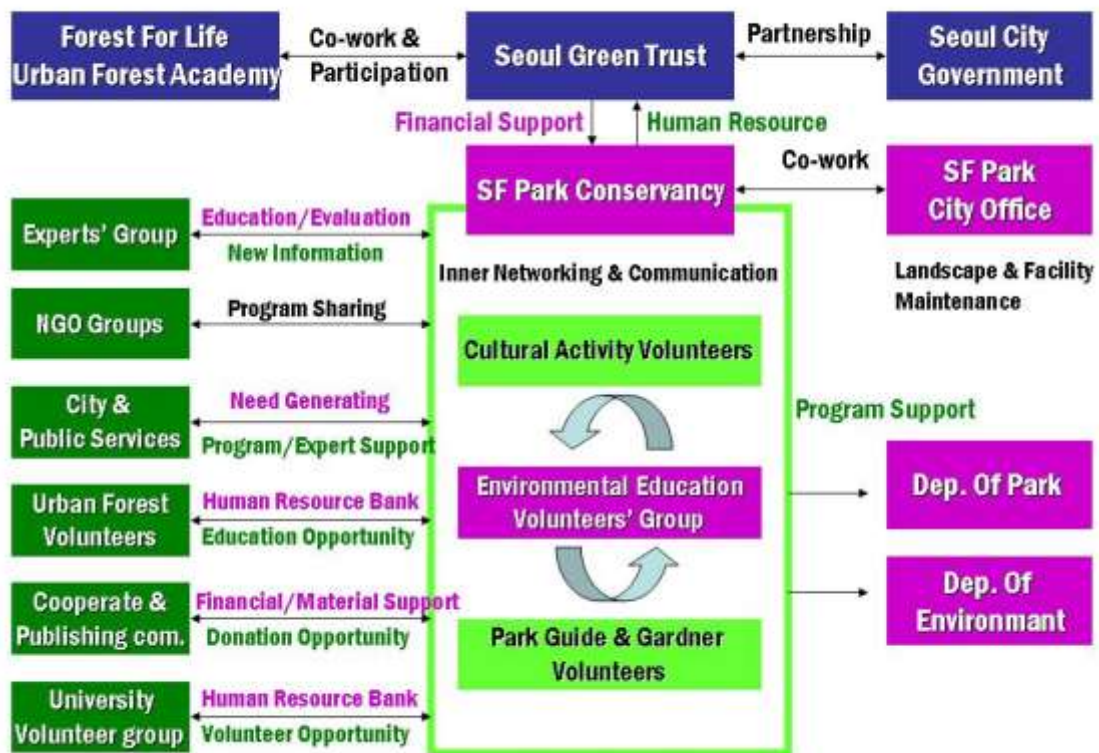


Figure4. Environmental Education Network of Seoul Forest Park Conservancy

Community Park Projects

In 2007, Seoul Green Trust started new community park projects as a green campaign of local community level within the city of Seoul. Many communities in Seoul had been broken down due to fast population growth, urbanization and industrialization. Seoul faces not only environmental problems but also severe social problems such as a jobless, a juvenile delinquent, an aging society and vandalism.

An idea of a community park, so called “Uri-Dongne-Soop”, is based on the several research results that urban forest or park can help solve such social problems and revitalize community. We developed 6 community parks in 2007, and we are planting trees at another 6 community parks with local people. At the first stage, the landscape architecture professors or landscape designers volunteered in designing a community park through several community workshops. And we found several sponsors who donate 50% of budget. There is a 50% matching fund from city government. Another important process is a celebration party with tree planting program and ancestor-worship ceremony as a Korean traditional ceremony. We keep maintaining trees

and facilities at least three years after plantation in expectation that local communities can organize their own volunteer management system of park in three years.



Figure4. Before and After of Community Park in Seogkwan, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul. (Left is before, and right is after)

Conclusion; Green Asia Network coping with Climate Change

Urban forest or park is an invaluable companion in our lives. Urban forest moderates the local climate, reduces the effects of air pollution and storm-water run-off and creates a beautiful landscape, which all contribute to improving the quality of our lives.

Working with people is our goal and strategy. We have been successful in developing a model case of citizen participation in urban park management, as well as increasing green space in the city of Seoul. We are facing new challenges. In October 2008, we will start to develop a new eco-park in Seoul which will be converted from golf course. And, we are planning to incubate another conservancy for the new park located in Northeast of Seoul in 2009.

Climate Change is old but new issue in the park. We believe that urban park or forest can play the most important role of mitigation & adaptation of climate change in metropolitan cities. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and mitigate 'heat island' effects. Parks and forest can be green refugee for million people in city. Furthermore, urban park organizations have to make network and partnership with other forestry NGOs, agency and government to mitigate Climate Change.

Korea is one of the most successful country in the reforestation projects in Asia. The country has restored 99% of mountain area with forest after Korean War which had destroyed most of mountain forests. And we have experiences of more than 30-year tree-planting national campaign in various levels. As the result of our efforts and experiences, we, Seoul Green Trust and 11 NGOs, organized "Climate Change Green Network in Korea(CCGN Korea)" with the slogan of "Green Korea and Green Asia" in July 2008. CCNG Korea targets (1) to absorb 30 million CO₂ ton until 2020, (2) to increase an average of urban green space to 9m² per capita,

(3)and enhance reforestation projects in Asia through 5P campaign(planting, pruning, protecting, producing, and promoting). CCGN Korea also will develop a guideline of voluntary carbon offset through forest activity.

All citizens are invited to participate in creating and maintaining the urban forest. Only with participation and support from the citizens can change Seoul & Asia into Green Society.