

National Parks – Towards a Sustainability

: A Local Community-based Initiative in Deogyusan National Park

KOREA NATIONAL
PARK SERVICE



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National Parks in Korea

✓ A Total of 23 National Parks

23 sites | **6,881** km²

60% terrestrial areas, 40% marine areas

01

*A haven
of biodiversity*

- ✓ Home to **23,774** species
- 40.9% of Korea's recorded biodiversity

02

*The ultimate
retreat*

- ✓ **40 million** annual visitors
- Explore its natural wonders and culture

03

*Rich historical
and cultural heritage*

- ✓ **895** designated cultural heritage sites
- 44 National Treasures, 74 Natural Monuments



What We Do

- 01 Resource Conservation & Environmental Management**
 Resource monitoring, restoration of endangered species, climate response, Patrols and enforcement against illegal and disorderly activities, cleanup.
- 02 Cooperation with Stakeholders**
 Development and support of park villages, operation of regional Cooperation committees, volunteer programs, and international exchanges
- 03 Visitor Services and Infrastructure Development**
 Environmental education for future generations (e.g., Junior Ranger programs, ecotourism initiatives, etc.), Installation and operation of visitor centers, trails, campgrounds, shelters, etc.
- 04 Disaster & Safety Management**
 Management of disaster-vulnerable zones, safety inspections of facilities, and accident prevention efforts (e.g., visitor safety education)

Management System

01

Ministry of Environment (MoE)



- ✓ Establishment of basic policies and key decisions for national parks

02

Korea National Park Service (KNPS)



- ✓ Management of national parks in accordance with 『the Korea National Park Service Act』 and 『the Natural Parks Act』

Park Act (1967)

In accordance with Act No. 1909 (Park Act), Korea formally **introduced its national park system**. **Jirisan National Park** was designated as **1st NP**.

National parks



HallyeoHaesang



Dadohaehaesang



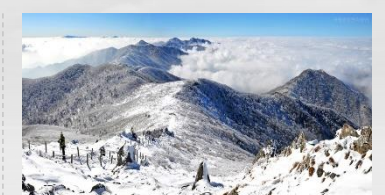
Seoraksan



Naejangsan



Gyeongju



Deogyusan

Project site – Deogyusan national park

Geochang County

36.157km² (15.79%)

South Gyeongsang
Province
(18.27%)

Hamyang County

5.677km² (2.48%)

Muju-gun

Muju County

176.2km² (76.97%)

North Jeolla
Province
(81.73%)

Jangsu County

10.885km² (4.76%)

Deogyusan NP



Hyangjeokbong peak (1,614m)

DEOGYUSAN NATIONAL PARK

- ✓ Designated as Korea's 10th national park on Feb 1, 1975
- ✓ Home to 5,364 species (1,369 plant and 2,827 animal)
- ✓ Korea's largest outdoor environmental education site, with 497 camping units and 32 accommodation cabins.



Deogyusan NP Office



Ecological resources



Spring landscape



Winter landscape



Gucheondong Valley



Campground

Overview of Project

Community-based Conservation Initiative

Title

- **Deogyusan National Park: A Community-Based Sustainable Travel Guide**

Concept

- **Discover** → Experience → **Share**
Identifying and exploring local experiences that aligns with GSTC standards, and sharing responsible travel practices through storytelling and documentation.



Participants

- **Ten teams** from the local community, including winery, café, artists, young farmers, NGO, volunteer, etc. in Muju
- This project brings together participants from **diverse sectors** such as culture, nature conservation, and local businesses.

Project Timeline (2025)

Jan

Recruiting
Participants
(10 teams from
various sectors)

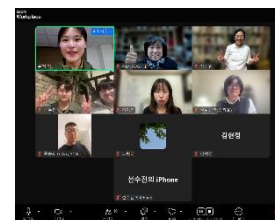
Awareness-Raising
Education
(e.g., SDGs, GSTC,
KNPS)

Planning
and
Conducting
The Trip

Writing
Travel
Narratives

Reviewing,
Editing,
And
**Developing
The Guide**

Nov



What We Pursue

- 01 Highlighting the value, contributions, responsibility, and role of national parks in sustainable tourism
- 02 Taking the lead fostering sustainable visitation culture in nature conservation and encouraging responsible behaviors

A case of trained volunteer (local resident)


Topic

Sustainable Eco-tour in Deogyusan National Park


- **Writer:** She is a professional volunteer in Deogyusan NP, equipped with abundant knowledge about ecosystem in park, and has been certified as a volunteer steward for five years.



Purpose

-  Through the National Park Steward Program, **trained and empowered volunteers actively participated** in park management.

Value

-  **Sustainable tourism standards** were applied throughout the planning and operation of national park programs.



➤ A case of trained volunteer (local resident)



01

◆ Resource Conservation & Eco-friendly Choices

- Use of **local accommodations with eco-conscious** operations, partner with local restaurants
- **Minimizing waste and energy** consumption

02

◆ National Park Education & Conservation Efforts

- Programs include **interpretation of natural resources**
- Promotion of national park **conservation policies and biodiversity awareness**

03

◆ Spreading Conscious Travel Behavior

- **Promote sustainable travel** through personal SNS posts, blogs, and online reviews
- Their authentic experiences **encourage others to adopt responsible travel habits**

More destinations and activities in Muju & Deogyusan NP

Muju County



Sustainable Travel with Parks and Communities



Deogyusan NP

Participate in Local Events

- Muju Mountain Film Festival, **a local event** Jointly hosted by Deogyusan national park and Muju County



Involve in Volunteer Work

- Join guided nature trekking tours and take part in the removal of invasive plant species **to help protect the park's natural resources** and citizen-science



Enjoy Low-carbon Meals

- Prepared with local specialties and seasonal Ingredients, **boosting the local economy** and local farm-to-table practices



Enjoy Eco-friendly Camping

- Contribute to **carbon neutrality** and support a **responsible camping culture** by staying at the eco-friendly campground operated by Deogyusan National Park



Responsible Consumption

- Visit **a small, family-run winery** that produces wine using eco-friendly farming methods. **Discover the everyday lives of people** Living at the foot of Deogyusan



Act as a Responsible Visitor

- Promote a mature and respectful exploration culture by **following the national park visitor Code of Conduct** and participating in park stewardship programs



National parks on the Path to Sustainable Management!



Visitor Services

- A7. Information and interpretation
- A12. Access for all
- A13. Managing visitors volumes and activities
- B2. Local employment
- B9. Code of conduct
- C2. Protecting cultural heritage and traditional access
- D3.1. Biodiversity conservation ... more



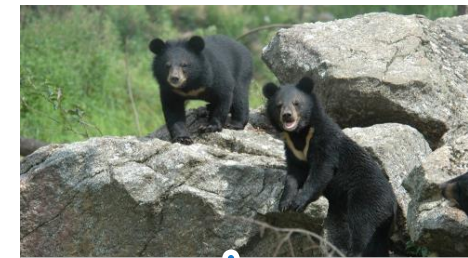
Community Cooperation

- A5. Visitor experience
- A6. Stakeholder engagement
- B1. Community support
- B8. Local livelihoods and traditional access
- C1. Cultural interactions
- C3. Presenting culture and heritage
- D2.1. Greenhouse gas emissions
- D3.1. Biodiversity conservation ... more



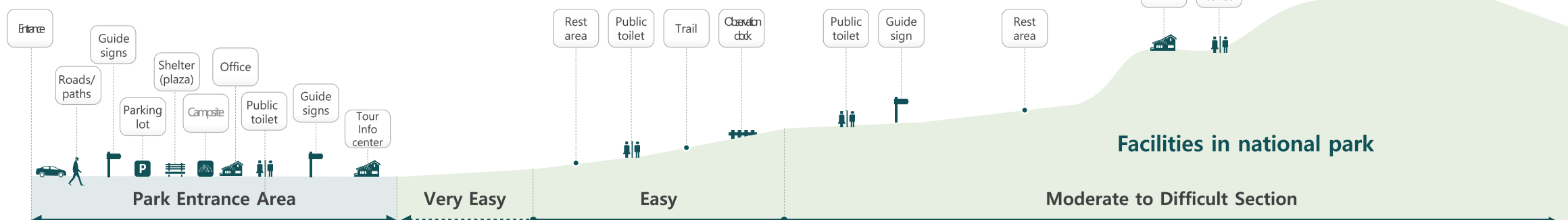
Park facilities

- D1.1. Energy conservation
- D1.2. Water conservation
- D2.1. Greenhouse gas emissions
- D2.2. Transportation
- D2.4. Solid waste
- D2.6. Minimize pollution ... more



Nature Conservation

- Most of the indicators in SECTION D are met!





Ensure Local Community
Engagement



Strengthen Capacity-
Building Opportunities



Build trust between
parks and communities

Where every journey contributes to
the well-being of both nature and people