

Restoration of Itachi River

In 1982, Yokohama City began developing shallow water channels along the Itachi River in order to restore the waterfront to its natural state. Prior to this, mudflats had developed as a result of earlier river improvement construction projects.

There were several goals to this river Restoration plan: to maintain sufficient water depth (i.e. to restore the water depth to pre-construction levels), to restore waterfront vegetation, to revive the riverbed microtopography in both rapid and slow streams, and to develop the river-walk. Through experimentation with various construction methods, the waterfront environment has now regained its natural vitality and once again attracts the local people.

◆ Key to Restoration

- Restoring vegetation along the banks of the river
- Replanting and preserving the vegetation
- Developing the river-walk

◆ Overview of the River

The Itachi River is a tributary of the Sakai River, a Class B river which flows through Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture. This small stream's basin covers 3.88 square km. Most of the basin has been urbanized (including some major developments), especially downstream of Nittoubashi and Nihonbashi. Further upstream, however, despite some housing development, many of the valleys and hillsides retain their greenery, winding streams and river terraces.



◆ Project Efforts for Restoration

[Restoring vegetation along the banks of the river]

Past construction projects broadened the river while flattening the riverbed. This in turn decreased the water depth and damaged the waterfront vegetation. They were restored by introducing low water channels based on the original width of the river. Now, the waterfront has been elaborately stabilized with plants rather than concrete or large rocks.

[Replanting and preserving the vegetation]

Thanks to these efforts, the river has been eventually restored to its natural state. Efforts are being made to introduce various microtopography to the course of the river through natural water flow patterns, and to preserve the waterfront grasses which serve as natural habitats for fish and insects. Mowing is limited to tall plants which are cut at 50 cm above water level and riverside grasses which are cut at 20 cm above ground. (Hard-stemmed and tall-growing ragweed are cut at their roots.)

[Developing the river-walk]

The "hometown River Development Project" aims to develop the river basin both scenically and environmentally. We hope to create a city centered along the Itachi River garden where you can easily enjoy the waterfront and nature trail

