

## Chapter 2 Comprehensive Conservation

### 1. Moving Beyond Regional Development

The people of Shiga Prefecture have never abandoned their love for their lake or their concern for its health. Nonetheless, they have also been concerned with their livelihoods, and in particular with keeping pace with the prosperous urbanized areas of the Kinki region. The touchstone of prefectural policy has been “regional development” for many decades. Now that Shiga is one of the most prosperous areas in Japan, both the people and the government have increasingly seen the imperative for environmental protection. Policy focus is swinging towards a kind of “regional management” that minimizes the impact of human activities on the environment. This new focus will require a new environmental consciousness and the nurturing of appropriate new social capital and related infrastructure.

Consequently, we must respond to the numerous problems that beset Lake Biwa with a set of thoroughly and methodically executed measures. These measures, guided by a long-term perspective, will provide a comprehensive basis for appropriate land use.



*Paddy fields in the planting period*

### 2. Guiding Principle

Lake Biwa embodies a confluence of many diverse values, a composite living culture forged over the eons through symbiosis between man and nature. The lake is an heirloom to be shared across generations.

Everyone who benefits from Lake Biwa bears the responsibility of passing the blessings of this lake on to future generations by living in a way that limits his or her impact on its environment. This in turn requires striving for a new, higher symbiotic culture.

With this in mind, we propose the following guiding principle for conservation of the lake.

Guiding Principle  
Symbiosis between Lake Biwa  
and the people :  
Bequeathing a clean Lake Biwa  
to future generations.

### 3. Key concepts

Three key concepts are predicated on the guiding principle: empathy, coexistence and common property.

#### *Empathy (broad emotional identification between people and region)*

It is quite natural that each person has his or her own attitude toward Lake Biwa. It would therefore not be so easy for all to have the same lifestyle or for a new societal norm to be acceptable to everyone in the community. We must further promote community-based efforts to improve mutual understanding to make more successful their collaborations in achieving comprehensive conservation.

#### *Coexistence (synergies between conservation and active lifestyles)*

We cannot abandon our active lifestyles and prosperous living standards, but we must minimize the negative impact of the ways we enjoy the bountiful lake and use it sensibly.

#### *Common Property (Sharing Lake Biwa with future generations)*

Lake Biwa is a common property asset that is entrusted to the present generation by generations yet to come.

### 4. Prefecture-Wide Collaboration

To establish this positive synergy requires, first and foremost, that residents and businesses in the prefecture minimize their impact on the environment. This in turn depends on the joint efforts of all parties, especially in civil society.

A number of civil society bodies, especially those established by prefectural residents and businesses, are busily involved in protecting Lake Biwa. Of course, they rely on the support of Shiga Prefecture and relevant municipalities.

Since water quality and ecosystems are not uniform throughout the Lake Biwa area, local conditions vary widely, and we must organize the various stakeholders along the boundaries of the various river basins feeding into the lake.

### 5. The Lake Biwa Conservation Model

In sum, promoting comprehensive conservation of Lake Biwa necessitates a common respect for the region's fine traditions, its history of harmony between the lake and the people, and a deep emotional attachment to conserving the lake.

This fresh challenge is truly a “grand, cross-generational experiment” in linking together people and nature. This great endeavor, empirically based and using trial-and-error methods, has the potential to be a model for Japan and the world in the protection of lakes.



The famous Seta Karahashi Bridge

## The Lake Biwa conservation model

### 1) The Value of Lake Biwa

Lake Biwa is one of the most ancient lakes in the world and prides itself on its beautiful scenery and its rich natural ecological system. Closely involved in the lives of people over countless years, the lake has been an important water resource and helped create and preserve a distinctive culture .

Lake Biwa, which embodies these different values, is a common property to be shared over generations.

### 2) Participatory Planning

We shoulder the responsibility for living an active lifestyle that causes little burden on Lake Biwa and passes a healthy and bountiful lake to the next generation.

To this end, we are fully committed to working for the coexistence of nature and humankind, with particular focus on Lake Biwa.

### 3) Pledges of participation

Nature alone can create Nature. Hence we should observe these rules in our participation:

- We should respect the versatility and uniqueness of Lake Biwa and the fine traditions of each of its subregions.
- We should be on constant alert for possible effects on the lake
- We will strive to enhance the self-restorative capacity of the lake.
- We will strive to use land wisely on the basis of a consensus of the lake's stakeholders
- We will appreciate the blessings of the lake that we enjoy.
- We will act on the basis of collaboration among the citizens of the prefecture, private enterprise and the government administration.

### 4) Contribution to conservation of world lakes

The results of our activities will be reported so that they can serve as a model for other lakes, beginning in Japan and ultimately in the rest of the world. We hope that this will make a positive contribution to other lakes that are faced with similar problems.