

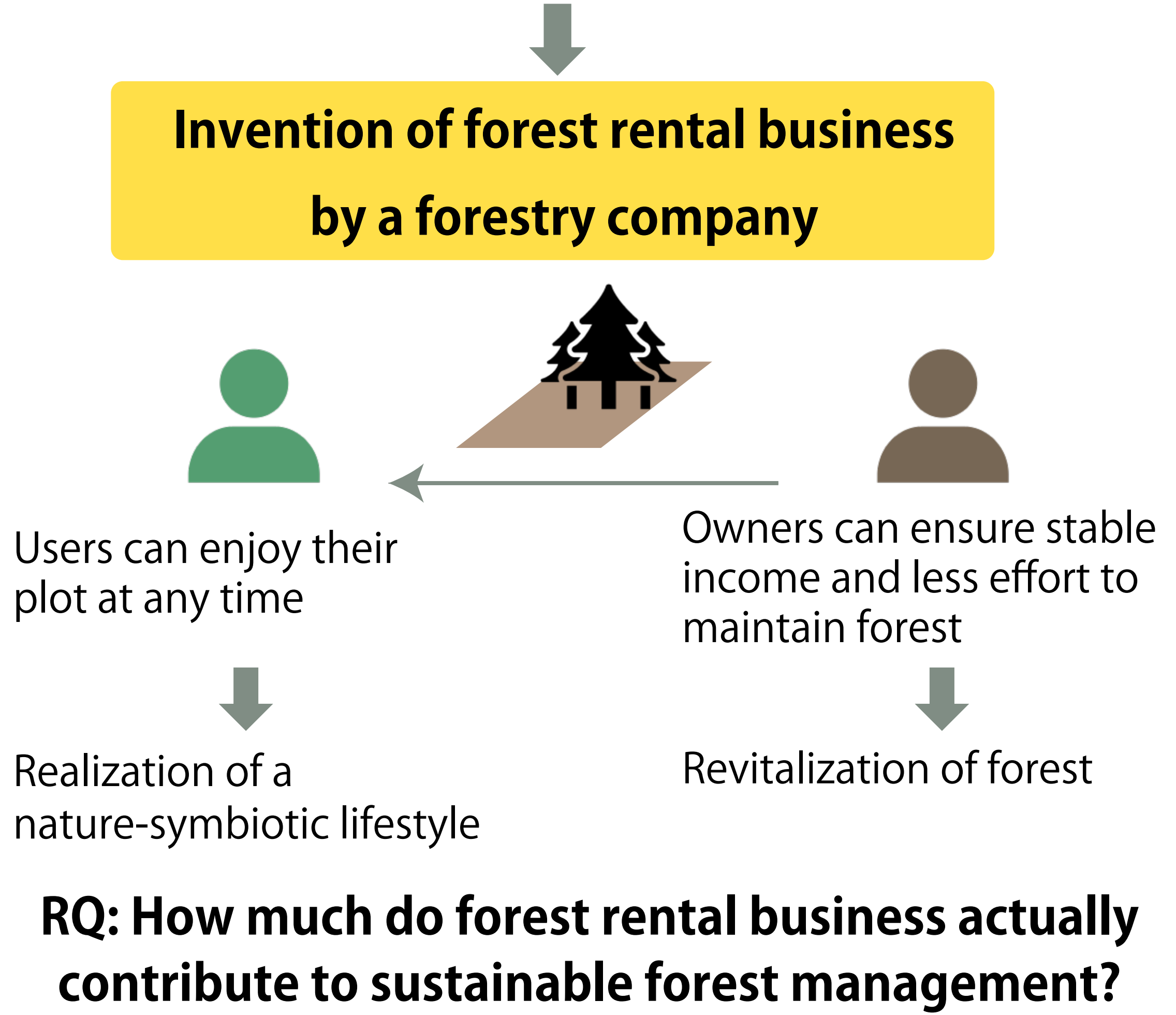
# Exploring new methods for sustainable forest management through forest rental businesses

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## Background

- Attention to safe and healthy recreational activities (COVID-19, change of lifestyle)
- Necessity of new forest use (Declining forestry and landscape degradation (Konno 2014), aging volunteers (Sawai and Takemoto 2019) )



## Objective

Elucidate the economic benefits of the forest rental business and its impact on forest management

## Method

Case study  
“forenta” business by Yamakyo Corp. based in Higashi-Shirakawa village



- Interviews with the president of Yamakyo Corp. March 14th, 2022 and October 14th, 2022  
Principal questions  
History of the business  
User target, demand  
Regulation on forest use  
Benefit for the company and mountain owners  
Franchise system (e.g. how to approach other owners)
- Information collection from “forenta” website

**Yamakyo Corp.**  
Established in 1955  
(Corporation since 1980)  
Lumber company specializing in Gifu lumber



Source: Yamakyo website

## Findings

### Start of the forest rental business

**Decline of the lumber industry**  
Lumber prices have been declining  
No way to add value  
No measures other than cost reduction

### Seeking to create forest value beyond timber production

**Idea obtained from European culture**  
During his training in Germany, the president learned about the culture of freely entering forests, BBQs, and hiking.

### Conceived the idea that consumers' familiarity with forests will lead to a culture of buying trees

**Increased demand in the Corona Disaster**  
Camping and outdoor activities are popular. More cases of forest purchases, but maintenance is difficult

### Invention of forest rental business in 2021 Start of franchise in 2021 as well to support other mountain owners

- Initial application rate: 25 times (440 groups applied for 17 lots)
- Users mostly from Aichi Pref. (next to Gifu)
- Promotion through instagram, facebook, twitter, YouTube, TV etc
- Fee: 66,000 JPY/y for 990 m<sup>2</sup> (case of Higashi-Shirakawa)

### Expansion of rental sites

Table: Forest rental sites including franchised sites (as of October 7th, made from forenta website)

Prefecture	City, town	Preview	Open	Plot size [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Number of plots	Annual fee (personal use) [JPY]	Operator
Gifu	Higashi-Shirakawa	Dec. 12, 2020, Mar. 12-13, 2021	Jan., 2021	990	36	66,000	Yamakyo
Gifu	Higashi-Shirakawa	Jul. 16-17, 2021, Apr. 8-9, 2022	N/A	660-990	20	66,000	Yamakyo
Shizuoka	Ito	Dec. 3-4, 2021	N/A	200	35	132,000	Agricultural farm
Shizuoka	Shimizu	Dec. 5-6, 2021	N/A	330	10	132,000	Forestry company
Gifu	Takayama	Aug. 7-8, 2022	Sep. 1, 2022	330	6	55,000	Real estate company
Kyoto	Fukuchiyama	Aug. 10-11, 2022	Sep. 1, 2022	160-276	6	88,000	Forestry company
Iwate	Iwaizumi	Aug. 28-29, 2022	Sep. 1, 2022	660-990	10	77,700-99,900	NPO
Shizuoka	Hamamatsu	Oct. 7-8, 2022	Nov. 1, 2022	660	10	132,000	Local owner
Hokkaido	Mikasa	Sep. 25-26, 2022	Oct. 1, 2022	300	8	55,000	Forestry company

### Franchise system

- Purpose: To utilize forests all over Japan
- Providing know-how to mountain owners
- Royalties collected after receiving business income (no initial fee)
- Owners usually contact through forenta website

### Benefit to mountain owners

- Effective use of planted forests (profitable during the growing period)
- No initial investment (logging and land development) required
- Stable income
- Necessity of just one or a few staff members

### Rules of use

- Flexible use as possible
- Tree cut allowance with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 15 cm or less
- Responsibility of users for accidents, theft and other troubles between users
- No commercial use
- Renewal possible upon expiration of contract



Figure: Actual use of forest (photo by authors)

## Conclusion and future works

**The forest rental business complement to the forestry industry and as a response to the increasing need for contact with nature. Growing number of franchise sites indicate mountain owners' benefits**

### Future works to evaluate forest business from environmental and economic perspectives

- 1) Investigation on users' lifestyle and motivation (Questionnaire to users)
- 2) Investigation on franchisees' intention and actual benefits (Interviews to franchisees)
- 3) Investigation on spatial changes of forest (Analysis of DEM data)