

A large, colorful sculpture of a person with arms raised, holding a globe, surrounded by flowers. The sculpture is made of green material and has a colorful, patchwork-like base. It is surrounded by a field of orange and pink flowers. The background is a clear sky.

Greenery Both Near & Far

Dream Park in Sudokwon Landfill Site

Dream Park is an ecological space and leisure park on reclaimed land flanking the Gyeongin Ara Waterway in Incheon. The site is operated by Sudokwon Landfill Site Management Corporation which set its vision decades ago on the ideals of savvy waste management, energy conversion and regenerative, purifying techniques. Through processes honed through years of persistent research, it has now reached its near-end stage of preparing to welcome the public.

“Sudokwon” literally means “Capital Zone” and refers to the greater Seoul area, a region that includes the city of Incheon and the densely populated Gyeonggi-do Province. Forty-eight percent of its waste comes from Seoul; 19% from Incheon; 33% from Gyeonggi-do Province. Considering the province’s size (much bigger in area than the other two metropolitan cities), it is impressive that the Sudokwon Landfill Site Management Corporation (SLC) takes care of all 64 of 66 metropolitan regions (which excludes two counties in Gyeonggi-do Province and Incheon, respectively).

SLC was established specifically for purposes of managing waste from the listed metropolitan areas exhaustively and in a further systemic and advanced manner. By the time of its establishment (1992), Nanji-do Island, which was formerly used as a dump for trash from Seoul, was in complete overload. To alleviate the region from being consumed by waste from the national capital, SLC, a territory that at the time, that at the time belonged to Gimpo came about. For that reason, hearing others

refer to the site as “reclaimed land in Gimpo” remains commonplace.

Managed by SLC, Sudokwon Landfill Site is a former wasteland that is no longer barren nor useless. By converting waste into energy through its well-honed recycling techniques empowered by regenerative techniques, especially through its LFG power plant, the world’s largest, useful elements are reaped from materials that are otherwise emitted as toxins.

Accumulated Know-how & Technologies

SLC was established in 2000 and has boosted its eco-friendly pursuits in waste management and regeneration through varied and persistent measures. By converting methane gas to fuel electricity, desalinating leachate (from landfill) to utilize it to cool the power plant, using combustible household wastes as solid refuse fuel and utilizing biogas from food waste in greenhouses, the corporation is a gigantic lab-in-progress with interrelated projects. The enormous municipality-backed project has been undergoing active R&D-based tests, primarily to gauge how much it can help our planet and its long-term sustainability.

In 2019, it transformed and opened to the public its resource circulation site, which is now Dream Park, but renovations and COVID-19 precautions led to a temporary shut-down. Officially reopened to the public in spring of 2021, parts of the verdant grounds of the Landfill Site open at varying periods. For instance, a select portion of the Wildflower Complex, located next to the East Gate, hosts regional summer festivities, especially when summertime evenings are long and temperate.

Though locals have found the portion pleasant enough for outdoor enjoyment, the grounds don’t remain open year-round, simply in order to provide the most optimal customer journey. SLC heeds such customer experience needs in arranging or limiting its opening hours as is appropriate.

Trees uprooted during Typhoon Lingling (2019) have been preserved in upside-down forms. She hit the region more forcefully than other parts of the peninsula. Agricultural lives of approx. Yeouido District’s size were wiped out, and thousands of structures were destroyed or dented.

This greenhouse for saplings nurtures flora that would be arranged to adorn parts of the Dream Park. The



food waste leachate uses biogas to heat the greenhouse, and local residents participate in nurturing them. © SLC

Picturesque Paths

Between the Main Office and the Wildflower Complex is a line of metasequoia trees, a visual and olfactory treat from early summer. They are also lined up lushly and orderly in a way that resembles scenes from a romance film. In fact, the faux roadway has appeared in the iconic K-drama “Goblin” in a scene where the main characters reunite after dueling. Apart from the classic drama, other scenes of movies and dramas that feature naturescapes for romantic strolling often visit the forested walkway, as the road is not open for vehicles to drive through.

The best time to visit is when fancy flowers like pink muhly burgeon and flaunt their colors, early summer being Korea’s most temperate time of year. A casual walk through the Wildflower Complex is sure to afford nice scenery with little of the artifice found in some botanical parks. Local residents manage much of the plants themselves, and SLC has focused on letting wildflowers thrive

in their own way.

From fields for picnicking to ponds lush with their own plant life and mostly miniature-sized structures, Dream Park harnesses a varied spectrum of land types.

The park’s vista involves not just flowers and greenery, but also ponds and streams, marsh life and bridges cutting through them.

Variety

The Landfill Site has spaces for activities apart from strolling around, basking in the colors and scents of the flora.

Landfill Site 1 hosts a 36-hole golf course — golf is a popular sport in Korea, despite the little space for fields. Occupying a part of the course is Resident Sports Park; to its right, towards the East Gate are Horseback Riding Facilities, a camping site and a swimming pool.

The Dream Park does not only serve various demographics and their multifaceted, often leisurely needs, but is also a unique exemplar reflecting municipal efforts toward wiser and more widely beneficial applications of waste and natural resources.



Source: Excerpt from “Fifty Wonders of Korea” Vol. 2 Science and Technology, Korean Spirit & Culture Promotion Project