

Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Conservation Project (April to June 2018)

(1) Project to Restore Rich Diversity of Shiretoko's Forests

This past winter saw few stormy days in what was a comparatively mild weather. However, posts on some parts of the deer fence, which is now quite a number of years old, have fallen over due to winds and the weight of snow, and the fence requires periodic repair work.

The spring thaw came in the middle of May and once again full-fledged work began on forest restoration. In the spring of each year, the main job is working the seedling fields. About 50 seedlings about two to five meters in height from the seedling field were planted in the 100-m² Movement Trust Area.

Repair work was done on the deer fence erected in 2003. The total length of the fence is about 1,000 meters, and it is the largest fence in the 100-m² Movement Trust Area, enclosing an area of about 4.5 hectares. Now about 15 years old, the fence has rot in some of the supporting posts, and these will be replaced gradually over a two-to-three-year period.

There are 22 service roads of varying sizes inside the 100-m² Movement Trust Area. While these have been under repair as required, there are still some that have continued to be used in the state they were originally built, and there are many points along the roads where driving is difficult due to road sinkage and poor drainage. Thus a two-to-three-year gradual repair plan is underway. This past spring, heavy machinery was used to lay gravel and conduct someroad-repair works.



Photo 1-1: Deer fence posts falling due to wind and the weight of snow (April 3, 2018)



Photo 1-2: Deer fence following repair (May 27, 2018)



Photo 1-3: Transplanting seedlings (May 12, 2018)



Photo 1-4: Volunteers gather following transplanting work



Photo 1-5: Pile driving work (June 22, 2018) on the steel deer fence posts (repair on fence erected in 2003)



Photo 1-6: Repairing a service road (June 19, 2018)

(2) Project to Protect and Pass on Shiretoko's Value as a World Heritage Site

1.Supporting activities to pass on Shiretoko's forests to the next generation

Work was carried out on the recreational trail so that the general public can walk along roads inside the 100-m² Movement Trust Area. The trails are open so that as many people as possible will be able to learn about the pioneering of the area, how forest restoration work is progressing, and about the environment inside the 100-m² Movement Trust Area.



Photo 2-1: Preparing to open the facilities (April 26, 2018)



Photo 2-2: A bear walks along the nature course; photo taken by an automatic camera (June 17, 2108)

Each youth group in the towns of Rausu and Shari has nature-oriented programs about 10 times a year. Since fiscal 2014, two of these programs have been held as exchange events in which the youth groups of the two towns collaborate.

2018 was the fifth year of this collaborative program, and in June members of the groups boarded a sight-seeing boat for a whale-watching tour in the ocean off Rausu. There were 52 participants, youngsters and staff, in total. The cost of renting one boat-load for this outing was paid for from funds donated by the Shiretoko forest project. (See photos 2-3 to 2-6.)

The children of Rausu and Utoro do not have many opportunities to do activities together. Daikin will continue to support this joint activity in the hope that it proves a valuable experience for the youngsters of both towns.



Photo 2-3: A member of the Rausu board of education teaches the children about the kinds of whales in the nearby ocean



Photo 2-4: The whale-watching boat departs from the port of Rausu



Photo 2-5: The youngsters watch a pod of humpback whales



Photo 2-6: A group photo following the whale-watching tour

2 Supporting activities so that humans and bears can coexist

This year in Rausu there was smaller-than-usual snow accumulation and the spring thaw came early, so work to prepare for operation of electric fence began two weeks earlier than usual. Work began on April 14 and by June 20 all electric fences had been turned on. (See photo 2-7.) After the fences were turned on, patrols were carried out. In places where voltage had dropped, the causes were determined and the fences were repaired to restore full power.

Electric fences were first erected in Rausu in 2011 and extended in length each year, and by 2015 all planned fences had been erected. Since parts of the fence have been up for seven years, patrols have discovered many parts of the mesh that have come undone. Therefore, power lines were replaced this year in the kelp-drying beach area, where there were many damaged sections, and in areas where no electric fence was erected last year due to mudslides. Fence materials will continue to be observed and replaced where necessary.

The same as last year, the work was carried out to cut the thick underbrush, mainly around the residential areas where bear sightings had occurred. Cutting the underbrush keeps the bears away since they will have no place to hide or feed; this means there is less chance of them entering this area.



Photo 2-7: Preparatory work before re-starting operation of the electric fence



Photo 2-8: Cutting underbrush near a home



Photo 2-9: Cutting weeds and grass in the vicinity of a bear sighting

Note: Unauthorized copying of the images and text used here is prohibited.