

Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Conservation Project (July to September 2017)

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

A new seedling area has been under preparation since the spring. University practicum students and volunteers from Daikin Industries, Ltd. have been helping with this work, which includes digging up bamboo roots and plowing the field. In autumn, work was begun on growing the seedlings that will be planted and tended in the seedling area. (Photos 1-1, 1-2)

Mid-September brought a typhoon accompanied by high winds and the third highest one-day rainfall on record, which bent and knocked down trees here and there in the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area. Sections of the deer fences were hit by fallen trees or branches, and some sections had collapsed. Patrols were carried out and broken fence sections were gradually repaired. (Photos 1-3, 1-4)

About 50 of the seedlings, from heights of 2 to 5 meters, that had been planted in May in the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area suffered broken branches due to the above-mentioned typhoon. The other seedlings are showing steady growth. (Photos 1-5, 1-6)



Photo 1-1: Digging up bamboo roots during preparation of the seedling-planting area (August 30, 2017)



Photo 1-2: Plowing the seedling-planting area (September 23, 2017)



Photo 1-3: Deer fence damaged by a typhoon



Photo 1-4: Deer fence following its repair

(September 21, 2017)



Photo 1-5: The seedlings, planted in the spring, as they looked in August (August 17, 2017)

(September 22, 2017)



Photo 1-6: The seedlings, planted in the spring, as they looked in September (September 20, 2017)

The period from September 22 (Friday) to 25 (Monday) was the 13th Daikin Industries, Ltd. Shiretoko volunteer trip. The 12 participants helped erect deer fences, plow the new seedling area under preparation, and carry out other activities necessary to rejuvenate the forest. (Photos 1-7 to 1-10)



Photo 1-7: Planting Sakhalin fir seedlings (September 23, 2017)



Photo 1-8: Plowing the new seedling-planting area (September 23, 2017)



Photo 1-9: Erecting a windbreak fence (September 24, 2017)



Photo 1-10: Participants gather for dinner at the lodge (September 24, 2017)

(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

Activities aimed at youngsters of all ages in the area and its surroundings, from elementary school students to university students, were carried out to familiarize participants with Shiretoko and the 100-m2 Movement. These included field studies inside the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area. Starting this fiscal year, all students at the three elementary schools in Shari will visit the area for field studies.

On September 9, a new course, called the “Forest Keeper Trail,” opened on the Shiretoko Forest Rejuvenation Trail, walking paths inside the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area. The new 5-kilometer walking path starts at the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center and passes locations such as the former Pioneer House. As of the end of September, approximately 180 people had walked the trail. (Photos 2-3, 2-4)



Photo 2-1: Grade 4 students from Shari Elementary School take a walk in the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area (July 11, 2017)



Photo 2-2: First year students from Tokyo University of Agriculture help rejuvenate a forest (July 22, 2017)



Photo 2-3: Inspecting a newly opened course in the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area (May 10, 2017)



Photo 2-4: View of the Shiretoko mountains from the “Forest Keeper Trail” (September 19, 2017)

2 Supporting activities so that humans and bears can coexist

Starting in July, maintenance work was carried out as needed on the electric fence area under operation. For example, voltage checks were conducted about once a week, and where short circuits were discovered the cause was determined and voltage was restored as soon as possible. In addition, because the electric fences can collapse due to high winds or flooding rivers from heavy rain, following the passing of low pressure fronts, patrols of the electric fences were immediately carried out to ensure there was no damage.

As in June, in August weeds and grass along all areas of the fences were removed to ensure that overgrown vegetation would not cause short circuits in the electric fence (Photo 2-5). During operation of the electric fences, there were no bear sightings on the sea side (inside) of the fences.

In a trial effort to keep out bears, since last fiscal year efforts have been underway to create a buffer zone, by removing vegetation, between the bears' habitat and areas where humans live and work. In the last quarter, vegetation was removed in a total of five locations: two locations in Misaki Town, two in Kaigan Town, and one in Minehama Town (Photo 2-6). These five locations are adjacent to private homes and fisheries processing plants, and near the sites of frequent bear sightings and bear markings (Photo 2-7). Since the vegetation removal efforts, no bears have come near these locations.



Photo 2-5: Electric fence on the south side of town following vegetation removal



Photo 2-6: Removing vegetation in a location of frequent bear sightings



Photo 2-7: Bear markings in the underbrush behind a private home

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