

Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Conservation Project (October to December 2017)

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

Preparation work on the seedling field, which began in June, was completed in October, and 320 Sakhalin fir seedlings were planted. The aim is to raise these seedlings in the seedling field and then plant them in the forest in three years time. Other varieties of seedlings will continue to be planted in this seedling field.

In November in Shiretoko, snow is usually already starting to accumulate on the ground. Again this year, personnel went around to the various sites to perform duties in preparation for winter such as inspecting deer fences and checking up on the planted seedlings. The winter is long here, lasting about half a year until the snow melts in April.



Photo 1-1: Making nursery beds in the completed seedling field (October 13, 2017)



Photo 1-2: Volunteers planting Sakhalin fir seedlings in the nursery beds (October 14, 2017)



Photo 1-3: Inspecting a deer fence prior to snowfall (November 7, 2017)



Photo 1-4: The seedlings, planted in May, as they looked in November (November 21, 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 were carried out to teach local high school students about Shiretoko’s nature and the 100-m² Movement. This fiscal year, students at all three elementary schools in Shari took part in the same field studies as the high school students, meaning that Shari students from elementary to senior high school have had the opportunity to learn about this project. These educational activities will continue to be carried out so that Shiretoko and its knowledge can be passed on to future generations.

In September 2017, a new hiking course, called the “Forest Keeper Trail,” opened on the Shiretoko Forest Regeneration Trail, walking paths inside the 100-m² Movement Trust Area. The 5-kilometer Pioneer Hut Course starts at the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center and passes locations such as the former Pioneer House. As of the end of November, 385 people had walked the trail. Plans are for this course to be reopened as a snow-shoeing course starting at the end of January, when snow is piled high.



Photo 2-1: Third-year senior high school students in Shari visiting the 100-m² Movement Trust Area (October 11, 2017)



Photo 2-2: At the 100-m² Movement House, third-year junior high school students listen to a presentation (October 25, 2017)



Photo 2-3: The Pioneer Hut Course in October (October 12, 2017)



Photo 2-4: The Pioneer Hut Course in November (November 17, 2017)

2 Supporting activities so that humans and bears can coexist

From October until when the electric fences were removed, maintenance work was carried out on provisional electric fences. A low-pressure front at end of October passed through Rausu, resulting in power losses to several parts of the electric fence (Photo 2-1). The damaged sections were repaired as well as possible and the fence was returned to working order. Normally, each year when snow begins to fall, bear sightings gradually decrease and the electric fences are removed starting around late November.

However, because there have been frequent bear sightings in the town this year even though the snow has begun to pile up, the electric fences were removed later than usual, in December, once there were no more bear sightings. Starting on December 3, work was carried out on removing the electric fences so as to prevent them from being damage by accumulated snow (Photo 2-2), and all removal work was completed on December 14 (Table 2-1). The fence removal work involves removing the electrical lines from the fence posts and binding them together on the ground. The fiberglass poles are removed and bound so that they do not bend from the weight of the snow sliding down the slope. After fence removal, maintenance work was done on fence parts like the batteries and materials so that the fences are ready to be set up again next fiscal year.



Photo 2-1: Electric fence following the passing of the low-pressure front



Photo 2-2: Removing an electric fence in the snow

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