

Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Conservation Project (October to December 2018)

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

Autumn is the ideal season for growing saplings. In October 2018, 153 Sakhalin fir saplings cultivated in the seedling field were planted by participants in the tree-planting festival. In November, small Sakhalin fir saplings were dug up in the forest and transplanted to the seedling field. The saplings dug up will be taken good care of in the seedling field with the goal of planting them in a tree-planting festival some years down the road (photo 1-1 to 1-4).

In addition, observation was done on deer fences and service roads in the Trust Area, with repair and fortification work done on aging sections. Over the past year, many participants including volunteers and student interns were instrumental in helping rejuvenate the forest from spring to autumn. December is when winter truly comes to Shiretoko, and it will be a long winter until the spring melt in April.



Photo 1-1: Volunteers prepare for the tree-planting festival (October 20, 2018)



Photo 1-2: Some of the 92 participants in the tree-planting festival (October 21, 2018)



Photo 1-3: Digging up Sakhalin fir saplings (November 1, 2018)



Photo 1-4: Volunteers transplanting the dug-up Sakhalin fir saplings to the seedling field (November 1, 2018)



Photo 1-5: Repairing a deer fence (October 25, 2018)

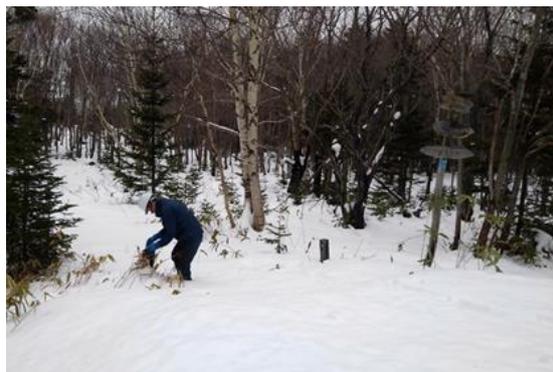


Photo 1-6: Preparing a gate of a service road for winter (December 17, 2018)

(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

To spread the word about Shiretoko's nature and the 100-m2 Movement, hands-on learning was held in the Trust Area for students from local schools and others.

In October, 72 first-year students from Shari Junior High School visited the Trust Area to observe forest rejuvenation and take the opportunity to experience the history of conservation efforts and the kinds of activities being carried out (photo 2-1). Once again in this past fiscal year, we held lessons on the Trust Area and hands-on learning for students in Shari and many others. We will continue such activities in order to further spread the message about Shiretoko among the next generation.

As well, staff of the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center and the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area House gave talks to the many visitors to the area about forest rejuvenation efforts in Shiretoko (photo 2-2).

From last spring to autumn, the Shiretoko Forest Regeneration Trail was open for visitors to hike through the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area. In October at the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center, as part of the Shiretoko Outdoor Film Festival, many participants toured some of the early pioneer houses along the Forest Keeper Trail and enjoyed specialty coffee at a pioneer hut. During the approximately seven months that the Pioneer Hut Course was open between April and early December, 1,153 people hiked along it (photo 2-3, 2-4).



Photo 2-1: First-year students of Shari Junior High School at the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area House (October 24, 2018)



Photo 2-2: Staff of the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area House give a talk (October 2, 2018)



Photo 2-3: Visitors enjoy coffee at the Pioneer Hut



Photo 2-4: The Pioneer House in December (December 19, 2018)

2 Supporting activities so that humans and bears can coexist

From October in this quarter, maintenance work was carried out as necessary on the electric fences until their removal. In early November, a whale carcass floated onto the beach in the Seseki district and this attracted bears. Because this was an area blocked off by an electric fence, in looking to find out how the bears entered, it was discovered that they got in at a part of the fence where electricity was not properly flowing (photo 2-5). Electricity was immediately restored to the part of the fence in question in order to properly close off the area to bears. However, even after this it appears that bears were able to force their way through the fence. Bears no longer entered the area once the whale carcass was removed. This episode brought home just how strongly bears become fixated on food.

As of the end of November there were no more bear sightings, so work on removing the electric fence was started before substantial amounts of snow piled up. Work commenced on November 27 (photo 2-6), and by December 6 all work was completed on removing the electric fence (table 1). The fence removal work involves removing the electrical lines from

the posts and binding them together on the ground with string. The fiberglass poles are removed and bound so that they do not bend from the weight of the snow sliding down the slope. After the removal work, maintenance was carried out on parts of the fence, such as batteries and materials, to facilitate work putting the fence back up next year.



Photo 2-5: The part of the electric fence where bears entered the area



Photo 2-6: Removing the electric fence

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