

Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Conservation Project (October to December 2016)

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

Starting this summer, work was begun repairing the deer fence that was erected in 2003. The fence's circumference is about 1,000 meters and encloses an area of about 4.5 hectares, making it the largest deer fence in the 100-m² Movement Trust Area. It's been 13 years since it was erected and its wooden fence posts are rotting, so the two-to-three-year plan calls for the gradual replacement of the posts with about 350 steel posts. This fiscal year, 61 steel posts were driven and attached to the existing fence.

An inspection was made of the deer fence along the Iwaobetsu River that was repaired with the help of volunteers from Daikin Industries, Ltd. in September following damage by a typhoon in August. Following the repair work, there were numerous instances of strong winds, but because the original board fence was replaced with wire mesh fence highly resistant to the elements, there was no major damage as the region entered winter.



Putting up the steel posts and fence (October)



Inspecting the deer fence along the Iwaobetsu
River (December)

In order to study ways to rejuvenate the forest and create a work plan, a visit was made to the Uryu Experimental Forest of Hokkaido University in order to gather information on state-of-the-art case studies. Participants observed activities such as the removal of bamboo grass.



Saplings growing following the removal of bamboo grass (October)



Equipment used to remove bamboo grass (October)

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

1. Pass on Shiretoko's forests to the next generation

A tour of the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area was held for 15 third-year students of Shari High School. Daikin also held lectures and learning activities at the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center so as to teach the many visitors to Shiretoko about the area's nature, history, and the 100-m2 Movement Trust Area.



Shari High School students see the deer fence (October)



A lecture at the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center (September)

2. Supporting activities so bears and humans can coexist

The large landslide that occurred in the electrified fence area in September cut off access, a problem that continued until October. Therefore, maintenance work on the fences was carried out as needed in accessible areas. Only people doing maintenance work were allowed through during certain times on October 14, 18, and 21. Because the road closures would only be lifted on the 14th and 21st of each month for the remainder of the year, workers hurried to remove the electrified fences during those two days.

For a period of more than a month, damage to the electrified fences in the cut-off areas was not as bad as had been feared; however, there were a number of locations where damage was observed due to power lines being cut and small-scale landslides.

Snow began to fall in November, and bear sightings became quite rare, so fence removal work was carried out in late November in the remaining areas before the snow got too deep. The fence removal work involves removing the electrical lines from the posts and binding them together on the ground with string so they don't blow away in the driving snow. The fiberglass poles are removed and bound so that they do not bend from the weight of the snow sliding down the slope. In this way, preparations were able to be made for the installation of new fences in the spring.



Electrified fence damaged by a landslide



Removing an electrified fence

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