

Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views: Selections from the Tourist Destinations in National Forest

Forests have provided both mankind – and indeed all living things – with safety, sustenance and security for an eternity. The lush greenery and gentle breeze of the forest is surely enough to rekindle nature's vigor in any soul.

With more than 70% of Japan landmass covered in abundant greenery, the Forestry Agency is working to create "Recreation Forests" to inspire as many as possible to rediscover the wonder of nature. The best forests to visit have been carefully selected and compiled as "Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views."

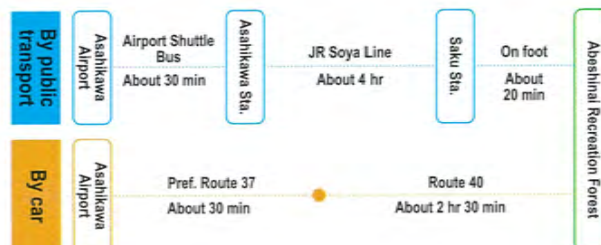
Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 1 Help protect wild animals and plants. When you bring your pets, please mind your manners and give consideration to the surrounding environment.
- 2 Damaging trees or stealing any forest product is penalized by law. Even collecting plants covering the ground of forest are prohibited within protection forests designated by law.
- 3 Do not enter the area beyond walking trails, or public squares. Please follow the rules for each Recreation Forest such as no camping outside the designated area.
- 4 Do not enter the area with "No Entry" or "Keep Out" sign.
- 5 When making a stop for rest or any other purposes, please look around and confirm that the area is safe without any risk of being hit by falling branches or rocks.
- 6 Enjoy mountaineering on your own responsibility. Please ensure that you submit your plan for mountaineering to a police station in the area as well as to your family members, your friends or colleagues after checking out climate and other necessary information for mountaineering and fully being equipped. Please also fill in "the Name List of Climbers and Visitors", which is placed at the mountain entrance. Check avalanche risks before mountaineering or skiing in winter.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 In order to prevent the spread of CSF through food residues, please make sure to take your garbage home with you. We are also taking measures such as removing trash bins.
- 9 Smoking is permitted only in special areas. Make sure to extinguish any fires, e.g. after smoking cigarettes.
- 10 Mountain paths are potentially dangerous to walk. Do not use smartphone while walking. When taking photos, please remain fully aware of your surroundings and do not bother other visitors in any way.
- 11 If you wish to use an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone), you need to submit prior written notice to District Forest Office. Please contact the nearest Regional Forest Office or District Forest Office of national forest beforehand.

Abeshinai Recreation Forest Access Map



Access



Abeshinai Recreation Forest

Location : 3 Yasukawa, Nakagawa Town, Nakagawa County, Hokkaido

Management office contact details :
Kamikawa Hokubu District Forest Office
FAX : 01655-4-2553

Nakagawa Town Committee for Promoting Establishment of Sustainable Forest Management

(Contact: Industrial Promotion Division, Nakagawa Municipal Office)
FAX : 01656-7-3511

National Forest Planning Division, Forestry Agency, MAFF

The Official Recreation Forests Website of the Forestry Agency
https://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/e/national_forest/recreation_forest/index.html



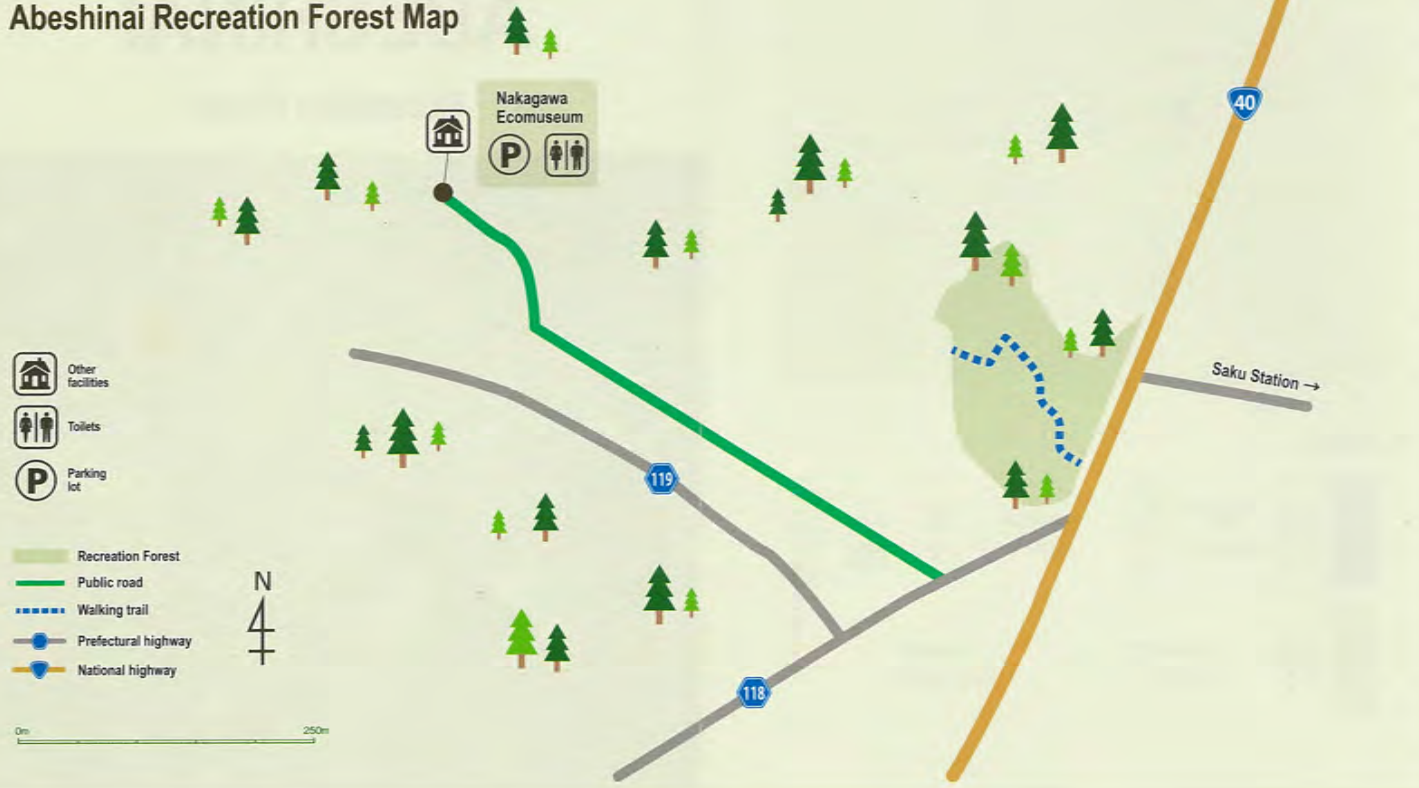
ABESHINAI

Recreation Forest



Fascinating picturesque forest overlooking a village full of history and romance

Abeshinai Recreation Forest Map



Geographical/ topographical features

The Abeshinai Recreation Forest lies atop a hill where the Teshio River and the Abeshinai River meet, and overlooks the Teshio River—Hokkaido's second longest river. The Abeshinai River basin where the recreation forest is located is an important area in Japan for research on Cretaceous strata and underground resources. It is a treasure trove of valuable fossils, including those of plesiosaurs and ammonites.



Historical/ cultural features

Abeshinai means "river along which we travel downstream" in the Ainu language. As the name suggests, the area was an important transportation hub, linking towns such as Teshio, Kamikawa, Uryu and Enbetsu. Meanwhile, Takeshiro Matsuura, the 19th century explorer said to have named the island "Hokkaido," stayed in this area during his Hokkaido explorations, and an Ainu kotan (settlement/village) is said to have existed here due to the location's importance to river navigation. In addition, Tomitaro Moriya, a physician and brother of the famous poet Mokichi Saito, was appointed to practice medicine at Shibunnai in Nakagawa Town by the prefectural government. Tanka Poet Mokichi Memorial Park and Shibunnai Pass Road are found in the area and a monument engraved with one of Mokichi's poems stands along a footpath. Many tanka poem (a form of classical Japanese short poem) enthusiasts visit these sites seeking inspiration for their own poetry.



Climate/ flora and fauna

The area has four distinctive seasons, with hot, dry summers and extremely cold winters with heavy snowfall.

In the Teshio River and Abeshinai River basins, Ojrowashi (white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*))—designated as both a national natural treasure and an endangered species—is resident throughout the year. Owashi (Steller's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus pelagicus*)) also fly over from Sakhalin Island to spend the winter. As for vegetation, it is the northern limit for the growth of wild Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* Siebold et Zucc. ex Hoffm. et Schult.) and Kitakobushi (Japanese magnolia (*Magnolia kobus* var. *borealis* Sarg.)).



Attractions

In the Abeshinai Recreation Forest, there is a natural rock that was used as a mountain god shrine to pray for safety of loggers in the early 20th century when it was popular to transport felled timber on the river—a reminder of the days when forestry was in its prime.

The forest has many trees, such as Itaya Kaede (*Acer pictum* Thunb. subsp. *dissectum* (Wesm.) H. Ohashi) and Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* Siebold et Zucc. ex Hoffm. et Schult.), whose leaves turn a beautiful golden yellow in the autumn. From October to November, these yellow-leaved trees together with crimson-red Nanakamado (*Sorbus commixta* Hedl.) and Ezo Yamazakura (sargent cherry (*Prunus sargentii*)) and deep-green Todomatsu (Todo fir (*Abies sachalinensis*)) scattered across the forest make a picturesque landscape, like an autumn brocade.

Visitors to Nakagawa Town can also enjoy a wide range of activities, including mountain biking, canoeing and fishing, as well as observing the geological strata and fossils. In addition, they can take part in local events, such as "Mori No Sanpo To Maki No Gochiso" (forest stroll and firewood cooking), where participants take a refreshing walk in the forest while hearing stories about it from a guide. At lunch time, they cook local ingredients over firewood and eat the food in the open air.

Moreover, The Nakagawa Ecomuseum exhibits a reconstructed plesiosaur skeleton—one of Japan's largest at about 11 meters long—that was found in the town and displays local fossils of ammonites, dolphins and others in a comparative manner with fossil specimens from around the world.



Information

- Elevation (m) 20 - 70
- Area (ha) 2.04
- Entrance fee None for the Recreation Forest itself
- Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
However, nighttime visits are not recommended as there are no lights.
- Accommodation options [Outside the forest]
Public hot spring facility, "Ponpira Aqua Ri-s Ing"; auto-camping site "Naport Park"; Sakaeya Inn; Oka Guest House; Nakagawa-cho Forest Park log house (all about 10 km / 10 minutes from the Abeshinai Recreation Forest)
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Nakagawa Ecomuseum (located nearby); Free parking for 30 ordinary vehicles and 2 large vehicles