

SHIN-ETSU TRAIL 信越トレイル

Our Mission

The Shin-etsu Trail Club sets and practices the following missions objectives in order to protect the Sekida Mountains, an invaluable natural asset, for the future generations:

1.Preserving the Eco-Diversity

We monitor the ecology surrounding all living things in the Sekida Mountains, not limiting ourselves to a particular species. We continue to research and observe, making sure to avoid placing any unnecessary or unintentional stress on the ecosystem.

2.Continuing the Traditional Culture and Sustaining Nature

The traditional culture of this area has been shaped by the heavy winter snowfalls (one of the heaviest in the world inhabited by people), as well as the exchange between seaside and mountainous lives. We consider this culture, closely tied with its natural environment, to be an irreplaceable heritage, and will continue to learn from, share, preserve, and develop it.

3.Contributing to the Local Area by Promoting Exchange Between People

We promote local services to visitors, including transportation, accommodation, and guides, thus encouraging exchange and ensuring that the beauty and uniqueness of the Sekida area are well understood by those who visit.

Rules for Hiking

1. Tread only on marked trails
2. Treat plants and animals with respect
3. Collect and carry all trash with you.
4. Use established toilet facilities only.
5. Obey rules and regulations on signboards.
6. Consider other hikers.
7. Know your surroundings, and prepare accordingly.

Hikers who abide by these rules provide a good example to everyone. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to welcoming you to the trail!

! This map is not to scale. Please use Official Map to navigate the trails. Snowfall conditions may affect when the trail is open to visitors, although the generally Sections 1&2 open late May, Sections' 3&4 from mid-June, and 5&6 from early July.



Course features

Section-1

Mt. Madarao~Mansaka Pass~Mt.Hakama~Akaike Pond

Walking time : ~6Hours*
Distance : 8.5km*
Highest elevation : 1,382m
Lowest elevation : 910m
Difference in elevation : 471m



This course runs from the peak of Mt. Madarao (斑尾山), at the trail's southern end, to Akaike Pond (赤池). Several local trails extend from the peak to down to the surrounding districts. On clear days, hikers can enjoy unobstructed views of the entire Sekida Mountain range (関田山脈). Nearby Daimyojin (大明神) peak offers a panorama of Lake Nojiriko (野尻湖), Nagano's Five Northern Peaks (信越五岳), Mt. Hiuchi (火打山) and the distant Northern Alps (北アルプス). This course is the most scenic of the 6 Shin-etsu Trail sections. The trail cuts through open meadows and has little shade until Mansaka Pass (万坂峠), so make sure to bring sunscreen and plenty of water during the hot summer months. The section between Mansaka Pass (万坂峠) and Mt. Hakama (袴岳) is especially pretty, shaded by towering beech and birch trees.

*The listed Time/Distance does not include the journey between Mt Madarao origin point and the closest road.

★Accommodation

Madarao Kogen (斑尾高原), Tangram (タングラム)

Section-2

Akaike Pond~Numanohara Marshland~Lake Nozomiko~Mt. Kenashi~Wakui Village

Walking time : ~5Hours
Distance : 10.7km
Highest elevation : 1,022m
Lowest elevation : 563m
Difference in elevation : 459m



This course runs from Akaike Pond (赤池) to Wakui Village (滝井). En-route to the Numanohara Marshland (沼の原湿原), the trail crosses low hills before entering a forest of beech trees. After the winter snow melts, Asian skunk cabbage and marsh marigold bloom, covering whole fields in white and yellow blossoms. More hills lie between Numanohara Marshland (沼の原湿原) and Lake Nozomiko (希望湖), offering views of Mt. Madarao (斑尾山), Mt. Hakama (袴岳) and in good weather a glimpse of Mt. Myoko (妙高山). A roughly 30 minute walk up a gentle slope brings hikers to the top of Mt. Kenashi (毛無山). From the peak, a sub-trail leads to a scenic viewing platform, a great place to stop for a lunch break. Heading towards Wakui-Shinike Pond (滝井新池), the trail descends through a larch tree forest to farm roads. Along the way, water from mountain streams bursts out to form a natural spring.

★Accommodation

Madarao Kogen (斑尾高原), Shinanodaira (信濃平), Iiyama City (飯山市街), Kijimadaira (木島平)

Section-3

Wakui Village~Tomikura Pass~Mt. Kuroiwa~Katsuraike Pond~Hotokegamine Trailhead

Walking time : ~6Hours
Distance : 12.7km
Highest elevation : 938m
Lowest elevation : 563m
Difference in elevation : 375m



This course runs from Wakui Village through Togari-Onsen Ski Resort (戸狩温泉スキー場), ending at Hotokegamine Trailhead. Not long into hike, the trail merges into a forest pass, running through groves of cedar trees. A centuries-old stone canal can be found in Tomikura Pass (湯倉峠), a relic of trade between Shinano/Nagano (信濃) and Echigo/Niigata (越後). Further along is the site of warlord Uesugi Kenshin's (上杉謙信) base camp, used in the Warring States Period campaigns. The spot offers views over Iiyama Basin (飯山盆地) and of villages on Mt. Kuroiwa's (黒岩山) northern ridge. As home to rare species of butterflies and frogs, the mountain has been designated a protected habitat. The trail is surrounded by expansive beech forests, with an arboretum/rest area open to hikers. In Katsuraike Pond (桂池) area, Asian skunk cabbage flowers bloom bright white in spring, fed by natural spring waters nearby. The trail continues into a national forest, shaded by cedar trees all the way to Hotokegamine Trailhead (仏ヶ峰登山口).

★Accommodation

Shinanodaira (信濃平), Togari-Onsen (戸狩温泉)

Section-4

Hotokegamine Trailhead~Kozawa Pass~Mt. Nabekura~Sekida Pass

Walking time : ~6Hours
Distance : 8.2km
Highest elevation : 1,288m
Lowest elevation : 830m
Difference in elevation : 458m



Starting at Togari-Onsen Ski Resort (戸狩温泉スキー場) and Hotokegamine Trailhead (仏ヶ峰登山口), the trail stretches all the way to Sekida Pass (関田峠). The trail ascends through beech forests and open fields before following the ridge, which allows view of a forest rolling terrain to Kozawa Pass (小沢峠). Continuing along the main trail, 100 year-old beech trees stand proudly in line, creating a beautiful backdrop for a lunch break. Past this point the trail narrows and visibility can be limited during the climb up Mt. Nabekura (鍋倉山), so some caution is required. Still, it's worth it for the amazing scenery from the peak, where hikers can look down over Mt. Myoko (妙高山), Mt. Hiuchi (火打山), Iiyama Basin (飯山盆地), and Chikuma River (千曲川) and on clear days, all the way to the Sea of Japan (日本海). From there, it's all downhill to Sekida Pass (関田峠).

★Accommodation

Togari-Onsen (戸狩温泉), Nabekura Kogen (なべくら高原), Nozawa-Onsen (野沢温泉), Joetsu City Itakura Ward (上越市板倉区)

Section-5

Sekida Pass~Maki Pass~Utsunomata Pass~Maboroshinoike Pond~Busuno Pass

Walking time : ~6Hours
Distance : 12.4km
Highest elevation : 1,140m
Lowest elevation : 970m
Difference in elevation : 170m



This course runs from Sekida Pass (関田峠) to Busuno Pas (伏野峠). The rolling terrain from Section-4 continues between Maki Pass (牧峠) and Busuno Pass (伏野峠). This area is home to many young beech trees, bent into a distinctive U-shape by heavy winter snowfall, as well as native Nabekura Skunk cabbage. When the weather is good, hikers standing on Maki Pass (牧峠) can look out as far as the Sea of Japan (日本海), and distant Sado Island (佐渡島). After passing through Utsunomata Pass (宇津ノ俣峠), the trail makes its way to Maboroshinoike Pond (幻の池), surrounded by 300 meter of natural beech forests. Beginning in late June, the pond is a spawning ground for forest green tree frogs and Japanese back salamanders. Nearing Busuno Pass (伏野峠), Niigata Prefecture's landmark Mt. Hishigatake (菱ヶ岳) appears on the horizon.

★Accommodation

Nabekura Kogen (なべくら高原), Joetsu City Itakura Ward, Maki Ward, Yasuduka Ward (上越市板倉区-牧区-安塚区)

Section-6

Busuno Pass~Sugawa Pass~Nonomi Pass~Misaka Pass~Mt. Amamizu

Walking time : ~7Hours*
Distance : 12.8km*
Highest elevation : 1,151m
Lowest elevation : 1,015m
Difference in elevation : 136m



The trail begins at Busuno Pass (伏野峠), which was used as both an old military passage and a place of religious significance for practitioners of Shugendo (修験道 / Buddhist mystical sect) and runs to its northernmost point at Mt. Amamizu (天水山). The trail is mostly gentle ascents and descents until just past Misaka Pass (深坂峠), where it begins to slope sharply downhill. Particularly in inclement weather, hikers should be cautious of their footing. Between Nonomi Pass (野々海峠) and Misaka Pass (深坂峠), hikers will pass through the northernmost point of Nagano prefecture. Of all the ridges in Sekida Mountains (関田山脈), the historical Misaka Pass (深坂峠) offers gorgeous views over Niigata. The beech forests in the foothill of Mt. Amamizu (天水山) are also worth the hike.

*The listed Time/Distance does not include the journey between Mt Amamizu origin point and the closest road.

★Accommodation

Daigoni Kogen (大蔵寺高原), Matsunoyama-Onsen (松之山温泉), Nakajyo-Onsen (中条温泉), Tsunan Town (津南町)

Visitor Information Centers

There are six visitor centers located along the Shin-etsu Trail. Before heading out, visit one of these information centers for the latest information on trail conditions and seasonal changes. Official trail maps are also available for sale at all six locations.

Parking availability
 The number in the () is for buses. Bathroom Lodging facility Restaurant Bus Stop

① Shinetsu-Shizenkyo Activity Center



JR Iiyama station, Iiyama, Nagano
TEL : 0269-62-7001
<https://www.shinetsu-activity.jp/en/>

Open year-round

② Madarao Kogen Yama-no-ie



Madarao Kogen Iiyama, Nagano
TEL : 0269-64-3222
<http://madarao.tv>

Open year-round
* The closest bus stop is "Yama-no-ie Mae" 山の家前.

③ Greenpal Kogen-So



Hikarigahara Kogen, Itakura Ward, Joetsu, Niigata
TEL : 080-8858-9776
* For winter season hours TEL: 025-787-241 (Joetsu City Itakura general office)
<http://www.city.joetsu.niigata.jp/soshiki/itakura-ku/itakura-ss-02-php.html>
Open June-October

④ Nabekura Kogen Mori-no-ie



Nabekura Kogen, Iiyama, Nagano
TEL : 0269-69-2888
<http://www.nabekura.net>
Closed: Tuesdays

⑤ Cupid Valley Center House



Yukidaruma Kogen, Sugawa, Yasuzuka Ward, Joetsu, Niigata
TEL : 025-593-2041
<http://www.yukidaruma-kogen.com>
Open year-round
*Guest housing accommodations and hot springs are located next to the Center House.

⑥ Daigoni Kogen Resthouse Kibokan



Daigoni Kogen, Amamizugoe, Matsunoyama, Tokamachi, Niigata
TEL : 025-596-2556
<http://www.daigoni.com/>
Open May-October

The Shin-etsu Trail Club member accommodations

We do our best to promote lodges and inns that participate in Shin-etsu Trail Club activities, provide information about the trail to visitors, and help to plan great hiking trips. Most of these accommodations provide guests with transportation to and from the trail, as well as the nearest train station. (Availability may vary with time and distance depending on a visitors desired route from their lodging to the site, so please ask at your lodge for details.) For more information about the accommodations, please contact us. E-mail: office@s-trail.net

The Shin-etsu Trail campsites

There are 6 camping sites along the trail. It takes 5 days 4 nights to hike the all the courses with tent. To ensure that everyone has a pleasant stay, we ask that you make reservations in advance and observe all campsite rules and regulations.



Site Name	Tent Capacity	Usage Fee (per person)	Reservations
① Akaike Pond Campsite *3 minute walk from the Akaike parking area.	10	Free *We ask for contribution of 1,000 yen per person for maintenance	Shinetsu Trail Club http://www.s-trail.net
② Katsuraike Pond Campsite	5	1,000 yen	
③ Tondaira Campsite *15 minute walk from Hotokegamine Trailhead.	10	1,000 yen	
④ Hikarigahara Campsite *15 minute walk from the Shin-etsu Trail crossroads.	30	1,000 yen	Hikarigahara Campsite Tel: 080-8858-9776
⑤ Nonomikogon Campsite *10 minute walk from the Shin-etsu Trail crossroads.	20	1,000 yen	Shinetsu Trail Club http://www.s-trail.net
⑥ Daigoni Kogen Campsite *15 minute walk on the promenade from Matsunoyama Trailhead.	40	Base Fee: 200 yen per person BYO Tent fee: 600 yen per tent Tent site fee: 1000 yen per site	Daigoni Kogen Campsite Tel: 025-596-2994