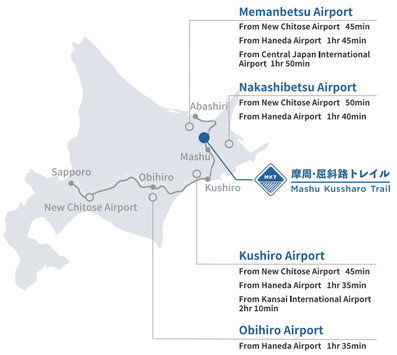
摩周・屈斜路トレイル
Mashu Kussharo Trail

A Trail with spectacular views of a volcano, forest, and lakes.

The Mashu Kussharo Trail (MKT) showcases the dynamic landscape of the northern part of Akan-Mashu National Park with a route that connects crater lakes, lava domes, and natural hot springs. The trail also visits sites such as Kussharo Kotan village, an important Ainu settlement, and Mt. Io (pronounced “ee-oh”), where natural sulfur was mined in the late nineteenth century. The 62.5-kilometer MKT is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the story of this region.

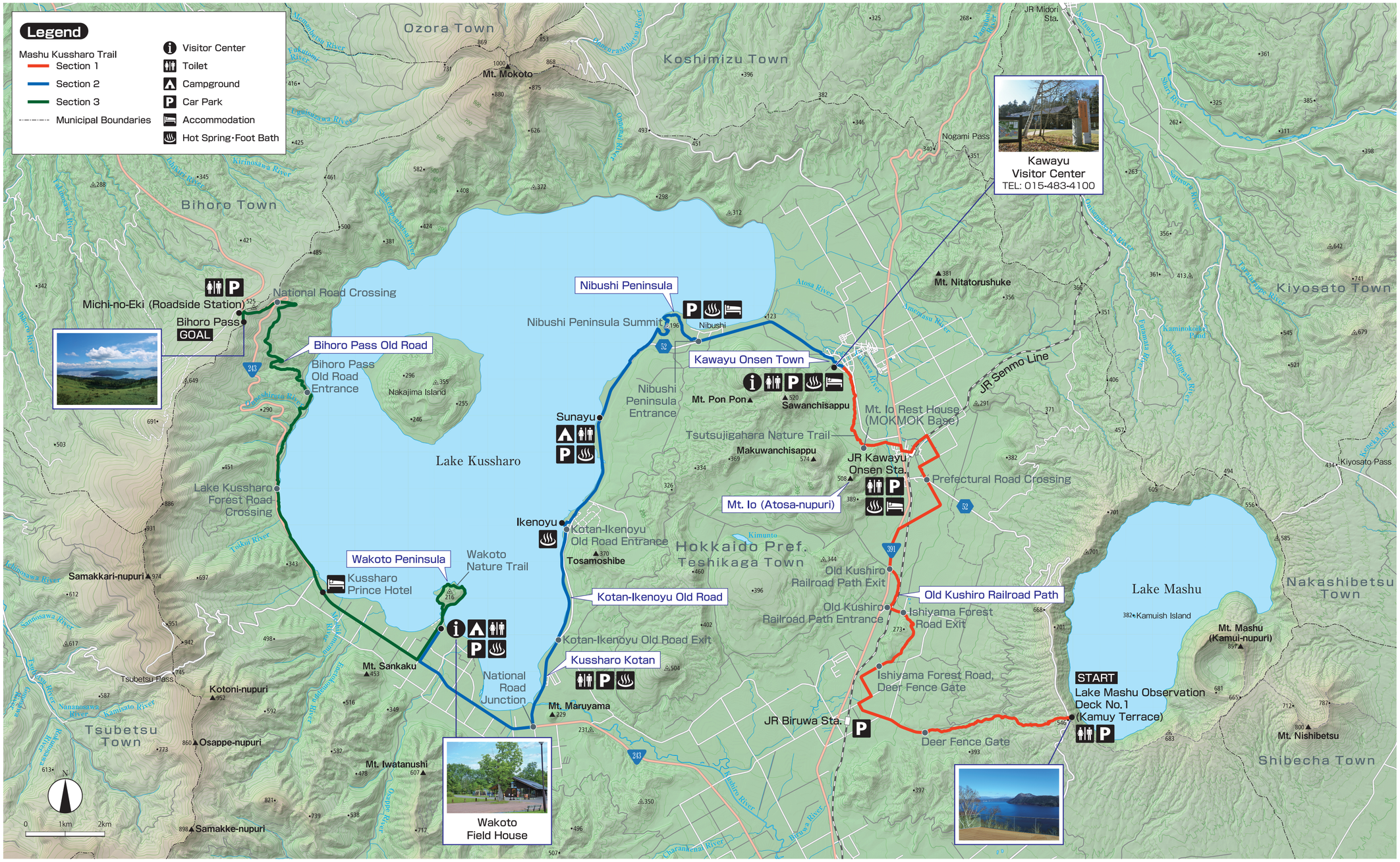


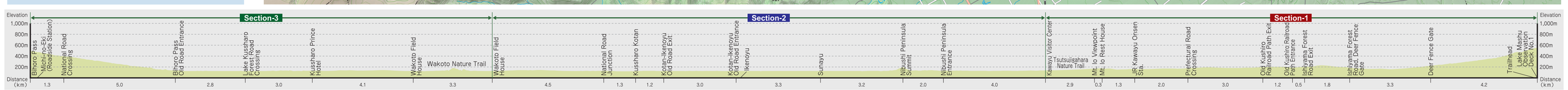
MKT Hiking Rules

1. Stay on the Trail
2. Respect the Flora and Fauna
3. Be Considerate of Others
4. Take All Trash Home with You
5. Use Established Toilet Facilities
6. Prepare Ahead and Walk as Planned
7. Obtain Brown Bear Information and Be Prepared
8. Camping and Fires are Allowed only in Designated Campgrounds

Local Transportation (only Japanese spoken)
Taxi : Mashu Taxi 015-482-3939
Bus : Akan Bus 015-486-7716

For more information on MKT
TESHIKAGA Trail Club
mashu.kussharo.trail@gmail.com





Bihoro Pass Old Road

The MKT follows the old road used before the current national highway was built. In the old days, did Ainu people go through a path somewhere near here to get to the hot springs in the Kussharo region?

Wakoto Peninsula

Once a volcanic island, the peninsula is still a site of high geothermal activity. Fumaroles called Oyakotsu Jigoku fume aggressively on the peninsula’s northern tip. Wildflowers grow in abundance along the nature trail here from spring to fall.

Section 3 Forest Trail

Walk along Wakoto Peninsula, which juts out from Lake Kussharo’s southern shore, and then through farmland and up the wildlife-rich inner slope of the Kussharo Caldera to Bihoro Pass (525 m), which overlooks Lake Kussharo. You will witness the special harmony of human activity and nature’s sublime energy on this 19.5 km section of the trail.

Kussharo Kotan

Visit the Ainu Museum (open Apr. 20 – Nov. 30) to learn more about Ainu culture and history in the region. Outdoor exhibits such as an altar and a lakeside hot spring are also highlights.

Kotan-Ikenoyu Old Road

In the old days, Ainu people used this road between Ikenoyu and Kussharo Kotan to visit the hot spring. They used the warm water to prepare materials such as tree bark for weaving, and also used it for bathing.

Nibushi Peninsula

This forest, which is comprised of many kinds of broadleaf trees and Sakhalin Fir (a hardy conifer found across Hokkaido), is a great habitat for wildlife. If you’re lucky, you just might be able to hear the drumming of the crow-sized Black Woodpecker.

Section 2 Lake Trail

The MKT goes through the primeval woodlands of the Kussharo Caldera, as well as an old road Ainu people once used in the past. Stop at unique outdoor natural hot springs and viewpoints along the shore of the Lake Kussharo. This 22.5 km section of the trail will reveal to you the wonders and charms of the lake and give you direct access to the Ainu past.

Kawayu Onsen Town

The sulfurous and acidic spring waters of Mt. Io flow to the town. Some hotels allow day visitors to use their onsen facilities. Local restaurants and cafés offer great service, and the National Park Visitor Center is a must visit for hikers.

Mt. Io (Atosa-nupuri)

This active volcano has more than 1,500 fumaroles which constantly release steam into the air. The sulfur deposits color sections of the landscape a bright yellow. Alpine plants are dominant in the highly acidic soil around the mountain.

Old Kushiro Railroad Path

At one point the MKT follows the path of the old railroad tracks which were in operation for 10 years starting in 1887. This train once transported sulfur mined from Mt. Io. Although the tracks are gone, the embankments still remain, albeit obscured by vegetation.

Lake Mashu Observation Deck No.1

The MKT trailhead begins at the Observation Deck of Lake Mashu. Its surface’s ever-changing color is called “Mashu Blue.” Enjoy a spectacular view and take a photo at the MKT sign before you start.

Section 1 Volcano Trail

Starting at Lake Mashu’s Observation Deck No. 1 (546 m), this trail descends the outer rim of the Mashu Caldera to Biruwa. After walking the forest path of the old railroad, pop into a café near the train station and enjoy watching the distant fumes rise from Mt. Io before heading to Kawayu Onsen town. On this 20.5 km section of the trail, you can feel the earth’s terrific breath rise towards the heavens.