

Kuju Plateau

Somi Grasslands Managed Burning

The Kuju Mountain Range refers to a group of five volcanoes that stretch 15km from east to west. At the base of the mountain range is Somi, an area of the Kuju Plateau characterized by open grasslands and an abundance of natural springs. The grasslands have a campground where visitors can stay and enjoy this wonderful natural environment.

The charm of the Somi campground lies in its clear water springs, cool forests, and the broad grassland that spreads as far as the eye can see. The grassland is managed through controlled burnings called *noyaki* that allow new grass to grow once the old, dead grass growth has been cleared. *Noyaki* in Kuju is done mainly by local farmers in the spring. In order to prevent the fires from spreading to areas that do not need to be burnt, firebreaks have to be opened in the grasslands first. Maintaining the broad, beautiful grasslands, though very hard work, is vital for the local farmers.