

## **Mt. Futatsumori Trailhead**

**Distance:** 3.2 kilometers

**Duration:** 1 hour (one way)

Mt. Futatsumori (1,086 m), located in Fujisato, Akita Prefecture, is the nearest mountain to the Shirakami Sanchi core zone. This trail leads through the buffer zone (the area that surrounds the core zone of the Shirakami Sanchi World Heritage Site) to the top of the mountain, which is on the border of Akita and Aomori prefectures. The road to the trailhead was once a logging road and was planned to cut through forest into Aomori Prefecture, but construction was stopped by environmental activists in 1990.

The name Futatsumori literally means “two forests,” and the mountain’s ecosystems support a wide diversity of plants and animals. Parts of the mountainside were once clear-cut for timber and the lower foothills of the mountain are still mostly used for tree farming. But as the trail leads closer to the Shirakami Sanchi core zone, the environment gradually changes into a beech forest with an undergrowth of bamboo grass. Many of the forest’s beech trees have curved trunks. Young beeches are bent by the weight of heavy snowfalls, but as the trees grow they become strong enough to bear the weight of the snow and send their trunks straight upward. The forest floor is carpeted by various shrubs and herbaceous plants, including forked viburnum (*Viburnum furcatum*), Asian fawn lily (*Erythronium japonicum*), and several species of rhododendron.