

## **Kawayu Eco-museum Center: The Gateway to Akan-Mashu National Park**

The best place to begin an adventure at Akan-Mashu National Park is the Kawayu Eco-museum Center. This facility introduces the region's nature and rich history through detailed dioramas and displays. Since the park covers 914 square kilometers and has numerous natural attractions, planning a tour may seem overwhelming, but the Kawayu Eco-museum's wealth of available information and knowledgeable staff make it easy for visitors to craft the ideal itinerary for exploring the park. There is also a bright and airy café space where guests can relax.

### *Learn*

The ecomuseum's exhibition space introduces the nature and history of Akan-Mashu National Park. Violent volcanic eruptions have shaped the area and the sulfur-mining industry put Kawayu on the map. Exhibitions also highlight the interesting local wildlife, the distinctive flora that thrives here despite the harsh volcanic environment, and the culture of the indigenous Ainu people who have hunted and gathered here for centuries.

### *Discover*

The ecomuseum has a diverse range of pamphlets and other literature about the park in both English and Japanese, and visitors can browse through the material to plan a tour of the park. Information on everything from the park's giant caldera lakes to its volcanoes and mountainous terrain is available. Guidebooks contain in-depth information about the park's flora and fauna, and comprehensive maps highlight the hiking trails. Ecomuseum staff are highly knowledgeable about the local area and are happy to answer any questions.

### *Experience*

The Kawayu Eco-museum is the perfect starting point to explore Akan-Mashu National Park. Learn about the many seasonal tours available in the park, including canoeing adventures, nature walks, and stargazing tours. Ecomuseum staff can guide visitors along the Sakhalin Spruce Nature Trail, a short round-trip trek through the Sakhalin spruce forest behind the museum. (Reservations are not required for a guided tour during quiet times.) For visitors in need of rain gear, rental of waterproof jackets and pants in all sizes are available so that everyone can enjoy the park regardless of the weather.

### *Play*

The Kawayu Eco-museum is fun for families. The kids' play area is stocked with picture books and toys for young children. Older kids (and adults) can express their creativity by making pinecone art at the nature craft corner, while the table tennis table offers some competitive fun. The second floor features an open space with an interactive birdsong exhibit, where families can learn about the various songs and calls heard in the park. A tepee and hammock set up on the covered outdoor open deck are ideal for kids to play in while waiting for rain clouds to pass.

### *Relax*

The café space on the second floor is equipped with comfortable chairs and sofas that look out onto the thick Sakhalin spruce forest behind the ecomuseum. Visitors can plan their next adventure in the park while taking a break over some drinks and light snacks.