

## **Nasu Heisei-no-mori Forest Field Center**

The Nasu Heisei-no-mori Forest opened to the public in 2011 as part of Nikko National Park. The Field Center is the forest's main facility and serves as the gateway to the Forest Recreation Zone and Forest Learning Zone.

Visitors can explore the Forest Recreation Zone at their leisure or participate in the free short programs offered by the Field Center: half-hour guided walks that highlight seasonal sights. There are three loop trails in the Recreation Zone. The longest, about 3 kilometers, leads to the Komadome Waterfall Observation Deck. For a shorter route, guests can take the 1-kilometer Footpath. The final path is only 300 meters, but it is entirely accessible by wheelchair.

Access to the Forest Learning Zone is restricted in order to maintain a balance between using the forest as a teaching tool and conserving the natural environment for future generations. Visitors can enter it only on pre-booked guided walks led by "nature interpreters." These guides explain the interdependence of plants and animals, point out easily missed signs of animal activity, and encourage participants to appreciate not just the sights, but also the sounds, scents, and textures of their surroundings. The Learning Zone trails follow the same paths once used by the Imperial Family.

The Field Center also has exhibits that explain the forest's ecology and the story of its transition from Imperial estate to public park. The staff will arrange guided walks or provide information on the forest and the local area. Even the building is ecologically conscious, with toilets designed to minimize the impact on the surrounding ecosystem.

Coffee lovers will appreciate the Field Center's outdoor coffee shop, where local companies offer small-batch, house-roasted beverages on a rotating basis.