

Ecotourism

According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” Ecotourism in Minakami is managed by the Tanigawadake Ecotourism Promotion Council, which was established in 2010 with the goal of protecting, utilizing, and promoting the natural resources of the area. The ecotours operated by the council include excursions into the surrounding wilderness to study the plants, animals, and natural phenomena of the area, as well as tours that introduce the history of the mountain and of Minakami.

Mt. Tanigawadake Week, a weeklong celebration with various events, including discounts on ecotours, accommodations, and dining, is held each year to coincide with Mt. Tanigawadake Day (July 2) and the beginning of alpine season (the first Sunday of July). As part of the event, visitors can learn about the local environment while hiking at Tenjindaira, Ichinokurasawa, in the foothills, and at other locations. As a result of these initiatives, the number of visitors and overnight guests to Minakami and the Mt. Tanigawadake area has increased.

In January, a guided tour of the powder snow at the foot of Mt. Tanigawadake is held as part of the Snowshoe Festival, and every August since 2013, more than 45 volunteers have worked under the guidance of the Ecotourism Promotion Council to eradicate the cutleaf coneflower, an invasive species. The council is also working to restore the original environment by planting species that are native to the area.