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## Fifth round of the Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project: Shirakami Sanchi Mitsui Chemicals Donates NONROT™ Benches Designed by Elementary School Students Supporting all of Japan's natural heritage sites

Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. (Tokyo: 4183; President & CEO: HASHIMOTO Osamu) and Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products Ltd. (President: TACHIBANA Akihiro) have carried out the fifth round of the Mitsui Chemicals' Group's Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project, focusing this round on the Shirakami Sanchi mountain range.

The project began with MINATO Norikazu, a furniture maker from Noshiro, Akita, holding a bench design workshop themed around Shirakami Sanchi at Fujisato Elementary and Middle School Fujisato Gakuen (Fujisato, Akita; Principal: SATO Masahiko), which is located at the foot of the mountain range. During the workshop, the elementary school students designed three benches, as well as a set of multi-purpose benches. Mitsui Chemicals and Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products then created these benches, and has now donated them to the Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisatokan), the Mori-no-Eki tourist information center and Fujisato Municipal School.

Mitsui Chemicals has also released a video providing a closer look at how the project went down.

**Video link:** [https://youtu.be/W\\_1r0lcWjHQ?si=GyGu7IzDPaTPxdNq](https://youtu.be/W_1r0lcWjHQ?si=GyGu7IzDPaTPxdNq) in Japanese

In addition, Mitsui Chemicals has released a video that looks back over and sums up its efforts to support all five of Japan's World Natural Heritage sites: Yakushima, Shirakami Sanchi, Shiretoko, the Ogasawara Islands, and the combined area of Amami Oshima, Tokunoshima, the northern part of Okinawa Island and Iriomote.

**Video link:** <https://youtu.be/J1ghysrFkkU?si=av2DPMcyo1tlF6x5> in Japanese

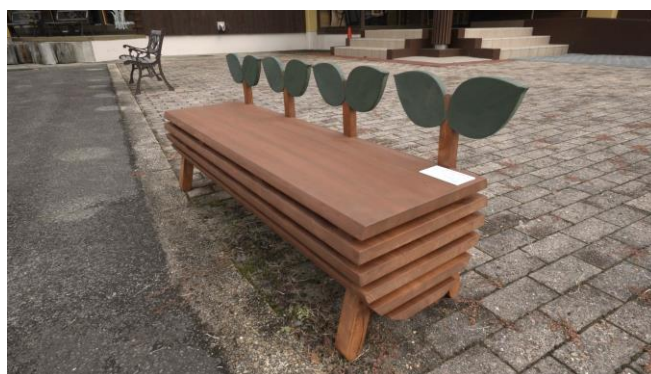


October 2023: Everyone from Fujisato Municipal School with the completed benches

Shirakami Sanchi is a large mountain range spanning approximately 130,000 hectares, from the northwest of Akita to the southwest of Aomori. It is a precious stretch of land, containing vast, uninterrupted stands of the Japanese beech tree, which grows in cold climates, but has been disappearing in recent years after a history of growing widely throughout Northern Japan. This pristine forest also houses an ecosystem rich in biodiversity, including more than 500 species of plants as well as precious animal species such as the golden eagle and the black woodpecker. Recognized as an extraordinarily valuable stretch of nature, Shirakami Sanchi was registered alongside Yakushima as one of Japan's first World Natural Heritage sites in December 1993, and recently had its 30th anniversary as such a site.

For this latest activity, two workshops were held at Fujisato Municipal School, with support from the Fujisato Town Board of Education and Fujisato Town Hall. First, in June, Minato Norikazu came as an instructor, holding a workshop focused on what sort of people the students wanted to visit Shirakami Sanchi, and what came to mind when the students thought about the area. The children grouped up to fill a blackboard with what they thought was appealing about Shirakami Sanchi, then drew pictures on the topic of what they liked about their town. Later, Minato drew up plans for the benches, then built them using Japanese cedar wood from Akita. Then in the second workshop, held in October, the students were guided by Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products in finishing the benches, which involved applying NONROT™ wood protecting coating to let the wood breathe and maintain the fresh smell of new wood.

The benches have since been set up at the Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisatokan), the Mori-no-Eki tourist information center and Fujisato Municipal School, helping to convey the appeal of Shirakami Sanchi's many natural blessings to visitors.



Benches inspired by the Japanese beech tree leaf and the flow of water through Shirakami Sanchi  
 Left: Mori-no-Eki tourist information center. Right: Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisatokan)



Multi-purpose benches inspired by water droplets in Shirakami Sanchi  
 Fujisato Municipal School

Children enjoying the benches  
 Fujisato Municipal School

## ■ NONROT™ wood protective coating <http://www.nonrot.jp>



Featuring excellent water repellency, UV resistance, and antiseptic, antifungal and anti-insect properties, NONROT™ is a highly safe coating which maximizes the breathability – or humidity control – that wood naturally possesses. As the product does not disturb the breathing of the wood, it allows the wood to release its inherent refreshing aroma, leading numerous architects, designers and clients to choose NONROT™ as a wood protective coating.

## ■ Minato Norikazu's profile <https://noshiroyamori.com/>

Born in Noshiro, Akita, Minato Norikazu runs Minato Furniture, a made-to-order furniture store that specializes in using unspoiled wood to create every piece of furniture with passion and care. In his efforts to unravel the history behind Noshiro, the “city of wood”, Minato has carried out studies into lumber mills and high-quality wooden goods stores. He has also held several events, including Mokuto Sampo and MOKU TALK.

In addition to devising ways of making effective use of wood from forest thinning and improvement cutting, Minato holds workshops for companies as part of their corporate social responsibility activities and also builds prototypes for later commercialization. He recently started up a town development company, Noshiro Yamorisha LLC., with the aim of making Noshiro a city that children will get attached to.

## ■ Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project

Mitsui Chemicals Group Donates NONROT™ Benches Made in Collaboration with Tokunoshima Elementary School Students

[https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2022/2022\\_0906/index.htm](https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2022/2022_0906/index.htm)

Mitsui Chemicals Group Donates NONROT™ Tree Decks to Shiretoko Nature Foundation

[https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2020/2020\\_0325.htm](https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2020/2020_0325.htm)

Mitsui Chemicals Group Donates NONROT™-Treated Benches Made from Non-Native Bishop Wood to Ogasawara Islands

[https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2019/2019\\_0214.htm](https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2019/2019_0214.htm)

Protecting Our World Heritage Project CSR Project Video in Yakushima now released

<https://jp.mitsuichemicals.com/en/release/2017/170316.htm>