On August 28th and 29th, 2015 (Fri-Sat), the 4th Tohoku Geopark Forum (organized by the Iwate Sanriku Geopark Promotion Conference) was held in Kuji. The event brought people involved with Tohoku Geoparks together in order to encourage cooperation and to further promote the region. Around 200 people attended.

In the keynote speech, Professor Setsuya Nakada of the University of Tokyo's Earthquake Research Institute gave his thoughts about the Sanriku Geopark in comparison with other Geoparks around the world. At the following workshop, attendees discussed the park's challenges and had an active exchange of ideas for promoting Tohoku's Geoparks.

On the second day, attendees joined one of three excursions to the Sanriku Geopark. At each Geosite they heard from a local guide and saw Sanriku's magnificent scenery with their own eyes.

The event will give a boost to the five regions aiming to be certified as Geoparks (Shimokita Peninsula, Mt. Kurikoma Area, Mt. Chokai & Tobishima Island, Mt. Zao and Mt. Gassan), and raised expectations for the reconstruction and its effect on tourism to the Sanriku Geopark.

On August 29th and 30th, 2015 (Sat-Sun), crowds of people attended a local food festival called the "Sanriku Food Court (Gurutto Shokudo) in KAMAISHI & B-1 Grand Prix", which was held at Sea-Plaza-Yu in Suzukocho, Kamaishi.

The event's aim was to share information about the Sanriku Coast, which is in the midst of reconstruction following the Great East Japan Earthquake & Tsunami. This was the first time the event was held in the Sanriku region, and was accredited by the Ai-B League, organizers of Japan's largest town-revitalization event "B-1 Grand Prix."

There were 15 stalls altogether: three from Kamaishi, one each from Iwaizumi, Miyako, Otsuchi, Sumita and Ofunato, and seven others from all over the country that have attended the B-1 Grand Prix before. Each stall showed off the gourmet food of their region, and the visitors ate their fill.

A display of Kamaishi's traditional Tiger Dance and a performance by the city's wind orchestra brought a lively atmosphere to the event.

Due to the heavy damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, "Marine Tourism Yamada" had to put its activities on hold. However, the entire roster of activities has now started up again, including cruises in the Yamada Bay, walks on the uninhabited Holland Island, and trying your hand at oyster and scallop farming while hanging out with local fishermen.

 ※Available April-October / Reservations required one week in advance.

【Contact】Yamada Town Tourism Association ☎ 0193-84-3775
On September 5, 2015 (Sat.), the Coastal Regional Development Bureau of the prefectural government started a direct bus service (run by Iwate Kenpoku Bus) between Miyako and Kamaishi. The JR Yamada train line (Miyako Station to Kamaishi Station) was suspended as a result of the damage it received from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. This has been quite an issue with residents and tourists, who say that it’s very inconvenient trying to travel up and down along the Sanriku Coastline. With the approach of the fall tourist season, this bus service will make transportation between the northern and southern areas of the coast more convenient.

This service will be available for a limited time this year on weekends from September 5 (Sat.) to November 29 (Sun.), as well as on November 2 (Mon.). Reservations are not required. A one-way fare for middle school students and up is 1,500 yen, and 750 yen for elementary school students and younger.

The trip lasts 1 hour and 50 minutes, and there are 2 round-trip buses a day. The bus stops in front of Kamaishi Station, Sanriku Hana Hotel Hamagiku, Michi-no-Eki Yamada (a rest stop), Yamada

Many young people are diligently helping the affected area of Sanriku move toward a full reconstruction. The section “People for Sanriku’s Future” introduces these young people and their powerful feelings.

Part 44 introduces Ms. Rieko Hiradate’s efforts.

PROFILE

Originally from Otsuchi, she graduated from university, found a job in Morioka as a cameraman assistant. After the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, she signed up for a project related to Otsuchi’s ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

In May 2013, she returned to Otsuchi, where she began to work with much determination with KAI OTSUCHI Co. Ltd. Ms. Hiradate wanted to use her experience with photography and design, so I want Otsuchi to become an ICT education hub.

Contribute to the region with ICT

At the time of the disaster, Ms. Hiradate was working in Morioka. The difference between the inland areas and the disaster-stricken areas on the coast was striking, and had her wondering what she could possibly do to help out the coastal regions. It was then that she heard that Otsuchi was looking to recruit an intern for an ICT-related project. Deciding that this was a good opportunity to use her experience with photography and design, she signed up for the position.

Casualties & Damage in Iwate

As of August 31, 2015

- Human casualties/deaths: 4,672; Missing: 1,129
- Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 26,164

To make a donation to aid in Iwate’s reconstruction:


Thank you for all your support!

As of August 31, 2015

Donations for survivors: Around ¥18,431 billion (91,932 donations)
Donations for reconstruction projects: Around ¥19,687 billion (7,429 donations)
Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations: Around ¥7,688,55 billion (16,125 donations)

This fund is to assist in the study and daily life of affected children by encouraging sport and study activities.