

Overall Conservation Approach for the Upper Access Routes and Their Associated Huts and Tractor Routes

1 Purpose

The ascending routes taken by pilgrims and the mountain huts -- facilities meant to support climbers -- originate from the worship ascents (or “*Tohai*”), which were made as part of religious practice. Meanwhile, the tractor routes are indispensable for the operation of mountain huts and the transport of injured and sick people. Therefore, in order to maintain the “spiritual quality” and “aesthetic quality” that characterize Fujisan, comprehensive conservation and management should be promoted, with a focus on harmonious and mutually complementing relations between the ascending routes, mountain huts, and tractor routes.

2 Existing State

(1) Ascending routes

Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture are actively engaged in maintaining the ascending routes, making inspections of the ascending routes based on the “Practical Guidelines for the Patrol of Fujisan Ascending Routes”, and conducting repair and maintenance work, using local materials.

In addition, where man-made structures such as stone-fall protection works are installed or repaired, Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture make efforts to integrate the shape and design of these structures with the surrounding scenic landscapes.

(2) Mountain huts

Mountain huts are set up and operated by private companies with the permission of the Ministry of the Environment as part of the park project based on the Park Plan of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park (Fujisan District) under the Natural Parks Law. With regard to the shape and design of the facilities and signs at the mountain huts, due consideration is to be given to scenic landscapes based on the Park Management Plan and the General Guidelines for Signs on Fujisan, etc.

(3) Tractor routes

Tractor routes are the freight roads that have been used by the associations of mountain huts owners and operators to transport goods are necessary for the operation of mountain huts. In addition to the transportation of goods, they function as an important public lifeline,

facilitating the emergency transportation of injured or sick people.

Also, efforts have been made to control environmental impacts by minimizing the frequency of the operation of tractors.

3 Issues

Since the ascending routes and mountain huts originate from worship ascents as religious practice and tractor routes are indispensable for the operation of mountain huts etc., these three elements of Fujisan's infrastructure are closely related to one another.

Nevertheless, hardly any attempt has been made to operate these three elements in a complementary or mutually harmonious manner.

(1) Ascending routes

There are some places on Fujisan where the geological stability of the slope is low and erosion from rain, storms, and snowmelt is progressing. On the other hand, slopes made of robust lava are not likely to be affected by climbing.

Therefore, it is necessary to continue research into, and analysis of, the impact of erosion, and to take measures to enhance the efficacy of conservation measures that meet the specific geological conditions of individual erosion spots.

Further, it is necessary to select the materials and engineering methods of man-made structures such as stone-fall prevention walls, in a way that protects the ascending routes, while not damaging the atmosphere or appearance of Fujisan.

(2) Mountain huts

At the moment, efforts are being made to mitigate the negative impact of huts on Fujisan's scenery by working from the existing standards for the exterior appearance of facilities and signs. However, further measures to improve scenic landscapes are needed.

(3) Tractor routes

It is technically difficult to shift completely the mode of transportation from tractors to other options such as helicopters, due to Fujisan's severe climate conditions along with other factors. It is also difficult to change the paths of tractor routes or the color of tractors for safety reasons. Therefore, it is necessary to select appropriate materials and engineering methods from the perspectives of the natural environment, the sacred atmosphere, and the mountain's appearance from ascending routes.

4 Policies

To facilitate a harmonious and mutually-complementing relationship between the ascending routes, mountain huts, and tractor routes, the following two policies are set out: “To implement the Visitor Management Strategy” and “to select materials and engineering methods in consideration of scenic landscapes etc.”

(1) To ensure the implementation of the Visitor Management Strategy

To ensure the implementation of measures set out in the Visitor Management Strategy, with the aim of promoting a “desired style of Fujisan ascent” that maintains the spirit of worship ascents, in order to control the impact of visitors on the ascending routes.

(2) To select materials and engineering methods in consideration of scenic landscapes

To select appropriate materials and engineering methods in consideration of the natural environment, the sacred atmosphere, and Fujisan’s appearance from ascending routes at all times when maintenance work on the ascending routes is necessary.

5 Measures

(1) To ensure the implementation of the Visitor Management Strategy

Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture will play a central role, based on local consensus, in controlling visitor impact on the ascending routes by taking measures to mitigate the concentrations of visitors during specific periods.

(2) To select materials and engineering methods in consideration of scenic landscapes

(i) *Ascending routes*

- Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture are to monitor constantly the points eroded by storms, rain, and snowmelt, along with signs of the impact of ascents, through patrols of the ascending routes. Also Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture are to improve the effectiveness of maintenance work by integrating best practices and appropriate materials and engineering methods into maintenance and repair work. (Reference information 1, page 62.)
- When man-made structure such as stone-fall prevention walls are to be installed or repaired, Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture are to decide on the materials and engineering methods to be used, taking into consideration opinions of experts in

various fields to help mitigate the adverse impact of the appearance of man-made structures. (Reference information 2, page 64.)

(ii) Mountain huts

- Relevant stakeholders will work together to research and improve the existing state of the appearance of the mountain huts, signs, etc., in order to maintain the sacred atmosphere of the mountain and to enhance harmony between the huts and scenic landscapes. (Reference information 3, page 65.)

(iii) Tractor routes

- Relevant stakeholders will work together to research the existing state of tractor routes etc., and analyze the degree of their impact upon scenic landscapes.
- To continue consultation and discussion with regard to allowing relevant stakeholders to organize the effective operation of freight vehicles and the introduction of low-noise and low-emission vehicles so that their impact on the natural environment can be reduced and harmony with the scenic landscapes may be promoted.

Reference Information

Reference Information 1: Patrols of Ascending Routes

• Summary

The officers of Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture are patrolling the ascending routes of Fujisan that are prefectural roads before and during the summer climbing season for the purpose of maintaining the ascending routes and ensure the safety of climbers.

The staff on patrol repair the ascending routes and signs on the spot if they find any damage to ensure the safety of climbers. If the damage cannot be repaired on the spot, provisional safety measures are taken so that they would not cause any inconveniences to climbers. The staff then immediately contact contractors to make arrangements for repair work.

Guidelines for Patrolling Ascending Routes (excerpt)

1 Information on patrolling Fujisan Ascending Routes

- (1) Patrol ascending routes based on the "Fujisan Ascending Routes Patrolling Guidelines".
- (2) On encountering a dangerous situation, pay attention even when you are off the duty.
- (3) Always keep in mind a quiet response to any situation. However, it is also important to consider your body condition. Please make sure not to overwork yourself.
- (4) Pay attention to sudden change of weather and weather forecast. Please make sure not to overwork yourself.
- (5) When working, make sure not to get injured. Also, make sure not to cause the rock falling, paying special attention.
- (6) Do not act on your own.

2 Checking routes

- (1) Remove loose rocks on the routes.
- (2) Rocks on the roadside which might fall must be buried.
- (3) Spots dug by water must be buried.
- (4) Rolling stones which might fall must be buried.

3 Checking Signs

1) Check foundation:



Check whether concrete is penetrating or not.
Emergency Measures
The width must be around 1.0 meters.

2) Check whether the signs work properly:

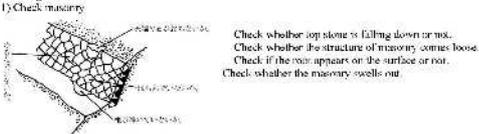
- (i) Check whether the sign face around the other direction by wind, mischief, and so on.
- (ii) Check whether attaching fittings come loose or damaged.
- (iii) Check if the pole is tilted or not.
- (iv) Check whether the paintings and signs are peeled off or not.

3) Check if the sign is at the right spot or not:

- (i) Check whether the sign exists on the right spot that is illustrated on a plan figure.
- (ii) Check if the signs fall down to maintain stream or were stolen.

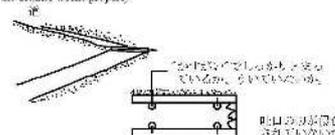
4) Checking structure

1) Check masonry:



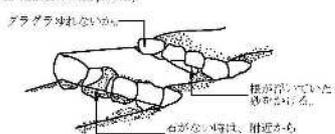
Check whether top stone is falling down or not.
Check whether the structure of masonry comes loose.
Check if the moss appears on the surface or not.
Check whether the masonry swells out.

2) Check whether the drain works properly:



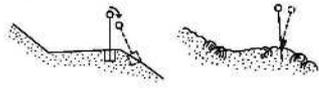
Check whether the drain holds properly.
Check whether the spout is eroded or not.

3) Check whether the stairs work properly:



Check whether the stone shakes.
If there is no rock on the staircases, bring some rocks from nearby to use.
If tree roots are sticking out, cover them with sand.

4) Check leading chain and rope fence:

- (i) Check the place of stake:
- (ii) Check the chains and rope fence wavy or not:


• Actions already implemented

Since it was anticipated that climbers would increase after the inscription of Fujisan on the World Heritage List in 2013, the frequency of the ascending route patrols by officers of Yamanashi Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture has been increased since 2013. In particular at the Yoshida Ascending Route, which is used by many climbers, the frequency of the patrol of the ascending route has been increased since 2012, one year before inscription.



Patrols of ascending routes

• Future actions

The maintenance and management of ascending routes are to be done basically by maintaining the current gravel roads with consideration to the natural environment and landscape. Patrols and repair works are to be implemented with increased frequency to ensure the safety of climbers.

<Process>

Category	Short term (implemented)			Medium term		Long term
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018 or later
Maintenance and repair of ascending routes	→					
Patrol of ascending routes	→					

Reference Information 2: Maintenance of Structures such as Rockfall Protection walls

• Summary

Necessary artificial structures such as rockfall protection walls are constructed to ensure the safety of climbers and to maintain ascending routes.

• Actions already implemented

Artificial structures have been constructed, by adopting methods in consideration of scenic landscapes, such as painting them in harmony with the surrounding mountain textures. Even more effective visual harmonization methods are explored for future improvement in terms of consideration to scenic landscapes.

Further visual harmonization methods will be tested in consideration of opinions from landscape experts and others and the appropriate methods will be selected from the perspectives of feasibility, durability, etc. Questionnaire survey will also be carried out to hear opinions of climbers in an effort to find the ideal visual harmonization method.

• Future actions

The results of test implementation etc. will be verified and efforts will be made to adopt visual harmonization methods that meet the specific conditions of the place where the artificial structure in question is installed.



An example of visual harmonization (greening of walls)

<Process>

Category	Short term (implemented)			Medium term		Long term
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018 or later
Maintenance and repair of ascending routes and exploration of visual harmonization methods for artificial structures	→					
Maintenance and repair of ascending routes and test implementation of visual harmonization methods for artificial structures			→			
Verification of test implementation			→			
Maintenance and repair of ascending routes and implementation of visual harmonization of artificial structures						→

Reference Information 3: Maintenance of Mountain Huts.

• Summary

In order to maintain the spiritual and aesthetic qualities characteristic of Fujisan, the improvement of the exterior of mountain huts, signs, etc. are pursued.

• Actions already implemented

The “Fujisan Signage Stakeholders’ Liaison Council”, consisting of The Ministry of the Environment, Yamanashi Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture, relevant municipal governments, tourist associations, mountain hut associations, etc., has adopted the “General Guidelines for Signs on Fujisan” and promoted the improvement of signs in terms of color, display manners, etc. in accordance with the guidelines.

Also, with regard to the exterior appearance of mountain huts, it should be noted that many of them retain the atmosphere of their origin, rock caves, in their retention walls.

In addition, explanation is provided about the origins of mountain huts and religious elements such as the household altars inside the huts, with a view to showing the role of mountain huts as religious centers.

With regard to the landscapes along the Yoshida Ascending Route, where many mountain huts are located, Yamanashi Prefecture has set up a committee consisting of experts in cultural properties, architecture, etc. and started the discussion toward the development of “visual harmonization guidelines” for mountain huts, in order to develop landscapes compatible with “sacredness” and “beauty” in the future.

• Future actions

The relevant stakeholders work together to improve the exterior appearance of mountain huts, signs, etc.

In particular, for the Yoshida Ascending Route, where many mountain huts exist, “visual harmonization guidelines” will be developed and consultation will be continued with the relevant stakeholders such as mountain hut associations toward the realization of the exterior appearance of mountain huts compatible with “sacredness” and “beauty”.



Exterior appearance of a mountain hut that retains the atmosphere of a rock cave



Household altar inside a mountain hut



Signboard explaining about the origins of mountain huts etc.

