

There is a story there.....

1. North Breakwater Dome of Wakkanai Port (Wakkanai)

The half-arch dome, built for the protection from northwestern waves of winter as part of the maintenance of the former Chihaku line between Wakkanai and Karafuto-Odomari. This rare historical inheritance has a unique structure: it stands 14 meters in height above the sea and is 427 meters in length with 72 pillars spaced every 6 meters apart. It is a remnant of the history of port engineering works and is also a masterpiece which preserves memories of the time of the old Karafuto line. Minoru Tsuchiya, a civil engineer, designed it when he was 26 years old.



2. Circumferential Glacier Topography of Soya Hills (Wakkanai)

The gentle-slopes found in the Soya hills are a characteristic topographical feature formed during the last ice age about 20,000 years ago, and were made by the repeated freezing and melting of glaciers. A topographical feature which looks like the shape of tree branches can be observed from the sky. Vast cattle ranches spread across the hills at the northernmost tip of Japan, and about 3,000 healthy black bulls graze in this harsh but fertile land.



3. The Teshio River (Municipalities of the Teshio Basin)

The Teshio River is 256 km in length and is the second longest river in Hokkaido. It is said that Takeshiro Matsuura gave the land the name "Hokkaido" when investigating along the Teshio River. The word "Tesh" (which means "beam" in the Ainu language) is the origin of the name of the Teshio River, and the remains of the beams can be seen throughout the Teshio basin. The river is also known as one of the major Japanese rivers suitable for canoeing, which allows canoeists to navigate 160 km to the mouth of the river without stopping. Canoeists can embark down the great river from 20 canoe ports.



4. The Herring Highway in Rumoi (The Former Saga Fishing Ground, The Former Hanada Banya, The Okada Residence and Life and Culture) (Rumoi Region)

Various tales remain of herring fishing in the Rumoi region. Fishermen had to change their rich fishing ground to follow the herring northward from the period of the Matsumae Clan in the Edo era. Although they went through the hardship of inconsistent herring populations, fishermen devoted all their time to making dried herring roe and dried fillet herring in the banya (watch-house) once they caught a school of herring. Herring suddenly disappeared from the region. However, only the banya and the cultures along the herring highway remain to tell us of the prosperity of herring fishing at that time.



5. Historical Buildings in Mashike (Historical Buildings and Mashike Elementary Schoolhouse in front of Rail Road Station) (Mashike)

Mashike is the last station on the Rumoi line. The stone and wooden buildings which have withstood wind and rain from the Sea of Japan, such as the former Maruichi Honma house which has continued doing business since the early Meiji period, still remain standing. Mashike elementary schoolhouse, a pre-war urban style wooden building built in 1936, sits on the hill and is the only school of its kind still in service in Hokkaido. Children still study there cheerfully and concerts are also held in the gymnasium. The schoolhouse is popular with former students and many other people in and around the town.



6. Asahibashi Bridge (Asahikawa)

"There is a bridge which has spanned several eras, reminded citizens of many memories and watched over the life of people." This is the opening sentence of a miniature book "Asahibashi." The bridge is built over the Ishikari River which flows through the central city of Asahikawa in northern Hokkaido. This bridge was first constructed as a clay bridge (a wooden bridge paved with earth) at the current location in 1892 and in 1932 it was completed as a steel arch bridge using the newest technology of those days. It is the symbol of the river city Asahikawa.



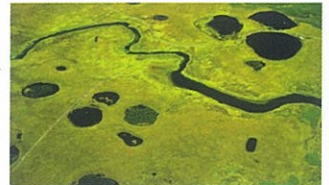
7. Museum of Soils "Mansion of Soils" (Kamifurano)

The Museum of Soils, established and managed by Sugano Farm Machinery MFG. Co., Ltd., tells us the details of the development of Hokkaido which was carried out under severe weather conditions, and of the importance of the relationship between humans and the land. In particular, one exhibit includes a 4-meter-tall monolith displaying layers of the earth and is one of only a few in the world. This museum also tells of the great damage caused by the volcanic mud flow from the explosion of Mt. Tokachi in 1926, and shows us the sturdiness of the people who recovered from the worst imaginable situation.



8. Uryu Marsh (Uryu)

Uryu Marsh is located at an altitude of 850 meters in the mountainous region of Mashike and is the broadest stretch of high mountainous marshes in Hokkaido. This is a unique landscape that has over one hundred large and small perfectly shaped circular ponds. The marsh was approved as a natural monument by the Hokkaido government in 1964 due to the rich assortment of marsh plants, and in 1990 as "the Shokanbetsu, Teuri and Yagishiri national parks special preserved region." The activities of "The Association of Love for Uryu Marsh" show the importance and difficulties in handing the land down to the next generation.



9. Hokkai Principal Irrigation Channel (Sorachi Region)

The Hokkai Principal Irrigation Channel, which extends about 80 km from Akabira to Nanporo, is the longest channel in Japan for agricultural use exclusively. This was constructed to supply water to the farm lands in the Sorachi plains and played an important part in supporting the granaries in Hokkaido. In order to irrigate from the Sorachi River, they first had to begin construction of the Hokkai sluice gate in 1924. Later, the control pond in Bibai and the water garden in the urban area of Iwamizawa, respectively, were added.



10. Colliery related Facilities, and Life and Culture of Sorachi (Sorachi Region)

As the largest center of domestic coal production, Sorachi promoted the modernization of Japan with 100 coal mines and a population of 830,000 at its peak. However, with downsizing because of changing energy policies, coal mines were closed one after another and then disappeared altogether from Sorachi. Various coal mine related facilities remain there showing from the coal production to the life of the miners in the region. It is literally a museum without a roof. In addition, many aspects of culture created during the coal mining era of the Sorachi region still continue today, such as the Hokkai-bon-odori dance, which originated in Mikasa.

