

National Parks of Japan

Orientation and Style Guide

Expanded for Editors and Proofreaders

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About the Project

Project Name: MOE

Project Code: moe-ph

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Important: This project is confidential. Please do not share any information about this project or the client. You are bound by the NDA you have signed. Do not post about the project on social media. You may not state that you have worked on this project on your resume or in your portfolio until after the official launch (end of March).

Goals

The goals of this project are to:

- inform an international audience about Japan's national parks
- provide information helpful for making choices
- engage users and encourage them to read down to the bottom of each page
- keep users exploring the National Parks of Japan site for long periods of time (looking at different pages that capture their interest, using the search function).

Target Audience

The audience for the National Parks of Japan site will be global. We will specifically target the following audiences in social media ad campaigns:

- United States
- United Kingdom
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Other major cities worldwide such as: Paris, Shanghai, Helsinki, Rome, Vancouver, etc.

The text should be engaging for people of all walks of life and interests. Put yourself in the shoes of the audience as you write.

International Audience and Future Translation

Keep in mind that not all users will be native English speakers.

It is highly possible that The National Parks of Japan website will be translated and localized into other languages in the next phase.

We are developing this website in such a way that non-native English speakers can understand it, and so that it can be translated and localized later on. As such, the text should be written so that it is easy to translate and understand, with simple syntax and clear wording.

Avoid slang. Avoid culture-specific references (unless you can explain them in gloss).

Don't assume that your audience already has any knowledge about Japan or the Japanese language.

International Audience and Future Translation

- Be concise. Use short sentences and use simple phrasing.
 - Use subject-verb-object sentence structure
 - Avoid passive constructions
 - Leave in words like “then,” “a,” “the,” “to,” and “that,” even if you think they could be cut
- See Mailchimp’s Content Style Guide “Writing for Translation”:
<https://styleguide.mailchimp.com/writing-for-translation/>

Tone

- Knowledgeable
- Informative
- Personable (but not overly casual)
- Neutral

Imagine you are a trusted friend introducing a park or a particular activity, destination, etc., sharing your insider information and expertise (without being overly subjective).

Voice

Think of how you would tell a friend or colleague about the place, while keeping the language level fairly neutral: avoid overly casual language like “the scenery is awesome,” but also steer clear of writing in the passive voice—use active language and verbs like “you can see,” “try the local soba noodles,” “enjoy,” “explore,” “discover,” “go to,” “hike up,” and so on.

In general, use the second person. Where appropriate, address the reader as “you” and its variations. Doing so helps wrap them in the writing.

Things to Avoid

- Information overload: Less is more. Keep copy simple, concise, easy-to-understand and ordered logically
- Overly poetic language and “purple prose.”
- Hyperbole: Not everywhere or everything is going to be “spectacular” or provide “commanding” views. Don’t exaggerate. Be imaginative, but not hyperbolic.
- Starting sentences with long subordinate clauses.

E.g.

Original

Set on a tiny island surrounded by the natural beauty of Hokkaido’s Lake Akan, the Marimo Exhibition and Observation Center offers the opportunity to discover the world’s quirkiest algae.

Revised

The Marimo Exhibition and Observation Center in Hokkaido offers visitors the opportunity to learn about marimo, the world’s rarest algae.

Benchmarks

Books

“National Parks of the United States” - National Geographic

“100 Parks, 5000 Ideas” - National Geographic

Websites

National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

Visit Australia: <https://www.australia.com/en-us>

We are looking for something with a similar feel to the content in these books and websites.

Style

For this project we are using:

- American (International) English*
- AP Stylebook: <https://www.apstylebook.com/>
- Webster's New World College Dictionary (for spelling and hyphenation rules, etc.)

Check the [AP Style Guide](#) for more details on style.

* Be careful about British vs. American spelling: centre vs. center, categorise vs. categorize, metre vs. meter. If you are used to writing in British English, run your text through Grammarly or a US spell-checker.

Note: other than the scientific/latin names of plants and animals, italics shall not be used anywhere else on the site, included foreign or Japanese words and book titles

Style: Descriptive Gloss

When including unfamiliar words, add brief descriptions to explain them.

E.g.

Labrador tea—a relative of the rhododendron—grows in large numbers around Mt. Io due to the impact of fumaroles, openings in areas near volcanoes that emit sulfurous gases.

Akan Mashu National Park, in northeastern Hokkaido, encompasses three calderas—areas of land that have collapsed due to the formation of a hollow chamber underground following a volcanic eruption. These calderas are Akan, Mashu, and Kussharo, formed between 7,000 and 150,000 years ago.

Readers are probably aren't experts on many of the subjects covered in the content. Avoid jargon, specialist language and clearly explain concepts. Providing supplementary information when necessary.

Style: Plants and Animals

Within the Ministry of the Environment's existing website there are many cases where only the scientific name of a plant (and sometimes an animal) is given. Sometimes, the English common name is provided along with the scientific name.

Plant and animal names will come up especially in the recommended course/hiking trail rewrites and the plants & animals pages for each of the 34 parks.

In order to maintain consistency, please use the following guidelines when writing about plants and animals.

Style: Plants and Animals

1) If the English common name exists, simply write the English common name.

E.g. MOE's existing site



Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

A mammal, 13 - 15 m in length, and weighing 30 tonnes. The main breeding grounds are in the Ogasawara Islands and the Nansei Islands. The humpback whale can be seen in the area around the Kerama Islands between December and April.

Revised

Humpback Whale

This mammal, 13 to 15 meters in length and weighing 30 tons, can be seen around the Kerama Islands between December and April. Its main breeding grounds are in the Ogasawara Islands and the Nansei Islands.



Since the humpback whale is a widely known animal and the common English name is provided, *humpback whale* is sufficient here.

Style: Plants and Animals

2) If no common English name is provided in the source text:

A) Research to see if an English common name does exist and use that name. Put the scientific name in parentheses next to it in italics with the first letter capitalized. Please include a reference link.

E.g.

Original: Also on Rishiri and Rebun islands, the habitats of rare white-tailed eagles, black woodpeckers and **Motacilla flava** have been confirmed. (<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/rishiri/point/index.html>)

Revised: The habitats of rare white-tailed eagles, black woodpeckers and **western yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)** have been confirmed on both Rishiri and Rebun islands.

Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_yellow_wagtail

Style: Plants and Animals

B) If you can not find the English common name, use the Japanese common name, transliterated into English followed by the scientific name. The scientific name should always be italicized with the first letter capitalized and in parentheses.

Meakan kinbai (*Potentilla miyabei* Makino) is a perennial herb with yellow flowers.

Note: Do not include the hyphen (i.e. Meakan-kinbai).

Rebun atsumoriso (*Cypripedium macranthos* var. *flavum*)

Rebun usuyukiso (*Leontopodium discolor*)

Rishiri hinageshi (*Papaver fauriei*)

tarumaiso (*Pennellianthus frutescens*)

<https://www.weblio.jp/content/Pennellianthus+frutescens>

komakusa (*Dicentra peregrina*)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dicentra_peregrina

<https://garden.org/plants/view/143008/Komakusa-Dicentra-peregrina/>

Style: Plants and Animals

Resources:

NP Facebook or Instagram pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalParksOfJapan/posts/the-unique-shape-of-its-petals-instantly-draws-your-eyes-to-this-rebun-ladys-sli/1073204856145445/>

https://www.instagram.com/nationalpark_japan/?hl=en

Plantlist.org

theplantlist.org

Garden.org Plants Database

<https://garden.org/plants/>

Style: Units of Measure

Use the metric system.

Spell out meter, centimeter, millimeter, kilometer, kilogram, hectare, etc. in running text. Abbreviate in caption and in informational text.

E.g.

Its summit lies at an elevation of 1,159 meters, making it the second-highest peak in the area after Mount Kami-Hiruzen (1,202 m).

The trail leading from the campground to the summit is 3 kilometers one way.

Note: All measurements should be written in Arabic numerals, regardless of the 1-9 rule (AP).

Style: Numbers

NUMBERS

Follow AP style for prose—spell out numbers 1 to 9 and any number beginning a sentence.

Style: Spelling

MOUNTAINS

Volcanoes

The plural of volcano is to be written with an “e”: volcanoes

Mountain names

Use “Mount” NOT “Mt.” for names of mountains. E.g. Mount Meakan, Mount Nishibetsu, Mount Karakuni

Mountain ranges should be lower case after the proper noun. E.g. Azuma mountain range,

Mountain stations

Are to be capitalized—First Station, Second Station, Third Station, and so on. On first mention on the page, add some descriptive gloss about what “mountain station” actually is, as this seems to be a Japanese concept.

E.g.

Mount Meakan is divided into 10 stages and is a fairly gentle ascent through 250-year-old red pines as far as the **Second Station** (the **waypoint marking the second stage of the hike**). (Lonely Planet’s “Hiking in Japan”)

There are three hiking routes to the summit of Meakan, each divided into 10 stages **with waypoints known as “stations.”**

Style: Punctuation

PUNCTUATION

Em Dash

Unlike the AP Stylebook, use the em dash without spaces in between the connecting words. We have chosen to do this for aesthetics based on the design of the website.

E.g.

Situated in the wilds of northeastern Hokkaido, Akan-Mashu National Park encompasses three calderas and their namesake lakes—Akan, Mashu and Kussharo—shaped by volcanic eruptions occurring as far back as 150,000 years.

Hyphens

Style: Time

- Spell out hours and minutes in running text:
 - The ferry journey takes 11 hours 45 minutes.
- Use numerals for times sequences, even when less than 10:
 - This hiking course takes approximately 2 hours 30 minutes to complete.
- When using parentheses to give durations, use the following format/abbreviations:
 - (2 hr 17 mins)
 - (7 hr)
 - (30 min)

Style: Subheads

- Use title case in subheadings

Style: Historical Periods

Historical periods are to be written as follows:

(note the use of the en dash)

Jomon period (c. 8000 B.C.–300 B.C.)

Yayoi period (300 B.C.–250 A.D.)

Kofun period (250–552)

Asuka period (552–645)

Nara period (710–784)

Heian period (794–1185)

Kamakura period (1192–1333)

Edo period (1603–1867)

Meiji era/period (1868–1912)

Taisho era/period (1912–26)

Showa era/period (1926–89)

Heisei era/period (1989–present)

National Park Names - Official List*

Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park
 利尻礼文サロベツ国立公園
 Shiretoko National Park
 知床国立公園
 Akan-Mashu National Park
 阿寒摩周国立公園
 Kushiroshitsugen National Park
 釧路湿原国立公園
 Daisetsuzan National Park
 大雪山国立公園
 Shikotsu-Toya National Park
 支笏洞爺国立公園
 Towada-Hachimantai National Park
 十和田八幡平国立公園
 Sanriku Fukko (reconstruction) National Park
 三陸復興国立公園
 Bandai-Asahi National Park
 磐梯朝日国立公園
 Nikko National Park
 日光国立公園

Oze National Park
 尾瀬国立公園
 Joshin'etsukogen National Park
 上信越高原国立公園
 Myoko-Togakushi renzan National Park
 妙高戸隠連山国立公園
 Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park
 秩父多摩甲斐国立公園
 Ogasawara National Park
 小笠原国立公園
 Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park
 富士箱根伊豆国立公園
 Chubusangaku National Park
 中部山岳国立公園
 Hakusan National Park
 白山国立公園
 Minami Alps National Park
 南アルプス国立公園

Ise-Shima National Park
 伊勢志摩国立公園
 Yoshino-Kumano National Park
 吉野熊野国立公園 San'in kaigan
 National Park
 山陰海岸国立公園
 Setonaikai National Park
 瀬戸内海国立公園
 Daisen-Okii National Park
 大山隠岐国立公園
 Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park
 足摺宇和海国立公園
 Saikai National Park
 西海国立公園
 Unzen-Amakusa National Park
 雲仙天草国立公園
 Aso-Kuju National Park
 阿蘇くじゅう国立公園
 Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park
 霧島錦江湾国立公園

Yakushima (Island) National Park
 屋久島国立公園
 Amamigunto National Park
 奄美群島国定公園
 Yambaru National Park
 やんばる国立公園
 Keramashoto National Park
 慶良間諸島国立公園
 Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park
 西表石垣国立公園

*Names of the parks must be spelled this way.

Quick Tips (for writers and editors)

Before submitting, please ensure your copy:

- Is enjoyable, easily digestible, fluent and concise.
- Presents key information at the top.
- Is understandable to those without prior knowledge of the subject matter.
- Answers the questions: Who, What, Where, When, How, So what?
- Mentions seasonal aspects of the particular activity, spot, plant or animal where relevant.
- Provides information about geographical features, animals, and plants, and experiences that are unique to the national park you are writing about.
- Answers the anticipated questions of the reader.
- Is well-researched.
- Has been fact-checked if you have included any information from sources other than the official website.

Revise, cut out any deadwood and tighten your writing before submitting.