

OES005-P20

Room: Convention Hall

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## Close to Nature, Touching Nature, Learning Nature "The Shirataki Geopark Project"

Hidetoshi Horishima<sup>1\*</sup>, Makoto Kumagai<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Engaru Town Geopark Promotion Department

Close to Nature, Touching Nature, Learning Nature  
"The Shirataki Geopark Project"

Horishima Hidetoshi / Kumagai Makoto / Wda Keiji / Katoh Takayuki / Kimura Hideaki

A world-class obsidian deposit lies in the town of Engaru in Hokkaido. Nearby are large-scale Paleolithic sites where this obsidian was processed to make stone tools. Periglacial sites such as wind caves (caves from which cold wind blows) and Habitats of the wild pika or "rock rabbit" (small hamster-like creatures with short limbs, rounded ears and short tails) also exist in the area. The aim of the Shirataki Geopark Project is to promote Sustainable development by developing education and tourism, while preserving the beautiful natural environment And unique resources of the region.

Engaru Town aims to create a Geopark centered on the valuable world heritage found in the source of obsidian in Shirataki. Alongside its aims to revitalize the region by supporting educational activities and reviving tourism, Engaru Town also aims to become a member of the Global Leopards Network.

### Projects Making the Geopark a Reality

In addition to geological, archaeological and ecological assets, this region also has a range of cultural and sightseeing opportunities. We strive to raise the value of the regional assets that make up the Geopark, and to preserve and maintain this unique environment. Our vision for the Shirataki Geopark Project is to create sustainable development through such activities as: a Geopark site where people can learn about man's relationship with the earth and grow closer to nature; a facility for academic research, a center for exchange where people can have fun learning about the region; and an education and tourism program aimed at reviving visitor industries. The town of Engaru strives to develop a regional society and Geopark using the diverse assets of the region. Along with public awareness, academic research, education, exhibitions and environmental conservation projects, the town is collaborating with the Shirataki Geopark Project Promotion Council in its activities to further promote the Geopark vision.

Keywords: geopark, obsidian, paleolithic period, environmental conservation