

JAPAN

Yakushima

II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1993

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Ministry of the Environment
1-2-2, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo, 100-8975
Japan
- Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo, 100-8952
Japan

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria N ii, iii

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“The Yakushima WH Area contains Yakusugi trees which are thousands of years old and unique in the world... [and] a wide representation of species in vertical distribution”

Status of Site Boundaries

- Any modification of the site boundaries was deemed “premature”, but in view of the revision of the Operational Guidelines would be “discussed in future”.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- The WH value is considered to have been maintained. No changes are foreseen.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The National and Kagoshima prefectural governments co-ordinate through the Yakushima Heritage Area Liaison Committee established in September 1995.
- The Ministry of the Environment and the Forest Agency collaborate for patrols, monitoring of visitor numbers and scientific research.



- The Agency of Cultural Affairs enforces the Law on the Protection of Cultural Properties, and the designation of Yakusugi forests and bird species as a ‘Natural Monument’ or ‘Special Natural Monument’.
- The unified management plan has been implemented since November 1995.

Present State of Conservation

- A total area of 2,262 ha in surrounding areas were added to the existing national park for intensified World Heritage protection.
- Signposts, viewing platforms, ranger stations, shelter pavilions, lavatories and footpaths were subsequently improved.

Staffing and Training Needs

- Government employees from national, prefectural and municipal levels work together to conserve the WH area. No figures supplied.
- Staffing level is considered inadequate. Volunteers employed work as nature guides and for forest patrols.

Financial Situation

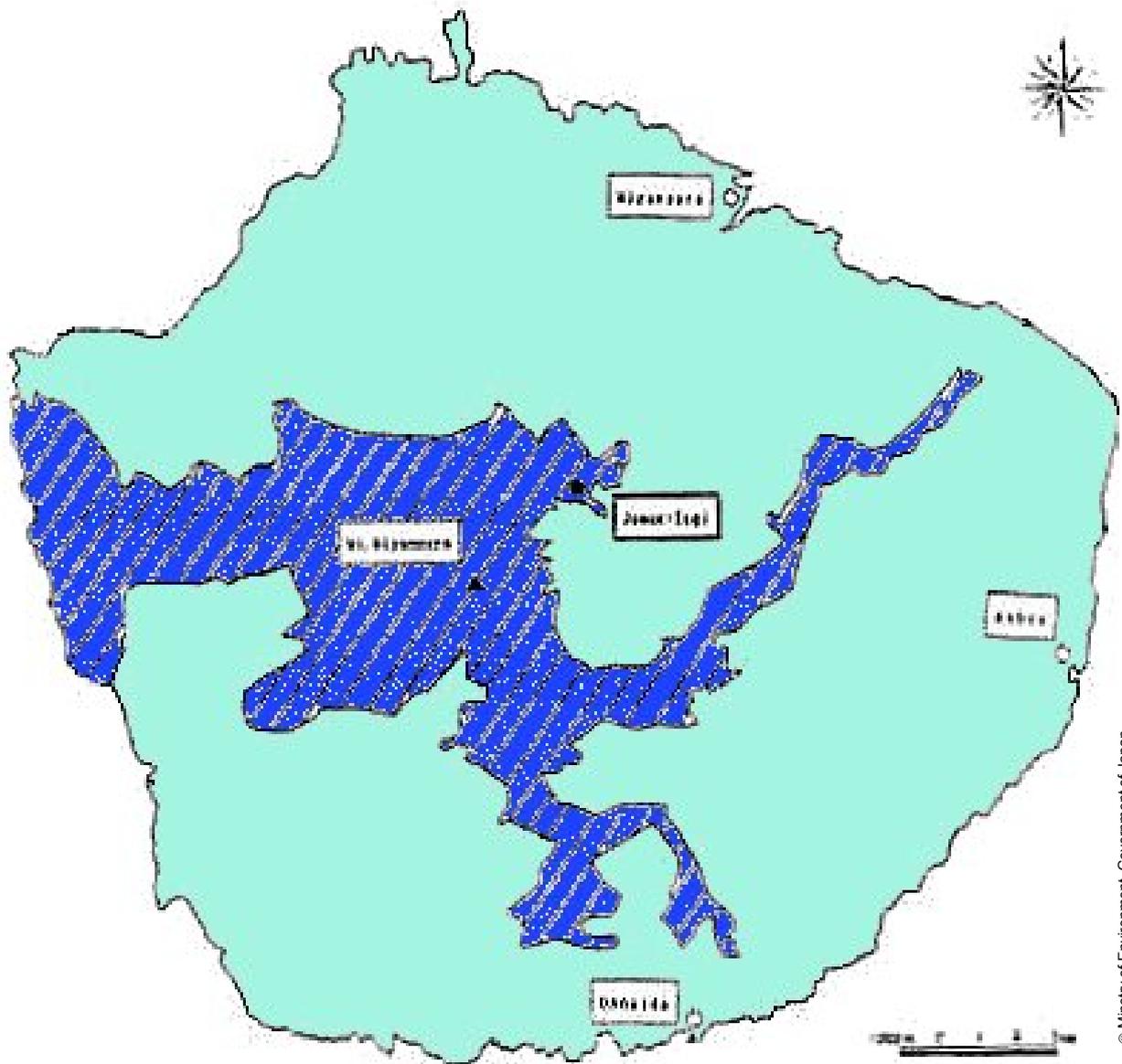
- A new budget allocation was created following inscription on the WH List.
- Funding is considered adequate.
- No figures supplied.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT

- 14 PCs with internet access.
- No GIS capacity.

Visitor Management

- Visitors to the whole island are counted automatically. No statistics supplied.
- Four separate environmental and cultural centres have been created featuring lectures on World Heritage.
- Facilities include upgraded mountain trails, shelters, and public lavatories with sewerage treatment.



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Map of Yakushima WH Area showing Core (dark blue) and Buffer (light blue) zones

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Some erosion and deterioration of footpaths has developed because of heavy rain and trampling pressure. The resultant washout flows in Hananoego and Ko-hananoego may have contributed to a drying trend in patches of upland moor vegetation.

Counteractive Plans

- No emergency plan has been developed. When a possible threat is foreseen, counter measures are discussed by the Yakushima WH Liaison Committee (Ministry of the Environment, Forestry Agency, Kagoshima Prefecture, Kamiyaku and Yaku towns).

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- A continuous system is in place to monitor trekkers, the quality of mountain streams, rainfall and landscape.
- Additional monitoring requirements include: (i) basic data on wild animals and plants; (ii) sampling methods for rare species; (iii) studies to track shifts in forest structure; and (iv) enhanced networking of on-site academic research.

Monitoring Indicators

- The four indicators are the following: (i) number of mountain climbers; (ii) water quality; (iii) precipitation; and (iv) “state of the landscape”.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- Yakushima represents a unique remnant of ancient forest extending through an altitudinal sequence from coastal forest, temperate coniferous, through to cold-temperature bamboo grassland at the central peaks, and contains one of the oldest cedars in the world estimated to be some 7,200 years old.
- There is no specific future action plan. “The value of the area is properly maintained by the management plan. The integrity of the area has not changed.”
- * Yakushima Island is pioneering a ‘Zero Emission’ concept for the site through the promotion of electric vehicles, composting centres, solar panels & small-scale hydro-electric dam facilities.
- Communication with other WH site managers in Japan, East and South-East Asia.

* State of Conservation Reports

1997 Committee CONF.208/8Brev IUCN informed the Bureau that it had undertaken a mission to review the state of conservation of the site and found that there were significant improvements with regard to the management since its inscription in 1993. The site now had well conceived management plans, providing opportunities for local communities to be involved in the management of the sites and conducting special programmes for educating the public in WH value of the site.

The Committee congratulated the Japanese authorities for strengthening the management, and encouraged them to consider implementing the suggestions presented in the IUCN report.