

Summer-time is River-time!

Even though we were freezing in the winter, this summer is going to be hot and muggy, and we're all going to need some way to cool off. Being mostly mountainous, instead of lots of lakes, Japan has mostly waterfalls and rivers. Swimming or even just wading in a river can be a great way to cool off in the beastly summer heat.

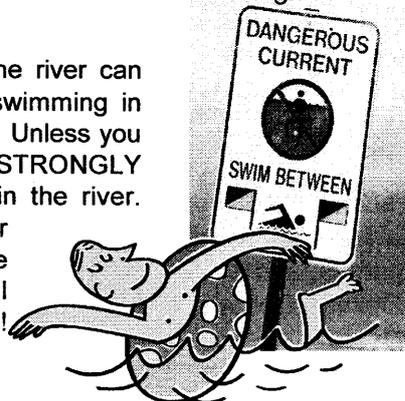
Lucky for us, one of Japan's cleanest rivers flows right through Obihiro! The name of that clean river is the Satsunai River (札内川 satsunai-gawa). It is so clean that the Japanese government has named it the cleanest Class-A river in Japan 7 times in the last 20 years! (the last time was in 2002)

The Satsunai flows down from the Hidaka mountains; starting off as a fast mountain stream, and ending as a bigger slower river because of all the smaller tributaries feeding into it along the way. The Satsunai forms the eastern border of Obihiro, while the larger Tokachi River forms the northern border of the city, and the Satsunai River becomes part of the Tokachi at the northeast corner of Obihiro.

The Tokachi River tends to be quite polluted in this area because it picks up a lot of waste from factories along the way to Obihiro. However, we are able to enjoy the Satsunai River before it joins up with the Tokachi River.

There are 2 spots on the river that are a good place for people who want to relax and play in the river. The first spot is the Konan Children's Water Area. It is located about where Minami 20 meets the river. This area was made as a separate shallow area where children can play without fear of being swept away by the current. The second spot is the Yale Center which is located just north of Highway 38 (██████████) and just before the Satsunai joins the Tokachi River. Here you can rent life-jackets, E-boats, and Canadian Canoes; everything you need for a fun day out on the water! There is also a place to swim, and the current should still be slow enough to be safe.

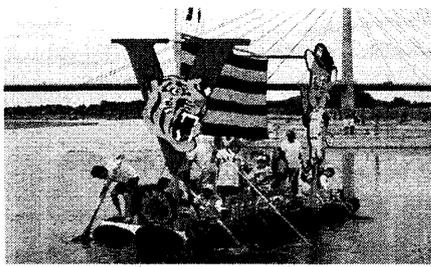
WARNING: Playing in the river can be fun and relaxing, but swimming in any river can be dangerous. Unless you are a skilled swimmer, I STRONGLY advise against swimming in the river. Any children playing in or near the river should also be closely supervised at all times! Have fun and be safe!



Quick Facts about the Satsunai River

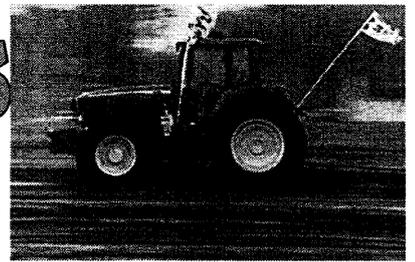
- Speed: Varies by location. Wider spots are slower, slimmer areas are faster.
- Temperature: The water temperature of the river in 2005 was 15.9C on 6/30, 15.8C on 7/26, 18.4C on 8/31, and 16.6C on 9/27. In other months of the year the water temp goes below 10C, and at that point, going in the water would become very uncomfortable.
- Pollution: In all tests across the board, the Satsunai River scores as a pristine river. It has a BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand) score of less than 0.5 (which is really clean) and doesn't have pollution problems (like mercury, etc) because there are virtually no factories on the river.
- The biggest pollutant in the river is nitrates from fertilizers used in all the farm fields nearby. However, even the nitrogen level is fairly low and is nothing to worry about. In fact, I believe Obihiro draws most of its drinking water from the spot these tests were taken at.

*All data received from Obihiro Environment Section

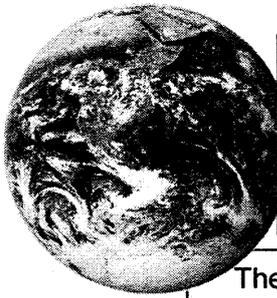


Tokachi Events

July 2007



When	What	Location/Contact TEL#
7/1 (Sun) 10:00 - 15:00	SEKAI NO TOMODACHI : This "Friends of the World" festival is going to have food and performances from all around the globe! There's going to be squirt gun relay games, seed spitting contests, and lots of other fun stuff to do and see, so definitely come on over!	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center 0155-34-0122
7/7 (Sat) 17:00-21:30	The Whitesnake Goddess Festival : Come see this ancient Ainu legend performed by skilled dancers. The giant white snake costume comes to life in the flames of the surrounding torches. At the end of the night, float your wishes across the lake ...	然別湖畔 Shikaribetsu Lake: Lakeside 01566-6-2311 (participation is FREE)
7/6 (Fri) 17:00 - 21:00	Waiwai Beer Party : This Party was created for the purpose of making a place where people could drink alcohol and eat local snacks, while mixing and mingling with other people from all around. There's going to be a taiko drum performance, a raffle for prizes and more. Celebrate the coming of summer at this laid-back event.	新得町保健福祉センター Shintoku Health and Welfare Center 0156-64-5324
7/8 (Sun) 9:00~	Tractor Bamba : The slogan: "Our agriculture. Our tomorrow. It's back again this year; Mecha Horsepower!" The event: Tractor Drag Racing! What you need to do: Come see it! Parade of the machines starts at 9am. Opening Ceremony at 10am. And the competition starts at 10:15am.	更別村ふるさと館周辺 Furusato Kan, Sarabetsumura 0155-52-2010
7/21 (Sat) 14:00-15:00	Story Telling Around the World : This month we will be reading a children's book from the Phillipines in both the native language, Tagalog, and Japanese. We're going play some games and have a great time! (for children from 3 yrs. old to 2 nd grade elementary) RSVP by TEL, FAX, or email.->	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center TEL 0155-34-0122 FAX 0155-34-0165 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
7/22 (Sun) 12:00 - 21:00	Shoko Natsu Matsuri : Beer, fireworks, and a cool summer evening; what could be better? There will be games and fun for the kids too. Fireworks at 19:30	芽室公園 Memuro Park 0155-62-2339
7/29 (Sun) Actual race is From 9:00 to 11:00	River Raft Race : This is an 11km race down the Tokachi river, but it's really all about the raft design! See how far your latest contraption can make it down the River! The competition is one big popularity contest, so you have to win over the onlookers!	十勝川 Starts at Suzuran Ohashi Bridge (Otofuke side) and goes all the way to the bird viewing area near the Tokachigawa Onsen Bridge 0155-31-0835
8/3 (Fri) 10:00 - 15:00	Obihiro Tanabata Festival : There's going to be huge tanabata decorations in the shape of all your favorite Japanese characters and more. There will be lots of good food, fun festival games, and it's a great way to enjoy the summer in Obihiro. Come out and have some fun with us!	帯広市 広小路 The festival centers around the Hirokoji Covered Arcade in downtown Obihiro 0155-23-5675



DEFENDING THE EARTH

(one drop of oil at a time)

There is a small shop filled with a bunch of guys trying to save our planet. Their top leaders were busy protecting the Earth, but I was lucky enough to land an interview with the 3rd man in charge.

WHIO: What is your name and what is the name of your "business"?

Sumi: My name is Sumi and I work at The Earth Defense Store.

WHIO: How exactly are you guys defending the Earth here in this little shop in Obihiro?

Sumi: We protect the Earth by recycling cooking oil and making into fuel that can be used by diesel vehicles. This used cooking oil would usually just be burned at a garbage disposal plant, but we reuse that it in order to slow down Global Warming and all of its damaging effects.

WHIO: How did this shop get started?

Sumi: Mr. Kasai founded this shop on May 30th, 2006. He was working at an automobile company selling hybrid vehicles and he realized how many people are trying to be environmentally conscious.

WHIO: How did you decide to work here?

Sumi: I was a truck driver making deliveries to grocery stores and whenever we made a delivery we had to turn off the truck. That's because stores didn't want the truck's dirty exhaust touching human food. I was surprised at how dirty and damaging truck exhaust could be and decided to throw my efforts towards saving the planet.

Drop off your oil at: The Earth Defense Store

Higashi 2 South 14 (near Marusen Apartment Bldg in Downtown Obihiro)

WHIO: Could you quickly explain what goes on in your little laboratory here?

Sumi: We take in used oils that people use everyday for cooking. We heat that oil up and mix with certain chemicals, and if we do it just right, we can extract a whole bunch of biodiesel fuel (BDF) from it.

WHIO: If someone reading this article thinks "**HOW CAN I HELP SAVE THE PLANET!??**" what could you suggest that they do?

Sumi: Well, tell as many people as you can about our store and what we're doing. Also, bring in any used salad oil or other oils that come from seeds or flowers into our little store and we will make it into fuel.



←←←
Earth Defense Store worker pouring unfinished BDF into a special machine for its final refinement cycle. Once it is finished it will be pumped directly into someone's vehicle!
←←←

The Japanese Corner (vocab found in or related to this month's issue)

バイオディーゼル燃料 (ばいおでいーぜる ねんりょう): Biodiesel Fuel (BDF)

地球 (ちきゅう): the Earth

防衛 (ぼうえい): Literally means "defense" or "counter-measures" It is usually used when talking about national defense and military related things, but the company in the article above uses the word to mean "defense" of the Earth's environment.

汚染 (おせん): "pollution" Can be used in combination with other words to say "water pollution", air pollution, etc.

筏 (いかだ): "raft"