



On the Path to World Heritage Status!



Cultural Landscape of Aso

An Agricultural Panorama That Spans a Volcanic Caldera



To Preserve Aso for Future Generations

Declaration to Protect the Landscape of Aso



In January 2020, Kumamoto Prefecture and the seven municipalities of the Aso region adopted the Declaration to Protect the Landscape of Aso, pledging to preserve, nurture, and pass down the cultural landscape of the entire Aso area, an invaluable asset handed down from past generations. Aso's breathtaking landscape was formed through powerful volcanic activity that created one of the world's largest calderas, and has been further shaped over the centuries by the daily lives and traditions of its people. It is essential to ensure that Aso's captivating scenery is not significantly harmed by development or other human activities.

Volunteer activities to support controlled burning



Image source: ASO GREEN STOCK

With the decline in the number of livestock farmers, labor shortages, and an aging population, it has become difficult to maintain Aso's grasslands, which continue to shrink each year. Volunteers from across Japan, especially Kyushu, act as a support group for maintaining the grasslands by taking part in activities such as extinguishing fires and creating firebreaks.

For inquiries regarding controlled burning volunteer activities

Aso Green Stock
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Process of Becoming a World Heritage Site

1 Inclusion of the site in the Japanese government's List of Candidates for Recommendation as World Heritage Sites (Tentative List)

It means the site is formally recognized as a candidate for World Heritage status in Japan.

2 Preliminary assessment

This system allows an advisory body to review the nomination in advance, helping to refine the content of the nomination dossier.

* Mandatory for nominations under review from 2028 onward.

3 Submission of a nomination dossier to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee

In principle, each country may submit only one nomination per year from its tentative list.

4 On-site evaluation by an assessment organization

Cultural heritage sites are evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), while natural heritage sites are evaluated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

5 Deliberation by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee

If approved...

6 The site is inscribed on the World Heritage List!



Four Attributes*¹ of Cultural Landscape of Aso—An Agricultural Panorama Situated Within a Caldera

The magnificent landscape of Aso is formed by the traditional Japanese land use pattern of "grassland–forest–residential area–farmland," which extends across the entire caldera. Through an agricultural system centered on controlled burning, grazing, and grass harvesting, semi-natural grasslands have been maintained here for over a thousand years.



1



The world's largest caldera terrain, featuring a distinct circular depression

2



A land use pattern of "grassland–forest–residential area–farmland" that extends across the entire caldera

3

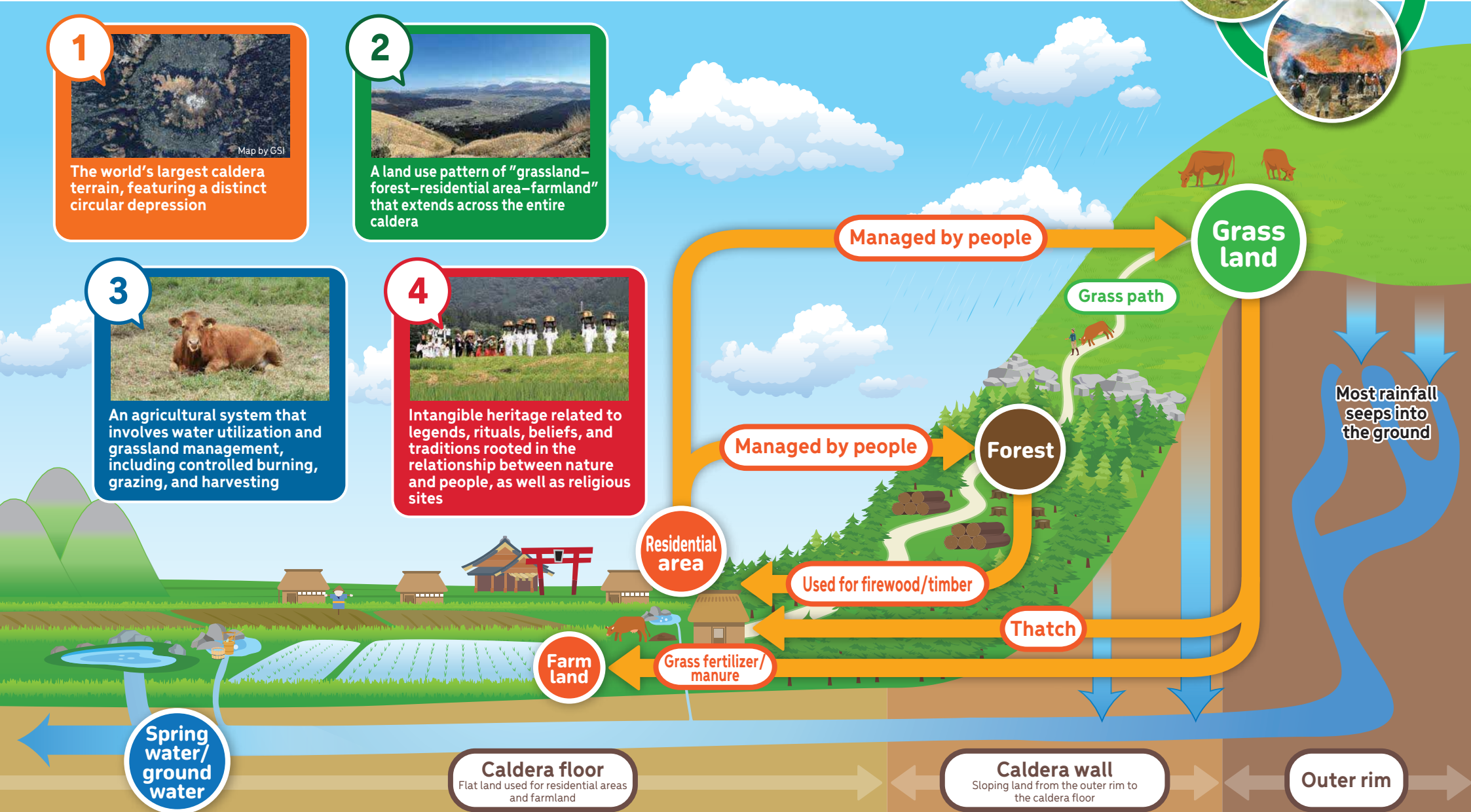


An agricultural system that involves water utilization and grassland management, including controlled burning, grazing, and harvesting

4



Intangible heritage related to legends, rituals, beliefs, and traditions rooted in the relationship between nature and people, as well as religious sites



*1 Attributes are tangible and intangible elements that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. It is important to protect these attributes.

*2 This is one example of land use patterns within the caldera. Actual land use patterns may vary by area.

Aso's Path to World Cultural Heritage

Aso is a magnificent and beautiful cultural landscape unlike any other in the world. It has been shaped by grasslands maintained since ancient times through the harmonious coexistence of people and nature in one of the world's largest calderas, along with farmlands developed over centuries to enhance and expand agricultural productivity.

To ensure this landscape is properly preserved and passed on as a shared treasure of humankind, Kumamoto Prefecture and the seven municipalities of the Aso region are working together to seek its inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the cultural category.

Inquiries

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