




# Niseko Range Tarn Loop Hike

ニセコ山地沼巡り    Hiking Map    1:25000







6.5hrs  
Time




935m  
Total Climb




1134m  
Highest point



15.3km  
Distance



5/10  
Difficulty



Jun-Oct  
Best season

This full day hike takes in the best the eastern end of the Niseko Range ニセコ連山 has to offer. We'd go out on a limb and say if you've only got time to do one hike in the Niseko Range, let it be this. Impressive volcanic white-rock valleys, high peaks with epic views along the range, the remains of an old sulphur mine, and lovely sub-alpine wetlands and mountain tarns. In summer, there's reasonable public bus transport access from Niseko JR train station.

LOCATION

This splendid loop hike wraps through and over popular peaks in the eastern



Niseko Range, near the international Niseko resort area in southern Hokkaido. The hike starts and finishes at the Goshiki Onsen Information Center 五色温泉インフォメーションセンター. It's also possible to start and finish the hike from either the lonely Oyachi Trail-head, Chisenupuri Trailhead, or the Shinsen-numa Rest House.

GENERAL NOTES

It's easy to write off Niseko in summer. With some of the best backcountry skiing in Hokkaido in winter at this eastern end of the Niseko Range, it's hard to imagine summer ever coming close to match what winter has to offer. Such thoughts are misplaced, however. This loop hike is a delightfully varied, ultra-

efficient way to experience the gorgeous topography, geology, and flora of summer time Niseko Range. Volcanic sand trails, an old sulphur mine, cool and clear mountain tarns, and truly impressive views along the range await. Ostensibly, its the mountain tarns dotted along the route that create the backbone of this route, but the cool forests and impressive peaks are also a treat.

**Difficulty:** There's nothing particularly technical about this hike, but it is a long hike – a time of 6 to 7hrs applies to fit hikers accustomed to plenty of climbing. The trail on the eastern side of Chisenupuri is particularly tough, with large boulders to clamber over. The trail is a bit overgrown in places – this is not a walk-in-the-park trip. There are, however, a couple of spots where the trail crosses a main road – escape is only a taxi call away, if required!

**Direction:** Naturally, this hike can be done in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. We did it counter-clockwise, but somewhat regretted this towards the end of the hike, when we'd been walking for 5 hours and still had two peaks to climb (Chisenupuri and Nitonupuri). Some hikers may find it less taxing to get the climbing out the way earlier in the day, by walking this in a clockwise direction.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

In most local guidebooks and maps, this route

is slated as a 6-7hr round trip. On a very hot late June day, however, it took us almost 8 hours with plenty of leisurely breaks. Allow plenty of time for this hike.

Most hikers will prefer to start this hike at Goshiki Onsen 五色温泉 because, well, onsen. Knowing there's a hot natural hotspring soak waiting for you at the end of the trip should be a motivator for anyone. Start up the trail from the Information Center towards Iwaonupuri イワオヌプリ. Not long after the big flight of stairs, you'll come to a junction. On this first short part of the trail, you may wonder if you've made a mistake walking this trail - it'll be bustling with hikers. But most hikers are just aiming for Iwaonupuri. As soon as you're past the Iwaonupuri turn-off, you'll have the trail mostly to yourself until you arrive at Shinsennuma 神仙沼, about 4 hours away.

The trail is well defined for the entire way, and reasonably well signposted, with Japanese and English signs. This first half of the trip (if traveling counter-clockwise) to Onuma 大沼 (literally, big pond) is characterized by compact volcanic scenery. White rocks, red scree slopes, and a crystal clear Sulphur creek. The Sulphur mine remains are more like strands of tailings rather than ruins, but interesting nonetheless.

Onuma is surrounded by tall sasa bamboo grass, and there's only one spot to actually get to the tarn's edge. But if the weather is hot, it would be a gorgeous spot for a swim. From Onuma to Oyachi 大谷地 the trail is mostly wooded, with plenty of shade.

From Oyachi to Shisennuma it's also nicely wooded, with old-growth white birch. A dilapidated boardwalk, with overgrown, low-lying branches slowing progress somewhat, takes you to the busy tourist-trap of Shisennuma. This is a large marsh area, with a few beautiful tarns. You'll be sharing the boardwalks with jeans-and-sneaker types for about 10 minutes. The tarns are worth it though. Really quite gorgeous.

Past Shisennuma, you're now on the second half of the circuit, but arguably the toughest part. There's a lot of climbing and descending to do, but this also offers the most spectacular views of the trip. Chisenupuri チセヌプリ is the high point of the route, and you'll have uninterrupted views west and east along the range. Yotei-zan to the east will be showing its peak too. Chisenupuri's views are hard earned however, as the descent (or ascent) on the eastern side is less a trail

than a boulder-hop. It's steep and exciting.

After Chisenupuri is out of the way, it's one more grunt up to another peak, this time Nitonupuri ニトヌプリ. The eastern side of Nitonupuri had come of the most inspiring landscape on the whole route though. Once again back into the white volcanic landscape nearing Iwaonupuri, there's a tiny plateau that feels like a natural Japanese garden. Low shrubby plants, a pure white trail, quiet and calm.

On the way back to Goshiki Onsen, you may be tempted for a quick summit of Iwaonupuri. It's only another 30 minutes or so off the trail. We were nearing 8 hours on the trail, so gave it a miss. Straight to the onsen for us!

TRANSPORT

**By car:** There's plenty of parking at Goshiki, Oyachi, Shinsennuma, and the Chisenupuri trailheads.

**Public transport:** During the peak summer season (July-Oct), there's a public bus service run by Niseko Bus ニセコバス runs from Niseko JR Station to Goshiki Onsen and Shinsennuma Rest House, via Annupuri. The bus fare is 820yen for the full 1hr 15m trip from Niseko Station to Goshiki Onsen. Note the bus runs every day from late July till late August, but only on weekends in the rest of July, and from late August till October. Call the Goshiki Onsen Information Center (in English is OK) for details (TEL: 0136-59-2200).

SAFETY NOTES

Despite the relatively low elevation throughout the route, the peaks in particular are very exposed to the elements. Make sure you're




carrying the appropriate gear in case of a sudden change in weather. Make sure to leave your intentions in the trailhead box, just below the large flight of stairs on the way to Iwaonupuri.

ONSEN NEARBY

The hike starts at Goshiki Onsen 五色温泉 (800yen), one of the Niseko area's best natural hot springs. Down to earth, rustic, and unbelievably soothing after a long hike. They're open from 9am till 8pm. Alternatively, there's the larger but still just as natural and smoothing Yukichichibu 雪秩父 (700yen), a 10 minute drive west along Route 58 from Goshiki Onsen. They're open from 10am till 8pm, have a basic restaurant attached, and have very large outdoor bathing areas. ■

| Japanese Map Glossary |       |            |
|-----------------------|-------|------------|
| Romaji                | Kanji | English    |
| bunki                 | 分岐    | junction   |
| cho                   | 町     | town       |
| dake/mine             | 岳/峯   | peak       |
| eki                   | 駅     | station    |
| goya/koya             | 小屋    | hut        |
| hinangoya             | 避難小屋  | shelter    |
| ike                   | 池     | pond       |
| kawa/gawa             | 川     | river      |
| kako                  | 火口    | crater     |
| ko/mizumi             | 湖     | lake       |
| kyo                   | 峡     | gorge      |
| numa                  | 沼     | pond       |
| onsen                 | 温泉    | hot spring |
| sawa                  | 沢     | stream     |
| taira/daira           | 平     | plateau    |
| tani/dani             | 谷     | valley     |
| taki                  | 滝     | waterfall  |
| toge                  | 峠     | pass       |
| yama/san/zan          | 山     | mountain   |



ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/nsktarn>


**Disclaimer** The information on this map was derived from digital databases provided by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan and the Biodiversity Center of Japan. Care was taken in the creation of this map. HokkaidoWilds.org cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy. There are no warranties, expressed or implied, including the warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

**TEXT, PHOTOS, MAP** | Rob Thomson

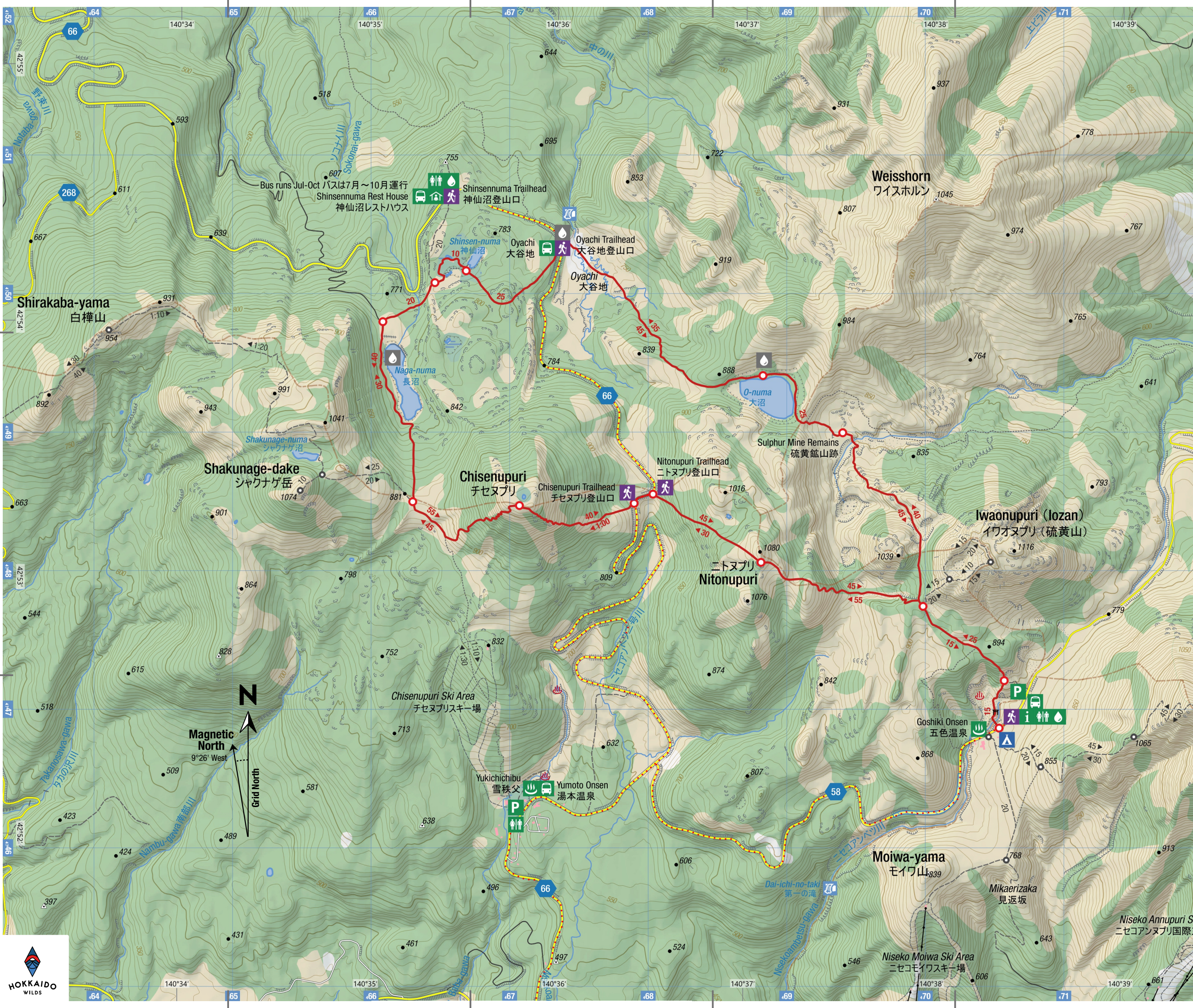
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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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HOKKAIDO  
WILDS



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ニセコ連山沼巡り Hiking Map 1:25000



## Symbol Key

- |  |                             |  |                           |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | Route (time between points) |  | Contour lines (100m, 10m) |
|  | National Highway            |  | Power transmission lines  |
|  | Prefectural Road            |  | Trees/no trees            |
|  | Municipal Road              |  | Rocks/cliffs              |
|  | Minor Municipal Road        |  | Hot spring                |
|  | Walkway                     |  | Fumerole                  |
|  | Bus route (bus stop)        |  | Hut                       |
|  | Toilet                      |  | Campsite                  |
|  | Water                       |  | Trailhead (with parking)  |
|  | Water (needs treatment)     |  | Basic shelter             |

**ONLINE ROUTE GUIDES** - Please visit the full route guides for route description, GPS files, and safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/nsktarn>

**THIS IS A GEOREFERENCED PDF** - Download the free Avenza Maps® app for iPhone and Android to see your location in real time: <https://hokw.jp/geontarn>

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この地図の作成に当たっては、国土地理院の地図データ、開発者の基盤地図情報及び電子地図図（タイル）を使用しました。（著作権等30年保護、第507号） 正式：1/25,000縮小54TVNデータ（国土地理院多様なセンターも使用し、HokkaidoWilds.orgが作成した電子地図図）

We created this map using the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and basemap data, with the Authority director's permission (no. Hek-30-psh, 04-867-psh). We also modified 1:25000 scale vegetation map data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (http://biodoc.biodic.go.jp).



## PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

### STEP 1

Load your printer with A3 printer paper (297mm x 420mm). If you've only got Tabloid or Ledger size (279mm x 432 mm), just follow the instructions below. You'll achieve an accurate scale, but the map will be clipped a little at the top and bottom.

### STEP 2

Open the print window by clicking on File > Print (or hitting Ctrl + P on your keyboard).

### STEP 3

Make sure "Actual Size" is selected.

### STEP 4

For double-sided printing, select "Print on both sides of paper".

### STEP 5

For best results, select the highest quality print option available on your printer (settings will vary).

### STEP 6

You won't need this instructions page, so just select the pages that don't include this instruction sheet.

### STEP 7

Click "Print".

## PLEASE PRINT AT 'ACTUAL SIZE' (NO SCALING)

The 1:25,000 scale used in the map is accurate if the PDF is printed without scaling (i.e., ACTUAL SIZE). Follow the instructions on this page to ensure an accurate rendering of the scale.

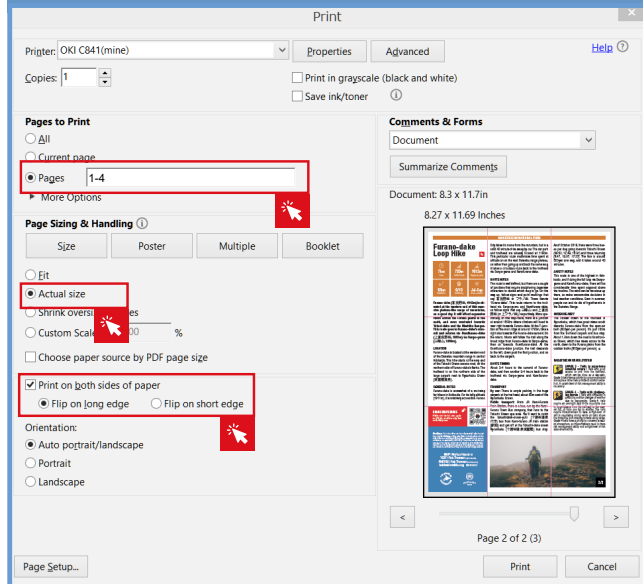
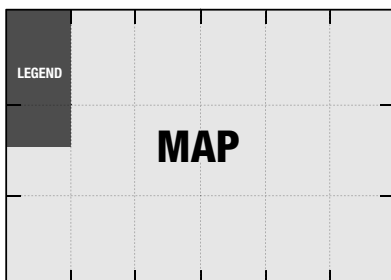


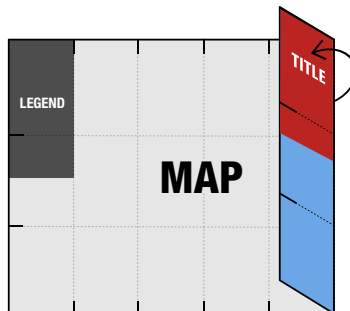
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

## ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

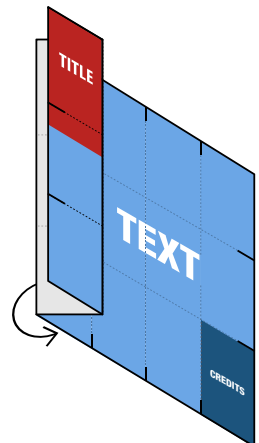
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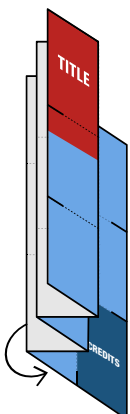
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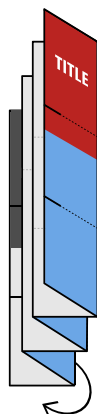
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4



5



6



7

