

## RESOLUTION

29 January 2008

Novosibirsk

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Working Meeting of NGOs “The Forests of Western Siberia: Problems of conservation and sustainable use” took place in Novosibirsk on the 28 – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008, with international participation. Discussions were held on forest conservation, use, and production, under the conditions of the newly imposed Forest Code and its many associated Acts; regional and local problems regarding forest use (including those related to regional protected areas and municipal forests), and the current developments in forest education. The discussions led participants to conclude that the following points are essential:

### Implementation of forest legislation and forest policy

1. To bring to the attention of the leadership of our country – President and government – that the most vital task of the government and society with regards to forests, is to formulate a clear and coherent forest policy. This does not currently exist. The policy must take into consideration the fact that Russia does not have limitless forest resources. The assumptions on which forestry use strategies are based must change – from an extensive ‘mining’ of new territories, to sustainable use of forests in areas traditionally used for forests, giving support to villages and settlements dependent on forests.

2. The chaotic process of formulating, ratifying and beginning to implement the new Forest Code and associated legislative acts at a federal and regional level has given rise to a ‘legal nihilism’ among the general population and employees of the forest service. This led to a steep increase in violations of the law and threatened a considerable proportion of high value forests. The situation is due to the low quality of the documents – the fact that many articles in the law and the associated normative legal acts contradict both each other, and other related Russian legislation. It is therefore important to underline to the government of the Russian Federation the importance of working with independent and competent experts from academic institutions and the forestry service, forest users & stakeholders, and community organisations, at all stages in the development of forest laws and all associated regulations. Public access to documents in preparation is currently extremely limited

### Public participation and NGO engagement in forest management

3. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation in Western Siberia, to create, as part of the structure for directing forest management, Public Forest Councils similar to the Public Environmental Council that operates at a federal level within the agency for forest management. Such Councils should include representatives of all interested community organisations, working on the problems for protecting and using forests, including also inter-regional and national NGOs.

4. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation, within local administration, and to the directors of forest districts, to develop a system of citizen’s forest monitoring and encourage voluntary participation of the general public in extinguishing forest fires and in tree planting / forest restoration activities. One means for co-operation could be the participation of representatives of community organisations in forest monitoring and law enforcement operations organised by the forestry service and protected area management structures.

5. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation to carry out together with non-governmental organisations competitions for grants for the support of local community initiatives to protect forests, green settlements and replant forests.

### Unsustainable use of forest resources in Western Siberia

6. To recommend to the government of the Russian Federation and the regional governments to stimulate the use of forestry wastes, non-liquid products of forest waste, and wastes from forest industry complexes, in part, for the preparation of timber fuel granules (pellets). To expediently convert the heating/electricity plants of forest villages to using pellets or forestry waste as their main fuel. Practical steps in this direction could include the creation of federal and/or regional programmes, which choose model forest districts and forestry villages for installation of heating plants and the necessary equipment for processing forestry waste.

7. To recommend to the government of the Russian Federation, the municipal governments of Western Siberian regions, and interested non-governmental organisations, to organise training for specialists in forest management on methods for evaluating reserves of non-timber forest products and ways to plan for their sustainable use.

#### Protection and restoration of the forests of Western Siberia, including specially protected areas

8. To recommend to the government of the Russian Federation investigating the creation of a specially protected area of federal significance for the unique Bolshoy Vasyuganskiy bog. This is the biggest forest-bog ecosystem in the world, of global significance in stabilising the processes of water exchange and climate regulation.

9. To recommend mapping the last massifs of untouched taiga forest and forests of high conservation value at a regional level, and development of a long-term plan to include these areas into a network of regional protected areas.

10. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation to use the positive experience of Krasnoyarsk and Khabarovsk Krai and Arkhangelsk Oblast, in creating a regional management unit on the development of protected areas, with the aim of improving effectiveness in managing the regional protected areas network.

11. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation, municipal authorities and interested non-governmental organisations to develop methodological recommendations on the designation of specially protected areas of regional and local significance, which makes use of the collected experience in designating key areas (key ornithological areas - SOPR, key botanical areas – MSOP, Sib Eco Centre) and forests of high conservation value (WWF).

12. To express concern regarding the condition of specially protected areas of the Altai Krai, recommend to the government of the Altai Krai to pay attention to:

- The current condition of forests and problems of forest use;
- The coordination of protected area management within the Krai;
- The positive experience of governments in Tomsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts in working together with community conservation organisations in the sphere of nature protection and resource management.

13. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation and municipal authorities, to actively include academic specialists (forest ecologists, sociologists etc) and representatives of interested community organisations when developing forest plans for forest parks. Forests near to settlements and forest green zones around them are mainly of value for recreation, health, nature conservation and environmental protection. This means that methods of forest inventory and management planning that are orientated towards maximum timber production should be corrected.

14. To suggest to the mayor of Novosibirsk that current planning documents regulating municipal forest management are altered, with the goal of protecting and restoring the recreational, health, conservation and environmental services value of the forests, in some areas by reducing the allowed logging volumes.

15. To recommend to the Council of Deputies of the Novosibirsk Oblast investigation of the question of financing rubbish removal along the banks of the Ob Reservoir in the region of Berdsk, given the regional significance of the area as a sanitary-spa zone for the whole Novosibirsk metropolis. Currently the forestry and municipal services of Berdsk do not cope with the task of creating an area for recreation in the spring & summer periods due to lack of resources, including

finance. The number of visitors to the area is growing annually and exceeds not only the population of Berdsk but also the population of Novosibirsk. The removal of rubbish from the area is currently undertaken in an ad hoc, slap-dash fashion.

16. To support the local community group ‘Protect the Forests of Akademgorodok’ in their aims of getting the central part of Novosibirsk Akademgorodok area designated as an area of cultural heritage of regional significance, and their request to protect this area as a unique settlement that works in harmony with nature, prohibiting any major construction projects on the territory of ‘municipal forests’, and recommendation that any development of Akademgorodok is carried out on areas of the town that are not forested. Additionally, to bring to the attention of the government of the Russian Federation the need to create a dendro-park (designated forest study area) of federal significance, for use by the Russian Academy of Science in Novosibirsk without time limit, in the area that was formerly part of the municipal forests of Novosibirsk Akademgorodok.

#### Development of forest education and information provision

17. To recommend to the relevant organs within the government of the Subjects of the Russian Federation to support the work of forest schools and children’s eco-forest groups; to develop for them methodological and informational materials on forest ecology and tree planting; and to support them in carrying out both practical in investigatory nature conservation activities.

18. To note the positive experience of Greenpeace Russia and Sib Eco Centre in creating school tree nurseries and school children’s participation in forest restoration activities though the children’s movement ‘Restore our forests’ and the south-Siberian network ‘Forest Guardians.’

19. To direct a letter to the government of Novosibirsk Oblast in the name of the working meeting, regarding support for the forest school ‘Forest Robinsons’, which previously existed as part of Berdsk Forest District. This forest school is in fact a regional methodological centre for the entire childrens forest education movement in the region. Currently, the old Forest District has been reformed, and the fate of the forest school is undecided.

20. To support the idea of Greenpeace Russia to conduct public forest lectures at forestry departments of further and higher education institutions, for employees in forestry management and specialists from NGOs, with the aim of adequately educating and re-educating forest experts.

Participants of the meeting noted the value of government representatives involved in forest management and environmental protection attending the meeting and express their hope that in the future representatives of the government of the Altai Krai, Kemerova Oblast, and the Republic of Altai, will also be able to attend such meetings.

Chair of organising committee

Alexander.V. Dubynin

Secretary

Yulia Y. Kolevatora