



GP HOPGAARD

What Future for the Taiga?

Russian President Putin dismissed the Federal Forest Service (FFS) and the State Committee for Nature Protection (SCNP) on 17 May and passed the functions of both to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

The abolition of both structures has been harshly criticised by the federal and local parliaments and by Russian and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who argue that giving environmental protection responsibilities to the MNR is like putting a fox in charge of the henhouse.

Protests have been swift and effective. On 13 June, NGOs held a conference on the fate of Russian nature conservation. On 29 June, Moscow City Voting Commission received an application for an all-Russia environmental referendum on the issue of the independent existence of both the FFS and SCNP.

Following these activities, Putin asked Prime Minister Kasyanov to reconsider the existence of the FFS and SCNP as separate entities. However, Kasyanov redirected this issue to the MNR which, on 13 July 2000, confirmed Putin's decision.

The protests are continuing with international pressure being successfully applied to Russia's donors. Following the abolition of the FFS, the World Bank has announced that it has frozen a US\$60 million loan for woodland projects in Russia, because it has no evidence that its environmental terms can be met.

Some senior Russian officials are also complaining. Komi Republic head Yurii Spiridonov has formally requested that the Prime Minister reconsider the decision to abolish the FFS, pointing out that the MNR is unlikely to be able to effectively deal with the issues facing the forest sector.

The main reason behind the decisions is that the new generation of Russian politicians, led by Putin, have made a clear choice in favour of economic liberalisation believing this will lead to a strong and competitive Russian economy. Simultaneously, big businesses are focussing their activities on trying to improve their economic performance. Any restrictions

such as environmental or social requirements are being interpreted by both the authorities and businesses as barriers to economic growth, the sacred cow of Putin's Russia. The message seems to be that Russia is too poor to care about environmental issues.

Environmentalists argue that Russia cannot afford not to care as the costs of pollution and uncontrolled forest exploitation are already enormous. The current plans for the FFS's absorption by the MNR will jeopardize even further the future of Russian forests. Extraction of increased volumes of raw materials is given much higher priority by the MNR than maximizing profits from exports of value-added processed materials.

The Minister of Natural Resources, Yatskevich, is proposing to simplify the system of permits for exploitation of natural resources, including reconsidering the regulations concerning environmental impact assessments, legislation on nature protection and the Forest Code. He justly notes that Russia's huge system of forest management is now half financed through unwarranted sanitary logging performed by *leskhoz*s (the local forestry administrations) themselves. However, the solution he proposes, to reduce the number of *leskhoz*s, would give environmentally unfriendly logging companies uncontrolled access to the forests. Yatskevich has also criticised the proposed environmental referendum, condemned the actions of international NGOs (in particular Greenpeace and WWF) and expressed concern about Russian NGOs receiving money from abroad.

The current plan for the SCNP and FFS requires full and transparent discussion within Russian society. This is sure to be a hot topic at the TRN conference in Moscow in September.

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Editorial

Ahead of the Taiga Rescue Network conference in Moscow 17th - 22nd September this special edition of Taiga News focuses on the Russian Taiga and multiple use forest management. Russia is going through turbulent changes as it moves towards economic liberalisation and a market economy. These changes will have a profound affect on the Russian forests and how they will be managed in the future as highlighted in several of the articles in this issue.

It is not often that we make a connection between the boreal and the tropical forests, but we particularly want to draw your attention to the story at the end of page 3 entitled 'Nordic footprints in the South.' This is a story from the World Rainforest Movement - a participant organisation of the Taiga Rescue Network - which suggests that some Nordic based transnational forestry companies may be applying double standards in their forestry operations. We need to find out whether these companies are behaving in southern locations in ways that would be intolerable in their home countries.

Mandy Haggith and Bill Ritchie

Global

G8 Forest Action Programme

On 13 July 2000, the foreign ministers of the eight most wealthy and powerful nations, known as G8, met in Okinawa, Japan. Most public attention focussed on what they had to say about debt relief for developing nations. But also on the agenda was the G8 Action Programme on Forests. All eight nations reported on their progress and agreed to continue the programme for a further two years. The programme includes both taking action on domestic forestry and preventing illegal timber trade. Can we hold our governments to this programme? The full report is at:
www.g8kyushu-okinawa.go.jp/e/documents/forest/index.htm

Monitoring of FSC certifiers

Throughout August the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) will conduct a series of evaluation visits of the accredited certification bodies SGS, SmartWood, SCS and IMO. These visits will take place in Sweden, the US and Germany. Comments on these bodies are welcomed by the FSC.

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Stressed-out spruces

The University of Alaska has reported recent results of research into the impact of climate change. It shows that due to limited growth because of drought stress, the future capacity of northern latitudes to act as a 'carbon sink' may be less than currently expected. Stressed spruce trees are more susceptible to other organisms like fungal invasions and spruce budworm attacks. In addition, dried-out trees provide prime fuel for wildfires. Destruction of the spruce trees would put even more carbon into the atmosphere, and lead to succession by smaller hardwood species like birch and aspen with less carbon-storage capacity.

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ForestPACT

A new initiative is being launched to speed up action on forests all over the world. ForestPACT (Forest Partnerships for Action and Co-operation Today) is a process involving NGOs, industry, research organisations and governments who pledge together to carry out action in support of conservation and sustainable management of forests. The interim secretariat are keen to involve organisations that are interested in taking active part in ForestPACT.

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North America

Hunger Strike against Abitibi

Clearcuts In Ontario, New Post, Wahgoshig and Grassy Narrows First Nations are on hunger strike. They are protesting against pulp and paper giant Abitibi Consolidated, and the Ministry of Natural Resources. They have challenged the authority of the Ontario government to licence the forestry operations of companies such as Abitibi Consolidated which infringe their rights to hunt, fish and trap. Abitibi, the largest newsprint manufacturer in the world, is clearcutting forest lands containing cultural artifacts and sacred burial grounds. They have a forestry licence for the next five years. Ministry of Natural Resources officials have so far refused to meet with the hunger striking First Nations.

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US-Canada timber trade

Canadian trade officials have been in active consultation with forest industry leaders for some time to develop policies and positions for the upcoming negotiations on the future of the Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) with the USA, which expires April 2001. Few people outside of the timber industry have been included in these talks, and several environmental, social justice and First Nations organizations think it's time this debate was opened up. They are calling for public hearings and full consultation. Meanwhile over the border, US forest activists are letting the US government know that they support the renegotiation of the SLA, and are asking for the elimination of harmful subsidies and the inclusion of greater forest protection in the agreement. They are also calling for substantive citizen participation in the negotiations, and full assessment and disclosure of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of any US-Canada timber trade agreement.

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Great Bear Rainforest protest

Forest Action Network (FAN) have set up a website as part of their Great Bear Rainforest campaign to halt logging in pristine British Columbian forests. International Forest Products (or Interfor), cuts almost 4 million cubic meters per year from old growth Canadian forests. FAN want to get them off the planet and have thus set up their 'kickinterfor' site.

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Certification makes some progress in the USA

Lowe's, the second-largest home improvement retailer in the USA, announced on 8 August a new wood purchasing policy that requires their suppliers to prove their products come from well-managed forests. Lowes, like Home Depot, ultimately wants its suppliers to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and have declared an immediate ban on products from the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia. For now, however, they will have to keep doing business with the forest giants. There just isn't enough certified wood to feed demand.

The issue of multiple standards is an issue in the States too. International Paper, the world's biggest forestry and paper company, have endorsed the 'Sustainable Forestry Initiative', a competitor to the FSC standard designed by the American Forest and Paper Association, the industry's trade group.

Russia

Forest fires

The late Russian Federal Forest Service had registered almost 4000 forest fires, burning over 312,000 hectares, by 11 May 2000. This is 300 fires more than last year in the same period of time. Most of them were caused by people. Since then there have been widespread reports of fires from Komi to Kamchatka, and even reports of planes firing rockets at clouds to try to induce rain. In the Komi republic alone, by early July there were 279 forest fires covering 47,000 hectares. Since closure of the Federal Forest Service, the picture for the whole of Russia is now hard to gauge.

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Komi oil spills

Oil pollution has devastated hundreds of hectares of land in the Usinsky Region, Republic of Komi, according to Greenpeace researchers. At the national level oil production is currently 300 million tons per year. An astonishing 15 million tons of this oil, equivalent to 370 Exxon Valdez accidents, ends up polluting the environment. Combined with the total natural gas burned off, the wasted fuel is more than would be required to create as much energy as Russia's 29 nuclear power stations. Six years after a huge oil spill in the Usinsk region in 1994 only 60% of the spillage has been cleaned up, despite \$US124 million in credits from the World Bank and the EBRD. Greenpeace has called on financial institutions and oil companies to invest in the modernization of pipelines, the improvement the ecological standards of oil extraction and the restoration of polluted territory.

World bank money

The World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency has offered New Arian Resources Corporation, a Magadan province gold mining venture, \$26.2 million worth of political-risk insurance to expand its gold mining. This is despite objections of environmentalists who want the global lender to halt operations in Russia. The bank has, however, frozen a \$60 million loan for Russian forestry, agreeing that it isn't possible to guarantee adequate environmental protection in the current political climate.

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Forest Watch Russia

The initial goal of Forest Watch Russia (FWR) is to identify all remaining major areas of intact frontier forest in Russia. A FWR partner organization, Transparent World (TW), has produced a preliminary map of intact forest blocks greater than 100,000 ha. The map scale is 1:1 million (it would be 8 meters wide if printed). The map is an original interpretation of images from the Russian satellite Resurs. TW has also conducted training courses on behalf of FWR, to prepare partners for the ground truthing work that is taking place during the field season of 2000 and for GIS follow-up work. Following revision and quality review, the map will be published in the spring of 2001 along with a report on the state of forestry in Russia. The work is funded mainly by IKEA.

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Europe

PEFC vs FSC

On 24 May 2000 the Pan European Forest Certification Council (PEFCC) members endorsed the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish national forest certification schemes. PEFC is a certification scheme defined by the European forestry ministers at their conferences on the protection of European forests. NGOs and indigenous peoples groups insist that it has no credibility as it has been developed in a top-down closed process. They insist that the Forest Stewardship Council offers the best option for forest certification. The Swedish Forest Industry Federation has also stated its unhappiness with two certification schemes existing in parallel and asks for a national effort to reach ONE standard. Which one? Their vice president, Stefan Wirten is clear: 'the choice is obvious; it is the FSC label that our customers will demand in the future.'

Nordic footprints in the South

The World Rainforest Movement (WRM) has recently drawn attention to companies from Finland, Norway and Sweden which are actively promoting the spread of large-scale fast-growing tree monocultures in the South, which are resulting in a large and increasing number of social and environmental impacts, including deforestation.

Finnish Jaakko Poyry, the largest forestry and engineering consulting company in the world, with an estimated 40 per cent of the forest industry consultancy market worldwide and 60 offices in 25 countries around the world, has been involved in hundreds of major commercial forestry and pulp and paper projects in the last two decades across the Americas, Africa, Asia, Oceania and Europe.

See: http://www.wrm.org.uy/english/plantations/material/jaakko_poyry.htm

The Norwegian company Tree Farms has started a project in Uganda to set up between 80,000 and 100,000 hectares of plantations of pines and eucalyptus to act as 'sinks' for Norway's emissions of CO₂. This project has provoked the eviction of some 8,000 people from 13 villages.

See: <http://www.wrm.org.uy/english/bulletin/bull35.htm#Uganda>

Swedish/Finnish Stora Enso is a major shareholder of Veracel, a company acting in the state of Bahia in Brazil which owns 160,000 hectares of land, much of which being covered with eucalyptus. The company's own web page says, 'Veracel's eucalyptus plantations are vast and concentrated, thereby producing low-cost pulpwood'. But it doesn't say anything about the social and environmental costs of these tree plantations. Other Nordic companies operating in the South include Ahlstrom, Valmet-Tampella, Kvaerner Pulping and Sunda Defibrator. Let's pay attention to their activities.

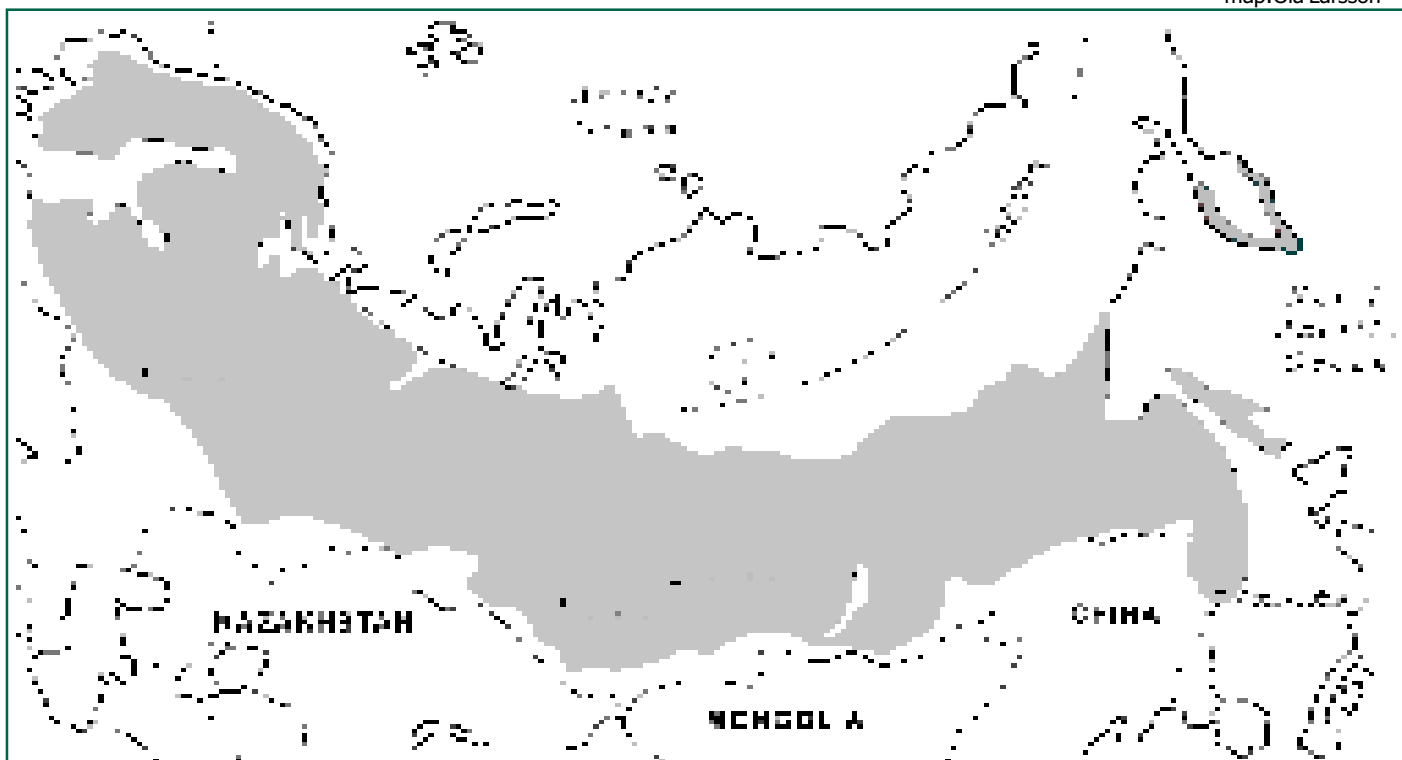
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russia

The Taiga Zone

map:Ola Larsson



The Russian Federation is the most forested nation in the world, with an estimated 809 million hectares of forest. This is 22% of the total world forest cover and 70% of the total boreal forest. The taiga's sheer scale gives Russia a unique role in managing the global services provided by such a huge contiguous forest area, much of which is intact old-growth forest. Balancing this responsibility with the desire to develop economic forestry is one of the biggest challenges facing the new 'free market' economy emerging in Russia.

The taiga ranges from the hemiboreal zone in the south with its mixture of boreal and temperate species, to the taiga-tundra zone of stunted, sparse and swampy forest in the northernmost regions, through dense stands of pine and spruce forest mingled with aspen, rowan and birch, which dominates the bulk of the taiga. The Russian taiga is home to many Indigenous Peoples and European Russian settlers as well as a vast range of wildlife including the threatened Amur leopard and magnificent Siberian tiger.

In Russia the state owns all forest lands. Until its recent abolition, these were managed primarily by the Federal Forest Service (FFS), largely through granting and overseeing leases and concessions to private logging companies including many transnational corporations. Protected forests were the responsibility of the State Committee for Nature Protection. Forests on former collective farms are leased to the new private agricultural cooperatives.

Throughout most of Russia, industrial forestry consists mainly of selective and clear cut felling followed by abandonment and regeneration (or in some cases, especially in the north, failed regeneration) rather than rotational forestry, with cleared areas replanted as even aged monocultures of selected species for future harvesting, which is the common practice in the other boreal regions.

Russia is self sufficient in most forest products, with imports an insignificant part of the economy. Exports are significant, with 9%

of world roundwood trade being supplied by Russia.

Although the total area of forest cover appears to be stable or increasing slightly, much of this is degraded. In spite of having what many consider to be a good suite of management guidelines and regulations, in many areas forest management is poor and inefficient and illegal practices common. There is widespread evidence of logging in areas sensitive to disturbance, such as steep slopes, watersheds and permafrost zones. There is strong evidence that mineral extraction and industrial processes are causing severe degradation of the taiga over wide areas. There are many reports of the FFS being unable or unwilling to carry out its regulatory functions and taking part in illegal activities. Corruption is widespread.

Huge areas of the taiga are at present inaccessible to commercial logging operations because of the lack of infrastructure and the lack of funds to invest in infrastructure and modern industrial practices. The opening up of the Russian economy to foreign investment is attracting the timber hungry nations of China, Japan and USA. There are plans to invest in new roads and ports, especially in the Russian Far East and Siberia, to open up large tracts of old growth forest to timber mining for export. The forces of the global market, with the current weak regulatory system, are widely interpreted as a major threat to the taiga.

But there's good news too! Grassroots support for the taiga is growing in Russia, as exemplified by the Forest Club - a coalition of environmental NGOs who have successfully negotiated, with industry and scientists, a moratorium on old-growth logging in Karelia. Sustainable forest management is being worked towards in many areas, and FSC certification processes have begun. Local people and NGOs around Russia are mapping forest areas and raising awareness in Russian society of the value of and threats to the taiga. Some examples of their work are highlighted on the next six pages.

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Is the Taiga moving?

Dr Tatiana Vlassova, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Science

An environmental consultant to RAIPON, the North Russian Indigenous Peoples organisation, questions the received wisdom about the likely impact of climate change on Russia's taiga forest zone.

During the 1990s, some extremely optimistic estimates were made about the impact of climate change on the Russian boreal forest. In 1997, the Federal Research Program of Russia made various predictions in their report, 'Global Changes of Environment and Climate'.

- Warming of the climate by 1.5°C will increase the productivity of forests in the south of the taiga zone by 12% in 50 years.
- In Vologda district, one of the main timber producing regions of European Russia, areas of swamps will decrease substantially and the stocks of timber could increase by 30% in 50 years.
- In the most northern area of the taiga zone, the Pomorsky lowlands, all slopes and valleys and some watersheds will become forested.
- On south-facing slopes currently occupied by the taiga-tundra zone, significant stocks of commercial forests will appear.

However, many climate-related factors such as fire, insects and diseases, which all play key roles in the health of existing stands and in restocking of forests, were not considered. Much of the risk to the boreal forest from climate change associated with global warming involves decreases in the moisture available for forest growth, tree mortality from insect outbreaks, probability of an increase of large fires, and changes caused by thawing of permafrost.

One of the characteristic features of the boreal forest is that insect outbreaks are a dominant disturbance factor and that outbreaks can result in tree death over vast areas. The probability of an increase in large fires in the boreal forest due to climate change is also substantial. As was indicated in the last report of the State Committee for Nature Protection, the incidence of fires in Russian forests has increased significantly in recent years. The new landscape produced by burning probably would support a significantly lower proportion of conifers and instead there are likely to be large areas of relatively pure hardwood stands.

We therefore can't predict with any assurance that climate warming in the taiga-tundra zone will lead to a northward movement of the boreal forest tree-line. In fact, we need also to consider the following human impacts, which may actually lead to a southward movement of the taiga and lesotundra zones.

The impacts of *the mining-metallurgy industry* on the taiga-tundra and taiga zones have been analyzed by many Russian scientists. 5 zones of different levels of disturbance and transformed boreal ecosystems can be identified around such industrial centres. Degradation of the taiga ecosystem is sometimes noticeable even at a distance of 80-90 kilometres from industrial centres.

The influence of *the oil and gas industry* on forests and reindeer pastures is tremendous. Oil pollution damages plants, inhibiting growth and disrupting photosynthesis and respiration, and disturbing root systems, leaves and reproductive organs. Its impact upon phytocoenoses results in degradation of the vegetation cover, decrease in the number of species and reduction of productivity.

The impact of *timber industrial complexes* on the taiga ecosystem was analyzed in the Syktyvkar Timber Complex (STC) situated in the middle European taiga zone. Forest cover is about 75% in this region, predominately pine and spruce forest. In the study, forests in the zone of up to 50 kilometres around Syktyvkar were considered to be severely degraded.

The impacts of *forestry* are increasing as forestry in the Russian North is becoming more and more profitable. In 1998-1999 the volume of timber production increased by up to 35%, particularly in

regions, such as Arhangelsk, Komi and Irkutsk districts, with convenient export facilities. Clear cut areas partly or wholly situated on permafrost are particularly slow to recover and some are irreversibly swamped.

As a result of all of these impacts, in areas of commercial forestry, and near large industrial centres and around cities and large settlements, the northern limit for viable forest is actually moving southward.

It is the indigenous peoples of the North who are most directly affected by these impacts. The northern taiga and lesotundra zones are needed for reindeer herding over the long autumn and winter periods. Its deforestation along with other economic factors have already led to reduction in reindeer herding. The numbers of domestic deer halved between 1990 and 1998. Because forest companies monopolise the forests for their timber producing interests, forestry impoverishes both reindeer grazing and biological diversity. The need to address the issue of multiple land-use management for forestry and reindeer herding is thus very urgent in the northern part of the boreal forest zone. We need to learn from the really holistic approach of the indigenous peoples towards the use of renewable resources.

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Living With the Taiga

Moscow Conference Programme

September 17: Internal TRN Strategic Planning Session

September 18:

The Boreal At Risk: Modern Reality And The Way Ahead

Keynote speakers:

Grand Chief Ted Moses, Grand Council of the Crees

Igor Chestin, WWF Russian Program Office

Alexey Grigoriev, Socio-Ecological Union

Chief Arthur Manuel Neskonlith, Chairman Interior Alliance

Excursion to illustrate typical Russian forest management

September 19:

Planning For Multiple Use Forest Management

Excursion showcasing an example of selective logging.

Examples of multiple use forest management.

Block 1 – Non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

Block 2 – Recreation, eco-tourism and forest as a place to live

Block 3 – Ecosystem based forest management

Block 4 – Traditional indigenous forest use

September 20:

Multiple Use Forest Management: Utopian Vision Or Emerging Trend?

Morning session: tools to promote multiple use forest management:

Block 1 – Forest certification

Block 2 – Capitalism at work: foreign investments in the forest sector

Block 3 – Legislation and policy tools

Block 4 – Public participation

Afternoon session: Multi-stakeholder panel debate

NTFP trade fair running on all three days

September 21-22: Internal NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Days

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Around the taiga

Valuing NTFPs in the

Karelia moratorium upheld

Earlier this summer, Finnish logging companies Stora Enso and UPM Kymmene agreed to maintain the moratorium on logging in the oldgrowth forests of Karelia and the Kola Peninsula. The moratorium will continue until the end of 2000. Stora Enso promises not to log in oldgrowth areas as agreed with the Russian Forest Club. The decision is considered by both industry and NGOs as a good compromise in the argument around oldgrowth forests of the region. Karelia's forests survived due to the cold war and the most significant old growth areas are on the Karelia-Finnish border. However, since the Iron Curtain fell these border forests have become threatened by logging, particularly by Finnish companies. The industry moratorium has been the reward of considerable mapping work by Russian NGOs and complex negotiations. (See TN30)

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The Komi people live in a great expanse of taiga forest, the Pechora River watershed, west of the Ural Mountains. Called the 'people of the forest', their traditional livelihoods and spirituality are based on living in harmony with the forest. The Komis estimate that they receive 85-90% of what they need from the natural forests, including a wide variety of berries, mushrooms, nuts, game, household goods and forest river fish.

In co-operation with Counterpart International, local members of the Pechora Rescue Committee are conducting a survey to identify and quantify the actual extent and value of non-timber forest products in 20 communities in the Pechora River watershed. The results of the survey will be used within the communities to raise awareness of the value of the forests to their rural households and serve as a lobbying tool to convince government officials that the forest is far more valuable left intact than logged.

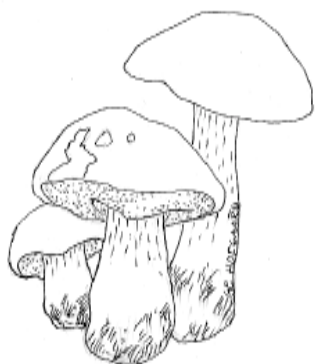
The Komis plan to lease deforested areas from the government for 50 years. The NTFP survey results will also assist the Komis to plan a Forest

Green Belt in danger

There is glorious primary taiga forest along the Green Belt of the Finnish-Russian border, in Russian Karelia and the western Kola Peninsula. Old pine snags dominate light pinewoods. A bear can rumble in lush spruce swamps. An eagle can sweep above birch thickets in the upper corner of a fjeld valley. But for how much longer?

The primeval forests of the River Jauri valley are only exceeded in primeval quality and overall size in Europe by the western slopes of the northern Urals. But during summer 2000 they are being logged by Petshengski leshoz (Forest Management of Petsenga) with help from local frontier guards.

In August 1998 road connection work was completed between Putilka frontier checkpoint in the Lutto river valley and Nickel Town in northern Petsenga. The Russian-Norwegian joint venture NORU (which has a modern sawmill in Verhnetulomski village) got a new route straight to their markets in Northern Norway and to the port of Kirkenes. A new bridge over the River Koallan was completed in summer 1999. Then in the autumn Russian frontier troops repaired their frontier patrol



road to the south of the River Lotta, to help speed up logging lorries.

The beautiful virginal shore forests of Lake Vuennijaur are now also in danger. The lake is in Laplandski les (the Forest of Lapland), situated between the Finnish Urho Kekkonen National Park (2530 km²) and the Russian Lapland Biosphere Reserve and zapovednik (2784 km²). This wilderness area is famous its fjeld reindeer population, bears and superb 100-year-old primary lichen heaths.

A Finnish-Russian consortium funded by the European Union is preparing for restoration of the Atlantic salmon population to source rivers of the Tuloma River in the Laplandski les. But if the huge clear-cutting operations push forward, siltation of salmon rivers will frustrate these restoration plans.

Russia's unsteady economic situation makes all nature protection efforts difficult. Many Russian official regulations are ideal, but only if enforced. People often bungle with fire and there is much destructive logging, overfishing, and overhunting. Everyone is involved in this: frontier guards, local politicians and officers, mafia, and poor people generally.

The northernmost part of the Green Belt is now the front line. Today bears, fjeld reindeer, Siberian jays, lichenous moors, virgin coniferous forests and salmon running in clear waters are still realities in the Forest of Lapland. But for how much longer?

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the Komi Republic

Garden project on these areas by defining how NTFPs can meet community needs and determining suitable locations. These forest gardens will replicate the natural forest structure but will include plants and trees that will produce a surplus of berries, mushrooms, nuts, and medicinal plants. As the recreated forest grows, native birds and animals will return, eventually restoring biodiversity as well as the productivity of the forest.

As foods, fruits, nuts and medicinal plants in excess of the needs of the local population are harvested, local businesses will be developed to process them for sale locally, regionally and internationally. Organic certified Forest Gardens products will be marketed within the growing Forest Garden worldwide marketing system.

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Hiking Trails instead of Axes

Over a hundred years ago Vladimir Arsenyev, a military topographer and naturalist, explored Primorsky Region, the remotest area of the Russian Empire. He wrote stories about this wildest part of the world and its rich and unique flora and fauna and he recommended to the Russian czar that it should be populated and protected.

The first of his recommendations was fulfilled. There are now ten settlements in Ternei district, on the eastern slopes of the Sikhote Alin mountain range. The main occupations of the locals are hunting, fishing and logging. The vast areas of virgin Korean

pine and secondary forests provide good habitats for the Amur tigers, brown and black bears, several deer species, wild boar, fur-bearing animals and salmon. However, the second of the Arsenyev's recommendations has never been fulfilled in its real sense.

The Ternei Taiga Tiger (TTT) Organization was formed in 1996 to assist the Sikhote-Alin Biosphere Zapovednik (state nature reserve) staff in protecting wildlife and providing environmental education to the local population.

A major goal is to contribute to wildlife protection by controlling game hunting and preventing poaching. There are cattle-farms in the area, located 5-40 km from the villages and livestock is attacked by tigers from time to time. We try to control tiger-human interactions and are seeking alternatives to the practice of killing problem tigers.

We also want to use the riches and beauties of the area in a non-traditional way by developing ecotourism. We don't want to use axes and guns and fishing nets to help the locals to survive. We want to help them to make their living in the hospitality business and we hope more adventurers will visit Ternei to see our natural way of living.

There are about 4000 children in Ternei district. Born in an area which is located, as we say, in a Bear's corner, many do not appreciate all the wildlife living in the nearby woods, all the fish swimming in the great number of rivers and creeks. They just hear hunters' stories about predators being dangerous and bloodthirsty. We TTT enthusiasts see our goal as educating the young Terneians environmentally. Ecocamping is very popular among schoolchildren,

and it's a very efficient tool for teaching them to make an attempt to live in harmony with nature. Not to spoil, to leave no trace, to feel and to understand the laws of the Taiga, this is what we try to teach the kids. And that tigers are not only dangerous. They are magic creatures, the Lords of the Taiga, its crown, elusive, secretive and majestic. The pride of Russia, the Tigers of the Snow. Our dream is to raise funds to organize more summer ecocamps for kids. Let's fulfil it!

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photo: Patrik Ritzen (patrik.ritzen@hem.passagen.se)

First FSC certificate

In Altay, South Siberia, Kosikhinskiy Forest Enterprise (KFE) achieved FSC certification for a 5-year period. It was certified by the British Soil Association under their 'Woodmark' labelling scheme. Kosikhinsky Forest Enterprise was founded in 1971, it employs about 70 staff and runs two small sawmills producing round and sawn timber of birch, pine and aspen. It is responsible for 42,000 hectares of 'agricultural forest' in the district of Kosikha. The area in which the forest lies is a mosaic of forest and farmland with the agricultural land managed by 12 collective farms.

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www.forest.ru/eng/sustainable_forestry/woodmark.html

Illegal Logging and Trade

Mary Rees, Pacific Environment and Resources Center

Rampant illegal logging and consumption of specific timber species in China and Japan have now become the primary threats to the rich temperate forests of Eastern Siberia and the southern Russian Far East. Russian domestic demand has plummeted over the past ten years, so that now the Russian timber industry focuses almost exclusively on export markets.

These are the conclusions of a new report, 'Plundering Russia's Far Eastern Taiga: Illegal Logging, Corruption, and Trade', which describes the growing threats to Russia's last frontier forests and enumerates ways to halt them. The report, by activists from Russia, Japan and the USA, outlines the trend toward increased exports of raw logs from Siberia and the Russian Far East to Northeast Asia.

The Russian version of the report went public during a Greenpeace demonstration in June in which six activists chained themselves to a pile of timber on a Russian freighter heading for Japan. The English version was published (on-line only) in time for the Group of Eight industrial nations (G8) July summit in Okinawa, Japan.

Russia's Far Eastern forests are of global importance. Huge tracts of old-growth forests protect a wealth of biodiversity, including such species as the Siberian tiger, Amur leopard and Asiatic black bear, and serve as a 'carbon sink' in the battle against global warming.

Responding to a deepening economic crisis and the rules of the international market economy, regional governments across Siberia and the Russian Far East have

facilitated large-scale extraction and export of natural resources in order to generate short-term, hard currency revenues. Private companies, both Russian and foreign, have moved quickly to obtain concessions of timber, minerals, and oil and gas at bargain prices. The Russian President's shocking decision in May to dissolve the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Federal Forest Service, transferring their functions to the Ministry of Natural Resources, was the latest alarming demonstration of efforts by the industrial lobby to remove the last obstacles to uncontrolled, predatory exploitation of Russia's forest resources.

Demand in the primary markets of China, Japan, and South Korea now determines the species that are logged, the size of logs, and logging locations. To avoid steep transportation costs, Russian timber companies log heavily in the most accessible areas, which offer easy transportation to the Asian market.

Over the next ten years, demand for Russian timber in

Northeast Asia will increase. By 2025 China could face a deficit of 200 million cubic meters of wood per year, according to a recent study by the Center for International Trade in Forest Products (CINTRAFOR) at the University of Washington. To satisfy that demand, China is looking north to Russia, which already provides 42% of China's total log imports. In 1999 the Harbin International Economic and Technological Cooperation Corporation in northeastern China received permission from the Russian government to send loggers across the border to the

The Russian government, along with international governments and NGOs, must take action now to bring illegal logging and export under control.

Greenpeace action

At the beginning of July, just before the G8 summit in Okinawa, six Greenpeace activists boarded a Russian freighter which had sailed from Primorsky region, in Far Eastern Russia. They chained themselves to its cargo of timber, only leaving the ship after it docked in Toyama, Japan, journalists were allowed on board, and an audience was achieved with Japanese officials. Greenpeace were protesting against the continued international trade in illegal timber. Loggers routinely violate Russian forestry laws by operating without required permits or with forged ones as they cut down oak, ash, Korean pine and spruce trees in ancient forests. At least 20% of the timber exported from Primorsky region is the result of illegal logging.

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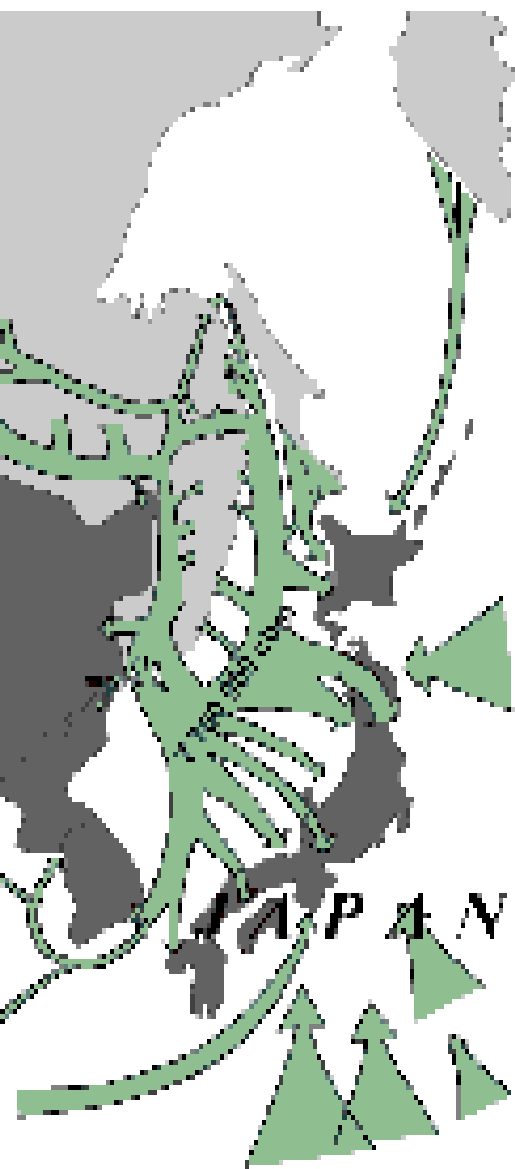


Main timber trade flows

Khabarovsk Region, in order to log 3 million cubic meters of timber. Reportedly all of it will be exported to China.

Despite such active trade, logging villages in the Russian Far East continue to live in poverty, and local people worry about their very survival. Timber industry officials blame the lack of funds on Japanese undervaluation of logs, while local villagers hold 'corrupt' timber traders and the upper management of the timber companies responsible. During the Asian financial crisis, log export operations in the Russian Far East slowed, as logs piled up in ports because there were no buyers in Japan. The crisis highlighted the problems of a 'boom-and-bust' economy based on raw log exports.

Endanger Russian Forests



vs, from the new report

It also led local Russian government officials to renew their calls for investment in timber processing, which would allow the Russians to sell finished wood products and receive more income per volume of wood while ensuring more sustainable revenues.

Meanwhile, illegal logging is flourishing in the Russian Far East, and the lack of regulation is apparent on all levels. Logging practices remain extremely wasteful and destructive, as up to 60 percent of the logged timber is lost during logging and transport. Government control over forest management has diminished due to weak federal legislation, declining budgets, and infighting among numerous federal and regional government agencies. Regulatory

bodies, including the forest service and environmental protection committees, rarely use their authority to control the explosion of small logging firms that have cropped up since 1996. Illegal practices such as logging without a license, logging in protected forest zones, taking protected tree species, and logging outside of concession boundaries are widespread. Further, in order to avoid the high taxes demanded by the Russian tax system, many Russian firms conceal at least some of their profits through clever, complex methods of documentary fraud and bribes.

The Center for International and Strategic Studies estimates that from 25% to 40% of all businesses in Russia are corrupt, and that Russia's shadow economy comprises approximately 40% of the reported Russian GNP. Illegal logging and exports constitute a large part of this shadow economy in the Russian Far East.

To secure hard currency and maintain their infrastructure, local district offices of the Russian Forest Service (leskhozy) have become some of Russia's most active loggers and organizers of illegal logging. Abusing loopholes in rules governing 'salvage' or 'sanitary' logging, Forest Service leskhozy have regularly either themselves cut, or issued licenses for others to cut, commercially valuable ash, Korean pine, and oak forests, despite being the very government bodies responsible for monitoring logging operations and maintaining forest health. And while the Forest Service leskhozy may only log to cover their budgets, their staff do not curtail other logging operations in the forest, which leads to uncontrolled logging.

The Russian government, along with international governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), must take action now to bring illegal logging and export under control. Specifically, it is vital to:

- Crack down on corruption and bribery;
- Ensure full enforcement of existing Russian laws and regulations;
- Prevent abuses in the name of salvage logging;
- Decrease the region's dependence on raw log exports;
- Ensure accurate and transparent data;
- Raise awareness about illegal logging and trade;
- Promote sustainable forestry in the Russian Far East.

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Chita clear cut

The regional forestry authorities of Chita in Siberia have allowed a large area of pristine Siberian forest to be clear-cut to satisfy China's demand for timber. According to the regional Forest Service office in Chita, an area of 490,000 hectares along the Argun river bordering China is being rented to several Russian logging companies, including Kluchi and Epos, which will then allow Chinese companies to manage the logging operations. Most of this area is frontier or untouched forest and about 80 to 85 percent of it will be cleared within five years, according to Eugene Atamankin, deputy director of the Chita Forest Service. Various trade routes have been created along the border near this area to allow the timber across. Most of the logging and hauling is done in winter when the river is frozen over since there are no bridges over the Argun in the area. Local NGOs only recently found out about the proposal. They plan to bring their concerns about the new logging concession before the next advisory board meeting on forest resource issues and try to at least ensure that an environmental impact assessment is done. In addition to the trade to China, timber from this area is shipped to the controversial pulp mill on Lake Baikal, nearly 1000 kilometres away.

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Plundering Russia's Far Eastern Taiga: Illegal Logging, Corruption, and Trade by Anatoly Lebedev (Bureau for Regional Oriental Campaigns, Vladivostok), Josh Newell (Friends of the Earth Japan, Tokyo), and David Gordon (Pacific Environment, in Oakland, California) is on the WWW at: www.foejapan.org/en/index.html.

Welcome to Espionage

Relections on a new strategy for environmental action in Putin's Russia

Anatoly Lebedev, Bureau for Regional Oriental Campaigning, Vladivostok

The Russian Far East (RFE) is the land of the sacred Siberian tiger, wild ginseng and the mighty Korean pine. *Taiga*, the first active group in the RFE, was formed in 1989 in Krasnoarmeiskii District, as a protest group against a nuclear power plant and a huge dam on the Iman river. This group, independently of international efforts, succeeded in thwarting the process of industrial destruction of the middle Sikhote-Alin taiga.

That same year, global environmental NGOs first started coming to the RFE. In 1992, the Greenpeace yacht *Rainbow Warrior* came to Svetlaya on the Sea of Japan to join local protests against illegal clearcuts in the Bikin watershed, the land of the Udege indigenous people. Logging in Krasnoarmeiskii District attracted Greenpeace's attention once more in 1994, when our joint campaign succeeded in getting a ban on logging Korean pine added to logging regulations. Also during the 1990s, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) became one of the key environmental donors of the Tiger Task Force and of educational programs. Some financial support for forest protection also came from US governmental and private funds.

But ironically, the more environmental organizations have appeared in Primorye from outside, and the more money that has been invested in conservation and anti-poaching activities, the poorer and more hopeless the lives of local forest communities have become. Increasingly it has seemed to them that their only source of survival is illegal logging and poaching, even though these will result in destruction of tiger habitat and loss of their traditional indigenous lifestyles. Environmental organizations are currently accused by the new Russian president of being foreign spies, consuming foreign funds specifically to destroy the national economy by setting legal limitations to industrial development. And, for many local people this may seem like the truth.

Significantly, the latest visit of Greenpeace to tiger country this summer was targeted again on Krasnoarmeiskii. This district has become a sort of criminal capital of illegal loggers. However, the local group *Taiga* played only a modest role in the action due to an absence of basic funding. This is a real shame, since continuation of monitoring of illegal logging operations will be deeply dependent on precisely these local activists.

Local NGOs often try to copy the style or ideology of their global colleagues but they rarely succeed in getting equal funding. This is a shame because local activists with the right support can do much more with the same money than international visitors on short visits.

Global NGOs should not come to our regions with their offices, money and teams to try to bring about a quantitative increase of local groups, or simply translate or distribute local information. Local groups need expertise and political support since our enemies usually recognize very few organizations, and pay attention to even fewer. Once pressure on them has been initiated by some campaign or action, the pressure must be kept up, which can be done effectively only by local groups. The best thing is to have a few local groups targeted to key local problems and supported by their global or national ideological 'sisters'.

It's a shame, but no surprise, that many NGOs consider collection

Putin's accusation that NGOs are spies should be considered as a compliment and as recognition of our merits.

and distribution of information to be a final goal of their environmental activities. However, information changes nothing by itself. It is only a tool for direct action. We

have to leave educational duties to governmental and scientific institutions. The boundary between scientific and active ecology needs to be clearer than it is at present.

Even those groups who are trying to do something practical, like anti-poaching actions or legislative initiatives, can make serious mistakes in their targets. Needing to demonstrate results to their donors for their future financial welfare, they tend to focus on the easiest and most perceptible destroyers of the environment and, as a result, they often expose not the real bandits, who are making money from stolen resources, but regular community members who are left unemployed and hungry by failed governmental strategies.

The Russian experience demonstrates that even the most serious achievements of environmental projects, such as the creation of the Tiger Task Force and certification of logging operations, may bring only the shape of success, while the essence of the problem stays alive. The essence lives in the free market's sanctity, protected by the WTO and governments more strongly than even national secrets. No efforts to stop the trade of tiger derivatives will bring real success

while there is a highly profitable market of oriental tiger medicines. No ban on illegal log exports will become effective while influential corporations keep making money from processing the timber.

The information epoch in the environmental movement is over. Global NGOs or donors can find anything out about any region by asking a local NGO or searching the internet. The time of war against the global resource market has come. This is our new agenda.

Since the abolition of the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Federal Forest Service, a new strategy has become essential. Local groups must get ready for a real political war and try to keep alive all the achievements of the past 10 years – protected areas, strong regulations, eco-expertise and environmental impact assessments.

It is now necessary for NGOs to turn to espionage if they have not already done so. Not against national interests, but in favour of them, and against national governments and oligarchs who seem ready to betray and destroy the environment for rapid revenues. Putin's accusation that NGOs are spies should be considered as a compliment and as recognition of our merits. And we can multiply these merits by combining our different actions. The recent action of the *Rainbow Warrior* in the Sea of Japan against illegal logging in Sikhote-Alin should be considered as a continuation of WWF's analysis in 1992 of the same problem in South East Asia. The action of the *Rainbow Warrior* on the South Kuril Islands against drift net fishing by Japanese boats must be continued by the Sakhalin based group *Environmental Watch*, and the whole environmental community needs to think about its appropriate funding. Our actions must become non-stop by fully involving local groups. Only then will we exhaust our enemies.

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The paper chain

“The top priority must be traceability systems.”

Florian Nehm is the Environmental Officer for Axel Springer Verlag (ASV). ASV is a large publishing company based in Germany with its own printing plants and distribution organisations. ASV employs 12,000 people and sales in 1999 exceeded 5.2 billion DM. ASV consumes 500,000 tonnes of paper per year. The company vision is to transform 'from a German print publisher to an international media company'.

Earlier this year, the FSC reduced, from 70% to 30%, the minimum percentage of FSC certified wood fibre required for paper products to carry the FSC label. We interviewed Florian Nehm to find out ASV have reacted to this change, and to get his views on a few other topical issues.



photo:ASV

How has the recent change in the FSCs criteria for certifying paper affected Axel Springer Verlag?

Looking at our supplies as a whole (see table 1), in theory we could now be using the FSC label as we must on average be meeting the new percentages. We get 25% of our forest products from Sweden, for example, which is all FSC certified.

But in practice we're not looking to use the label. It would be too difficult to transfer to our finished products. For example, how do we label a print-run of 2 million newspapers? We use 500,000 tonnes of paper per year. For security, we deliberately use many different, widely distributed sources. We have many different factories. As consumers of wood products it is not practical for us to use the label.

Speaking philosophically it is a weakening of the FSC's position, and it is the first quantifiable way in which the FSC is now weaker than some other certification systems. It is therefore an Achilles heel.

We always buy from the most expensive and best suppliers. These days there are a very few, giant suppliers with many factories. So if a supplier is stubborn about some issue we are not happy about, like environmental standards, it is difficult for us to boycott them.

How would you like to see the FSC develop in the future?

The most important thing is that mutual recognition is essential. I think the NGOs deserve congratulating for getting the FSC started. But NGOs have to realise that industry and business are now being very creative and innovative. It is vital for the FSC to reduce machismo and get rid of the attitude that it matters 'who got there first'.

There has been a lot of progress. There has been tremendous competence building in industry, in tracking of products, for example. There are a lot of innovative co-operations along the paper chain. For example, we ran a three-year project where we sourced wood from a particular set of 8000 family-run Living Forest certified forests in Norway, then ensured we used only those products all the way to production of a report. This was a good way to build competence in chain of custody tracking but it is not the way we would normally work.

Does ASV buy forest products from Russia?

We would like to increase our sources from Russia. Some of our imports from Russia are based on an Environmental Management System certified by Norske Veritas. We're concentrating on Russia, which is undergoing big transformation processes. We are seeking to develop individual guarantees with sources there.

Would you use NGO information like Old-Growth Mapping?

Yes, these are relevant. We sent copies of The Last of the Last to all our paper suppliers and asked them to analyse the maps in their areas, and decide what was right and what was wrong and to explain their strategies to us. Everyone recognises that data scarcity is a big problem. There will now be more communication between suppliers and wood importers. This communication needs to become more systematic but awareness is high and growing.

What's your reaction to 'No Old-Growth' declarations?

Those with the widest mouth have the least to back up what they are saying. Where are their traceability systems? Where are their environmental management systems?

The top priority must be traceability systems. Where there is certification, chain of custody of wood products is usually OK, but in pre-certification areas, traceability systems are needed. Then the next priority needs to be the right criteria and for that we need good negotiation processes between NGOs, who can provide maps for example, scientists with ecological expertise, and industry. For example, in Karelia, NGOs identified hotspots. Originally there were many hotspots then these were negotiated and eventually criteria were agreed for the moratorium. We need competence building in these kind of processes.

Table 1: Origin of ASV's printing paper

| Country of Origin | %total | %certified |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Germany | 30.1 | |
| Sweden | 25.6 | 35%FSC* |
| Finland | 19 | |
| Norway | 10.1 | 25% LF* |
| Eastern Canada | 4.6 | |
| Great Britain | 3.6 | |
| France | 3.1 | |
| Russia | 2.1 | |
| Austria | 1.0 | |
| Switzerland | 0.7 | |
| Italy | 0.1 | |

FSC: Forest Stewardship Council standard

LF: Living Forest: Norwegian standard

*calculations by the concerned party

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Jokkmokk Box

Sarah Lloyd,
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Jokkmokk Box AB is a small Swedish enterprise producing decorative wooden beer crates, wine boxes and other wooden handcrafted box products. The company started up on 1 February 2000. It is currently in its start-up phase: making prototypes, developing their product range, and looking for markets. It presents an interesting case illustrating some challenges facing enterprise development in the boreal forest regions today.

Employment is a big issue in communities like Jokkmokk throughout the boreal region. Despite being a well-forested area, with logging of up to 450,000 cubic metres per year, only 129 people were employed in the wood processing industry in Jokkmokk in 1995, and this is just a third of the number ten years previously. The managing director of Jokkmokk Box, Bertil Røjfors, was formerly employed by the local sawmill, which went bankrupt in the spring of 1999. His goal is to turnover 16-17 million SEK per annum during the first two years of operation and to employ 10-15 people by the end of two years. He currently has 4 full time employees.

Jokkmokk Box is a small user of wood, using up to 1000 cubic metres per year. Currently they are making all their components themselves in Jokkmokk. Buying directly from the large companies operating locally is difficult due to the high prices charged to small buyers. For larger volumes of wood of consistent quality and quantity they may need to buy wood from Denmark and southern Sweden.

Generally the big state and private companies logging in the northern areas of Sweden, including Jokkmokk, truck their timber down to the coast to their own mills as well as ship raw logs to large buyers in Denmark and Southern Sweden. Ironically therefore, a local sawmill in northern Sweden buying partially processed wood and components from Danish or southern Swedish distributors end up buying products made from timber harvested in the north.

Bertil Røjfors feels that FSC certification as currently implemented in Sweden is not acting in his best interest. According to the principles and criteria, the long-term social and economic needs of the local community

must be considered by a company in order for their products to carry the FSC label. If this were the case, the large FSC certified companies operating in the north should sell to small local enterprises at a reasonable price.

There may be more favorable opportunities for a small company to buy timber locally today than two years ago. This is due to the restructuring of the ownership and operation of the Swedish state forest companies. However, Bertil Røjfors believes that it is not wise for a small business to sink resources into owning its own forest land in order to control its own source of raw materials. This is especially so in the north where slow growing cycles make it necessary to have large tracts of land to ensure consistent harvest.

Another option for a small enterprise is to link up with other enterprises locally and

regionally to be able to make larger orders. A hurdle to this is that enterprise owners can be slow to co-operate, but in Jokkmokk this tendency may be changing. Local and regional wood processing enterprises have set up regular meetings to discuss issues in the sector and to socialise. Bertil Røjfors feels that this allows people to get to know each other and perhaps creates willingness to cooperate in business in the future. This is important considering the difficulties of running a small forest or wood processing enterprise and the fact that a business in Jokkmokk must be able to compete with 'low-wage' countries such as the Baltics and Poland. It remains to be seen what success the company and other similar enterprises in the region will achieve.

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First Certification for First Nation

The road to the certification of the Pictou Landing First Nation woodlot has been one of many years of hard work. When the woodlot was first reviewed in the early eighties, it was found to be of little commercial value and in need of considerable forest improvement over a long-term basis. The idea of clearcutting was not considered as it is very short-sighted and would have produced little economic value to the community due to the poor condition of the woodlot. A forest management plan was drawn up which would improve the condition of the forest over the next fifteen years. The result of a lot of hard work and patience is a forest greatly improved in its overall quality.

In 1999, a new updated management plan was to be developed. It was at this time that the Pictou Landing First Nation looked into the idea of certification and discovered that the principles of the Forest Stewardship Council were in keeping with the traditional Native use of the forest and its resources. A new management plan was developed in keeping with the principles and philosophies of the Forest Stewardship Council.

After more hard work, in 2000 we achieved certification of the woodlot through the Forest Stewardship Council. This woodlot is only the fifth in Canada to be certified, the first in the province of Nova Scotia and the first Native woodlot to be certified in Canada. This achievement brings great pride to the people of Pictou Landing and ensures that there will be 'Forests for the Children'.

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map:Ola Larsson

Peoples of the Plateau

Renewing Traditional Values

Chief Arthur Manuel, Interior Alliance

It is sometimes difficult to explain to others what our lands and forests mean to us. We are the peoples of the plateau, the Southern Carrier, St'at'imc, Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux and Okanagan Peoples of British Columbia (BC), Canada. Our ancestors moved into this region as the tundra and glacial bogs dried out and the forests inched back from the south and grew into rich and complex forest ecosystems. Our lands are vast, extending to around 350,000 square kilometres.

Traditional Use

Our forests have provided more than 300 generations not only with building materials and firewood, but also with a wondrous diversity of food and medicinal plants and habitat for numerous animal species. The whole forest ecosystem is central to our lives. The forests were once rich in wildlife: deer, moose, bear, beaver, marmot, hare and birds. They provided an open market for nutritious food plants, like Indian celery, sunflowers, cow-parasit, wild onions, a great variety of berries and dozens of other delicacies that we stored for year-round use. They nurture a natural pharmacy of medicinal plants which our people still gather. But the value of the forest for ourselves and for our ancestors cannot be summed up solely by listing the tangibles it yields. Throughout our territories there are hundreds of sacred sites, often marked by ancient rock paintings, where people still go to keep in touch with our old values.

The lands are an essential part of how we see ourselves. None of the peoples of the plateau have ever ceded an inch of their territory to outsiders, even though successive Canadian governments have followed a policy of extinguishment, trying to purchase our lands and terminate our Aboriginal title and Aboriginal rights. We see our ancient connection to our lands as part of our basic human rights. This has been recognized in the court of world opinion, with the UN criticizing Canada for its extinguishment policy, and by the Supreme Court of Canada, which in December 1997 finally affirmed our title to our lands in the historical Delgamuukw Decision (see TN30). The court recognised our Aboriginal title and our role as caretakers of the land and urged the Canadian government to open up nation-to-nation negotiations with our peoples in the spirit of reconciliation, something the Canadian government has so far refused to do.

Arrival of the logging companies

While the Okanagan, Nlaka'pamux, Secwepemc, St'at'imc and Southern Carrier have never signed treaties with outsiders, our relations with others have always been based on sharing. However, European settlers took over our land without respecting our inherent rights to the land and resources and without sharing our obligation to protect nature.

By the end of the 19th century, the first small-scale logging operations were underway, with several small sawmills supplying local demand using logs floated down the rivers. As demand grew, mills became larger and demanded more supply from the montane forests. The Federal Government sold large tracks of our land to loggers at very low prices and with minimal regulatory interference. Industrial loggers could run their operations as they saw fit, and they could, and did, stop trespassers from entering their timber concessions whether they were in use or not. Thus our peoples were prohibited



from using forested lands that were once an integral part of our social, spiritual and economic culture. This practice has continued into the new millennium, with the BC government barring our peoples from the forests to cut wood for houses for our elders, while it distributes clear cutting licenses to national and multinational forestry companies.

The pace of destruction has continued throughout the century and has increased dramatically over the past two decades. This is compounded by the fact that today, most of the forestry operations in BC are clear cuts. Throughout our territories, clear cutting has already resulted in serious damage to wildlife habitat, soil, water and overall ecosystem functioning. It has been especially devastating during the last decade as industrial loggers have been moving up the mountain slopes.

Independent forestry experts have studied the effect of logging operations on our territories. They have found that these exceedingly slow growing high-elevation forests, with their very dry and cold climate and sensitive, unstable soils, are at threshold levels above which serious environmental damage could occur, including the drying up of wet lands and loss of aquifers and irrigation. We have witnessed clear cuts remaining brown and barren a dozen years or more after replanting, in what appears to be a permanent destruction of the forest. These high-elevation clear cuts and the scarred land are destroying our upper watersheds, which are vital to sustain the balance of forest health, productivity and biodiversity in the valleys below.

It has become clear not only to us, but also to outside environmentalists and to many in the forestry industry, that our living forests are being irrevocably destroyed. Even the BC government, which is responsible for distributing logging licenses, admits that the annual logging rate is 30% higher than the sustainable level. If this assault is not stopped, our children's generation will be the last to experience the natural forests of our ancestral lands.

Our Alternative

The peoples of the plateau understand that what is needed to save our forests is a new approach based on the old values of respecting nature and its gifts. Today, we are working with partners to develop an Aboriginal Forestry Code for our lands based on a sustainable model and we are creating an ecosystem-based plan (see next article) for the management of our forests. We will be calling on all forestry companies to respect this plan and we will call on the world to boycott the consumer products of those companies that insist on using destructive logging practices on our ancestral lands.

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Ecosystem-based forest planning

Herb Hammond, Silva Forest Foundation

Ecosystem-based forest planning is an approach to human use of the forest that places protection of the forest ecosystem ahead of using the forest for human purposes. Ecosystem-based forest planning recognizes that human economies are subsets of human cultures, which are subsets of ecosystems. Therefore, if we protect the ecosystem, the forest, we protect our cultures and, in turn, our economies.

The practise of ecosystem-based forest planning is based on two central principles:

Ecological responsibility. All human activities must be carried out in ways that protect, maintain, and (where necessary) restore fully functioning forests (including land, water, plants, and animals) at all scales, from the microscopic to the global, in both the short and long terms.

Balanced use. Within the context of ecological responsibility, all forest users, human and non-human, are entitled to fair, legally protected land bases that are well distributed through the forest, sufficient to meet their needs, and adequate to carry out their functions in the ecosystem.

The problem with 'sustainable timber management' is that it ignores one critical reality. *We cannot sustain the forest, the forest sustains us.* Ecosystem-based planners do not assume that timber cutting is an appropriate forest use, even where trees with commercial value are plentiful in a particular landscape. Before any human uses are planned, ecosystem-based planners first assess the characteristics of the ecosystem (how the forest functions), its condition (how human use has impacted forest functioning), and its ecological limits to various types of disturbance. This assessment is then combined with other ecosystem, cultural, and economic factors to determine which human uses, if any, are appropriate, sustainable, and compatible.

By recognising the forest, including humans, as a whole system, ecosystem-based forest planning provides an alternative approach to

conventional industrial-scale forestry.

Ecosystem-based forest planning focuses on managing human activities to serve the long-term interests of fully functioning forest ecosystems, rather than managing forests to serve short-term human interests.

The principles of ecosystem-based forest planning apply to all human uses of the forest: cultural and spiritual uses, tourism, recreation, non-timber forest products, education, ecologically responsible fishing, hunting, trapping and timber management. Stable, diverse, and sustainable human communities are the products of ecosystem-based forest planning, because ecosystem-based planning encourages conserver societies and economies as opposed to consumer societies and economies. Conserver economies include meaningful work, labour-intensive activities, and value-added products (both timber and non-timber products) manufactured in close proximity to their forest source. Local communities participate fully during the process of ecosystem-based forest planning.

Ecosystem-based forest plans focus on maintaining the functioning of the boreal landscape by establishing two major types of protected areas: *large protected reserves*, and *protected landscape networks*.

Large protected reserves constitute entire drainage basins or watersheds. Because large protected reserves are storehouses of biological diversity needed to maintain forest ecosystems, scientists suggest that these reserves must be 50 to 200 times the size of the largest anticipated natural disturbance. The large scale of fire disturbances in the boreal landscape means that large protected reserves may need to be hundreds of thousands of hectares in order to ensure that they can withstand a large natural disturbance while maintaining their resiliency to protect their long-term functioning.

In order to maintain healthy landscapes, large protected reserves cannot exist as islands, regardless of their size. They must be connected across the landscape. Connectors include *riparian ecosystems* and *cross-valley corridors*.

Riparian ecosystems include riparian zones (the wet forest area along rivers, lakes, wetlands and other freshwater bodies) and the upland forest immediately adjacent to riparian zones. These concentrate water, nutrients, and energy that drain into them, and regulate their dispersal back into the landscape. They are also travel corridors for animals and plants.

Cross-valley corridors are 300 to 5,000 metre wide bands of forest that provide valley-to-valley connections between large protected reserves. Cross-valley corridors are made up of representative ecosystems found in the landscape, particularly those that support the movement or migration of large mammals.

Between large protected reserves, ecologically responsible human modifications may occur. However, it is still necessary to maintain the landscape functions and integrity. This is achieved through *protected landscape networks*. Note that, even at smaller scales, landscape protection and connection must be maintained through corridors, riparian zones, and small protected areas such as old growth nodes and ecologically sensitive zones.

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For a longer, illustrated version of this article see:
www.snf.se/TRN/TaigaNews

Principles of Ecosystem-Based Forest Planning

In addition to the two central principles of ecological responsibility and balanced use, ecosystem-based forest planning is guided by ten principles, derived from both wisdom and science.

1. Focus on what to leave, not on what to take.
2. Apply the precautionary principle to all plans and activities.
3. Design forest plans on temporal scales of 500 years and beyond and on spatial scales that embrace as large a landscape as is practical.
4. Respect the ecological limits of the various ecosystems to human disturbance.
5. Protect, maintain, and, where necessary, restore natural biological diversity.
6. Protect, maintain, and, where necessary, restore natural composition, structures, and functions at the landscape and stand levels.
7. Protect, maintain, and, where necessary, restore forest ecosystem connectivity.
8. Diversify activities to encourage ecological, social, and economic well-being and stability.
9. Respect traditional and current indigenous culture.
10. Constantly review and evaluate all forest use activities.

C-Commerce: the Shady World of Carbon Laundering

Larry Lohmann, Cornerhouse

How much would you pay to be allowed to go on using fossil fuels, yet be reassured that by doing so you were not increasing the dangers of global warming?

This is the question being asked by a new breed of entrepreneurs who are telling worried western corporations and consumers that the need for a liveable climate does not, after all, require that they retool their inefficient power plants or give up their off-road vehicles and Concorde flights. Like advertisers for fat-free yoghurt, their message to heavy users of oil and coal is: 'Go ahead. You can indulge.'

The key is forestry. As everyone knows, plants convert carbon dioxide created by the burning of fossil fuels back into carbon through photosynthesis. Plant enough trees, the reasoning goes, and you can wipe away any sin of combustion.

Consider the following 'carbon equations' from a recent promotional video by Future Forests, a British tree-planting firm:

7 trees = 5 London-New York airline flights for one person

5 trees = 1 year's driving of an ordinary car

2 trees = 4 pots of tea per day for 6 years

These calculations are part of Future Forests' invitation to you or your company to become 'carbon-neutral'. It doesn't matter how much fossil fuel you use. Simply write out a cheque and the carbon professionals will punch numbers into their computers to calculate your carbon-dioxide emissions, plant the requisite number of trees to compensate, and watch over them for you.

Welcome to the world of 'negative CO2' and 'carbon offsets'. You've heard of e-commerce; here comes C-commerce.

In theory, an entire country's carbon-dioxide emissions could be absorbed, at least temporarily, by planting trees. One visionary has already calculated that compensating for the UK's emissions would be nothing more than a matter of finding an area 50% larger than the UK somewhere in the world and covering it with trees. Merely by hogging a disproportionate amount of the world's land, in other words, the UK could 'fix' the problems engendered by its hogging a disproportionate amount of the atmosphere as a CO2 dump.

This is the sort of idea that some industrialised nation governments find irresistible. In 1997, the US made it a condition of agreeing to some minor cuts in its greenhouse gas emissions that the way be left open to substitute trees for some of the reductions. A specialist advisory panel of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), peopled partly by C-business executives, has now reassured climate negotiators that carbon-absorbing forestry projects are technically feasible*. Anticipating a bonanza, plantation consultants are fanning out across the world looking for 'degraded lands' to plant trees on to soak up carbon dioxide.

Unfortunately there's a catch: the theory behind C-commerce is scientifically fraudulent.

Take a close look at the 'carbon equations' which underpin the concept. Suppose a swidden farmer emits to the atmosphere 1 tonne of carbon per year in the form of carbon dioxide, largely from agricultural activities. Suppose this farmer also, through tree-planting and the preservation of fallow cycles, ensures that the vegetation for which she is steward absorbs 1 tonne of carbon per year from the atmosphere. She is, in the approved jargon, 'carbon-neutral':

1 t C/y emitted through agriculture -

1 t C/y absorbed through agriculture and forestry = 0

Now take a giant corporation which emits to the atmosphere 1 million tonnes of carbon per year in the form of CO2 from fossil fuel combustion. Suppose this corporation, through intensive tree-planting on hundreds of thousands of hectares of cheap land far from its factories, claims to be absorbing 1 million tonnes of carbon per year. In the theory of C-commerce, this corporation is also 'carbon-neutral':

1,000,000 t C/y emitted through fossil fuel combustion -
1,000,000 t C/y absorbed through industrial plantation forestry = 0

As the sums in both equations are zero these two systems are, the theory tells us, climatically equivalent. But no one who has any feeling for biology, geology or social dynamics can possibly believe this. The corporation unearths coal and oil that would otherwise remain unexposed to the atmosphere and feeds it through industrial processes with multiple impacts. The company's gigantic plantations, meanwhile, are almost certainly established on land which was previously used by local people in other ways. The resulting displacement of the residents onto new lands has incalculable effects all of which bear on CO2 emissions and thus on climate change: clearance of forests, changes in agricultural techniques, shifts in consumption, loss of conservation knowledge, even political resentment. Plantations also alter soil regimes and increase the risks of large-scale fires. Meanwhile, the establishment of these plantations may also discourage investors from investing immediately in new energy-saving technologies. All this will have further unpredictable effects on climate.

Such complex, large-scale, and uncertain effects are impossible to compare quantitatively with those of the swidden farmer's activities on a single hectare. Structurally unable to recognize these differences, global C-commerce, as currently conceived, cannot but fail in the end.

But so what if C-commerce is an unconstructive approach to climate change? Will that fact keep it in check, given the huge sums of carbon money already sloshing around?

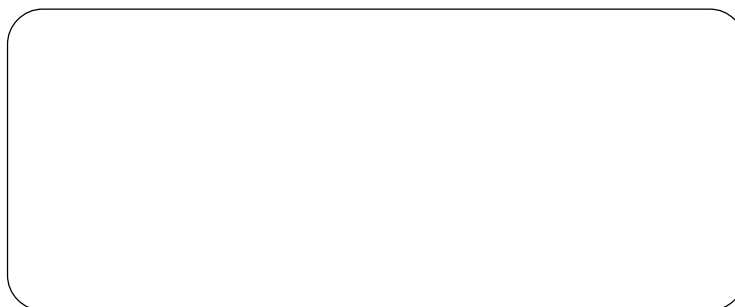
A lot depends on how well-intentioned NGOs respond to invitations to take part in seemingly-beneficial carbon forestry projects, such as those aimed at supporting existing grassroots conservation efforts.

'Help us to make our projects succeed,' carbon professionals will beg NGOs. 'You understand local areas. You can help mitigate social effects. You can help make real forest conservation, participation and sustainable development part of the enterprise. Help us to achieve our goals and perhaps you can achieve yours as well.' The subtext hardly needs to be spelled out: forget the fraud, feel the cash.

A first response by democratic-minded NGOs must be to remind themselves that all carbon forestry projects, even those engineered to have some local benefits, will also have effects on other communities over a very far-flung area. All 'offset' projects are designed to license faraway factories or vehicles to continue to use a disproportionate amount of the atmosphere as a CO2 dump, and to license the operations of the coal mines or oil wells needed to feed them. Yet these factories and oil wells are all situated in their own 'affected communities'. NGOs should consult each of these communities, and not just those in the neighbourhood of the 'offset' forestry project itself, before deciding whether to take the carbon dollar.

Because global C-commerce, as currently envisaged, will inevitably contribute to climatic instability, NGOs should also hold off banking any carbon cheques until they consult with a few of the people who will be most affected by the coming storms, droughts, and floods. 96 per cent of deaths from natural disasters happen in the South, in precisely those underprivileged communities whose livelihoods and environments have been a traditional NGO concern. Will NGOs be able to put a credible face on accepting carbon money for a local forest project if it contributes to such destruction elsewhere? * See www.wrm.org.uy/english/bulletin/bull35.htm#sinks for documentation on conflicts of interest among the authors of the IPCC Special Report. See also the Mount Tamalpais Declaration at www.wrm.org.uy/english/declarations/Tamalpais.htm and sign on if you can.

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Next issue

The focus of the autumn issue of Taiga News (number 33) will be on forest technologies and the impacts of new technology on forests in the boreal region. The deadline for contributions is 30th September 2000. The issue will be produced in October 2000.