

# Tackling the timber trade



Following free-trade agreements made between Russia and China, trains loaded with logs arrive around the clock at dozens of checkpoints along the 4,200-kilometre border. The image has become the dominant symbol of trade between the two countries.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and in response to the country's economic crisis, the Russian government approved large-scale natural resource extraction across previously untouched areas of the ecologically rich Russian Far East and Siberia.

In response to such ecological degradation, an exceptionally vocal and diverse environmental movement has emerged in the region. Pacific Environment, with two decades of experience in the Russian Far East and Siberia, has been working to strengthen this movement.

## Pacific Environment: saving endangered forests on the Pacific Rim

In 1997, Pacific Environment worked with students from Russia's Pedagogical Institute in Komsomolsk-na-Amure and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance in Bellingham Washington to monitor the impacts of Global Forestry Management Group's logging operations in the Khabarovsk Region. Pacific Environment

believes that these student monitoring efforts can become a model for citizens' monitoring in the Northeast Asia.

In 2000, Pacific Environment and the Bureau for Regional Oriental Campaigns (BROC) and Friends of the Earth Japan, released the *Plundering Russia's Far Eastern Taiga* report. To raise awareness among Chinese citizens, the report was translated into Chinese, and received wide publicity in Chinese media. This was the first time that many Chinese learned the scale and details of China's role in the deforestation of the Russian Far East.

While focusing on local capacity building, Pacific Environment maintains a global vision. The organization monitors many treaties and international agreements that overwhelmingly favour the interests of large timber companies over local communities and the environment. For example, to counter such accords, in 2001, Pacific Environment worked with Japanese activists to push for policy changes within the Japanese government.

*Timber trade between Russia and China.*

Photo: Wen Bo

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## Editorial

This issue brings you news from Asia and the Russian Far East. As most readers know the exponential increase of demand for wood and paper products in China is putting increasing pressure on the boreal forest of the Russian Far East. Large areas of forest are being leased by the Russian government to Chinese companies, who often bring their workers with them, leaving the local community with almost no benefit. Lack of enforcement of forest law and corrupt governance, mean there are insufficient checks on timber logging and export.

Wen Bo of Pacific Environment in Beijing tells us about the work of Chinese NGOs to inform consumers of the unsustainable sources of their hardwood floors and computer paper. Kenichi Nakazawa from Friends of the Earth Japan writes about a Japanese system of 'santoku' between small producers and home builders that might become a business model for forest trade with Far East villages.

Anatoly Lebedev of BROCC gives us an overview of the East Siberia – Pacific Ocean and Sakhalin oil pipeline projects that have caused much controversy in Russia during 2006, and have been the subject of huge protests by environmentalists and local communities. Zhanna Dolgan from Kamchatka and TRN intern Stephan Nielsen provide a more optimistic look at small-scale ecotourism in the region.

We also have an introduction to TRN's new Russian Development Coordinator, Katy Harris, and a brief summary of the 8th Biennial TRN Conference in Cambridge, U.K. Our next issue scheduled for February 2007 will look at climate change — both its effects on the boreal, and the growing realization of the importance of the taiga as a carbon sink.

Leslie Cole, Editor

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## Europe

### Finland accused of buying illegal Russian logs

Greenpeace has accused Finnish companies of buying illegally logged timber from Russian suppliers releasing photos and videos of lorries carrying logs across the border from Karelia to processing UPM and Stora Enso plants in Finland. The suppliers did not have licenses to cut timber. UPM denied the charges saying they track their timber supplies. The Finnish government said its existing self-regulation system was working. Environmentalists are trying to embarrass the Finnish government which currently holds the EU presidency.

**Contact:**  
russianforestnews.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=222

### Europeans like soft tissue

Only one of the five major European tissue producers received a "green" mark in the WWF scoring on recycled content and sourcing of wood fibre in 2006. SCA was the only company surveyed that could ensure that wood fibres used in tissue production did not come from badly managed forests. SCA produces Danke, Edet, Zewa, Cosy and Velvet brands of toilet paper. Metsa was the only company that increased its recycled content in tissues. All companies improved their scores in sourcing and recycled content but only SCA scored more than 60% in both. Detailed scoring is available at the web site.

**Contact:**  
www.panda.org/forests/tissue

## Global

### Ecosystem collapse by 2050

A new report by WWF says world consumption patterns are causing such rapid degradation of natural species that the world may see the global ecosystem collapse by 2050. The biannual *Living Planet Report* which measures our ecological footprint says Finland, the United States, Canada and the United Arab Emirates consume the most resources per capita. It also reports a loss of 30% of terrestrial species since 1970. If consumption patterns continue to rise at this rate, it warns we will need two planets to meet our global demands by 2050.

**Contact:**  
www.wwf.org.uk

### NGO FLEG meeting

The NGO Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade (FLEG T) Meeting is being held December 8th and 9th in Munich. The NGO FLEG(T) meeting has been organized by Pro REGENWALD to give an update on the focus of NGO-work and recent projects concerning FLEG(T) processes. It will also offer an opportunity to discuss joint priorities and political opportunities and develop a joint work plan for 2007.

**Contact:**  
www.wald.org/meeting

### FLEG case studies published

A new book about Forest Legislation Enforcement and Governance shows that smaller and poorer communities have suffered from new regulations requiring sustainable logging practices. *Justice in the Forest: Rural livelihoods and forest law enforcement* by Marcus Colchester presents case studies from Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cameroon, Indonesia, and Canada which show new administrative requirements are too onerous for small operators and make their way of life illegal. Colchester recommends efforts to help the poor should focus on strengthening their ability to speak for themselves and forest regulators should be more sensitive to their potentially negative effects on people.

**Contact:**  
www.cifor.cgiar.org

### New Forest Code accepted by Russian Duma

The Russian State Duma has accepted the new Forest Code after a third and final reading on November 8. To come into force, the code now needs to be voted on by the Federation Council and then signed by the president. The code is expected to come into force January 1, 2007.

According to WWF Russia, the new Forest Code is unacceptable since it does not take into account the interests of civil society, business and the environment. At a press conference in Moscow on September 5, WWF called on Russian citizens to participate in a national campaign against adoption of the current version of the code. A letter (in Russian) from WWF to the Russian government, the State Duma and President Vladimir Putin can be found at [www.wwf.ru](http://www.wwf.ru).

**Contact:**  
russianforestnews.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=275&sid=f7513d14e1f2a1954de8e82461efbde

### Russian-U.S. joint forestry

U.S.-based company International Paper (IP) announced a billion-dollar deal to buy half of the Russian timber company Ilim in October. Ilim Pulp operates four pulp and paper mills and is one of the world's 10 largest forestry companies. News of the joint venture came as President Vladimir Putin said the government would hike export duties on timber logs by 2009 and cut tariffs on imports of wood-processing equipment to stimulate the domestic industry. Ilim Paper, the largest forest industry corporation in Russia, has been working towards FSC certification. It is unclear whether this will continue because International Paper favours the North American Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

**Contact:**  
www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/25/AR2006102500312.html

## North America

### Alberta tar sands lose aboriginal support

Aboriginal support for Alberta's oil sands boom is crumbling, as concerns mount that escalating water needs will imperil the Athabasca River and aboriginal fisheries. The Athabasca Chipewyan, who live 200 kilometres downstream from the oil sands, announced in September they were withdrawing from the Cumulative Environmental Management Association, a body of industry, government, and aboriginal groups established to develop strategies for sustainable development of Alberta's bitumen resources. According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, one oil company's dam, which holds back nearly three decades of waste water from tar sands extraction, is the second-largest on earth after the Three Gorges Dam in China.

**Contact:**  
www.manitobawildlands.org/news\_item.asp?number=658

### Greenpeace protests U.S. paper giant

Greenpeace activists protested outside Kimberly Clark's U.S. largest paper production factory in October to publicize their recent report *Chain of Lies*. The Greenpeace report revealed Kimberly Clark's use of ancient boreal forests to make toilet paper and paper towels and called for increased recycled content in its paper products. CNN's internet business magazine published an article about

Greenpeace's claims against Kimberly-Clark and noted 80% of Americans would buy recycled paper to save ancient forests and would be willing to pay more to do so.

**Contact:**  
www.kleercut.net

### Climate change and pine beetles

Scientists fear global warming is responsible for the widespread death of pine forests in British Columbia and the Canadian Rockies over the past 5 years. An estimated 8.7 million hectares of B.C.'s interior forest has been infected by pine beetle since 2000 with huge sections of the mountain area's forests dying in the past year. Huge sections of B.C. forest died over the summer this year and a recent infestation in northern Alberta has alarmed scientists and foresters who were surprised to find the beetles swarming into boreal pine forests near Grande Prairie, Alberta. In one year the area affected increased from 19,000 to 150,000 hectares. Warmer winters are suspected to have made trees more susceptible to the pest.

**Contact:**  
www.globeandmail.com

### New national park

The Canadian government has signed a memorandum of understanding with a northern indigenous group to create a huge new national park in Canada's Northwest Territories. The October agreement with the Lutsel Ke First Nation on eastern shore of Great Slave Lake (formerly Snowdrift) would see an area covering 33,525 square kilometers included in the park. The Dene who live in the area want to preserve the ecological and cultural value of this area which is in the transition zone between taiga and tundra.

**Contact:**  
www.borealcanada.ca or www.cpaws.org

### New Film: *Selling Forests from the Roots*

Irkutsk Regional Non-Governmental Organisation 'Baikal Environmental Wave' has recently produced a new documentary film investigating the problem of illegal logging in Siberia, with financial support of the Pacific Environmental Resource Centre (PERC). Illegal logging in Russia not only causes economic damage, it also has huge negative effects on the environment. The hero of the film is truck driver Vasiliy Morozov, who has been hauling timber for many years. The film follows the entire supply chain – from the forest to a processing plant in China – through private businesses and corrupt governmental structures. The film is available on DVD in Russian with English subtitles.

**Contact:**  
Vera Pakhomova at Baikal Environmental Wave: [library@baikalwave.eu.org](mailto:library@baikalwave.eu.org)

### \$93 billion from Canada's boreal

A Canadian economist has estimated the value of pollution control and tourism from Canada's boreal forests at CA \$93 billion per year. Speaking to the National Forest Congress outside Ottawa in late September Mark Anielski said the environmental work of boreal forests includes \$1.8 billion of carbon capture and \$77 billion of water filtration and erosion control. Tourism in the boreal wilderness generates billions more. Anielski urged government policy makers to consider the economic value of intact boreal forests in the country's GDP and plan for sustainable development of forests.

**Contact:**  
www.pembina.org/efr/doc.php?id=204

### Canadian mills close after U.S. softwood deal

A softwood-lumber agreement between Canada and the U.S., extolled by a new pro-U.S. Canadian government as a better deal than the former agreement based on duties, was implemented in early October. Eleven Canadian mills that employed 30,000 people closed before the end of the month, and critics blame the new deal. Under the new agreement the Canadian government imposes taxes on Canadian timber exports to the U.S. if prices in the U.S. fall below \$315 per 1000 board feet. Import taxes climbed to 15 percent in mid-October as American lumber prices fell. Mills that had suffered through more than a year of high American tariffs could not continue to operate.

**Contact:**  
www.csmonitor.com/2006/1018/p07s02-woam.html OR

# Japan's Hunger for Russian Timber

For most ordinary Japanese people, the image of Siberia is of unending taiga and timber resources that are almost infinite. Japan imports a huge amount of Russian timber, more than five million cubic metres of raw logs and more than one million cubic metres of sawn wood annually. It makes up one tenth of Japan's total timber demand and is the largest raw log supplier for Japan. Although this may be an economic boon for some Russians, we have to consider the effects on Russian forests and local communities.

In Siberia and the Russian Far East, many forests have already been developed and damaged by logging and forest fires. People in rural villages struggle

with poverty. Many people lost jobs in the 1990s after the Soviet era ended and the Russian Far East in particular has had very little economic growth. In addition to this, the Russian government has changed forest governance and forest legislation frequently and forest budgets have been cut with the subsequent loss of jobs for many foresters. This creates chaotic conditions in the forests in Siberia and the Russian

Far East. Thousands of timber companies have been established, corruption prevails among officials and timber businesses,

*Timber is mostly exported to China and Japan as raw logs, without creating any profit in the local economy.*

and logging operations have become almost uncontrolled.

Timber is mostly exported to China and Japan as raw logs, without creating any profit in the local economy. We have to improve the situation so that local communities can get a fair profit from timber businesses and forests can be managed sustainably.

In Japan, timber from Siberia and the Russian Far East is used mainly for building houses. Larch, pine, spruce and fir logs are directly exported to Japan by large trading companies and processed in plywood mills and sawmills in Japan. In the case of hardwoods, such as oak, ash and birch, many of these logs are exported to China by Chinese brokers and processed into flooring, doors and furniture by low-cost labourers, and then re-exported to Japan. (China became the largest wood products supplier to Japan (by value) in 2005). These hardwood products are very popular in Japan but it is highly likely they are made from illegal timber from Siberia and the RFE and Japanese buyers seldom check the original source. Even if buyers want to verify the source of timber, supply chains are too long and convoluted to make this process possible.

In Japan, there is a system called *santyoku* which directly connects Japanese timber producers in villages and Japanese house builders in cities. They make long-term contracts and builders give annual plans with an estimated order volume, price and schedule. If a builder or a group of builders has an appropriate size of



This house being constructed in Tokyo uses wood from Russia, Canada and the United States.

Photo: Kenichi Nakazawa

*In Japan, there is a system called *santyoku* which directly connects Japanese timber producers in villages and Japanese house builders in cities.*

demand, their timber producer can make appropriate size of harvest or production plan. The producer does not need to harvest too much, and can concentrate on producing good quality products with a pre-determined volume and schedule. This can also be of benefit for the builder. Although most of the Japanese forestry industry totally collapsed after the 1960s, suppliers which succeed in *santyoku* direct trade are still vigorous and continue to follow good forest management practices.

Friends of the Earth Japan (FoE) is currently promoting *santyoku* direct trade through a campaign to house builders. It promotes the use of locally produced timber and it can eliminate illegal timber. This also supports local economies and good local forest management.

But there is a problem. Timber species are limited to cedar and cypress in many

cases since they are the major planted trees in Japan. Home builders usually also want to use hardwood. Domestic production of hardwood is very small and most final hardwood products are imported from overseas sources such as China.

FoE Japan wants to promote the *santyoku* direct trade system between Russian Far East hardwood producers and Japanese house builders as an alternative. This could return fair profits to local producers and help them avoid illegal logging. It would also allow them to conduct good forest management. We would like to collaborate with our Russian friends to try this approach.

**Kenichi Nakazawa** works with the Forest Program of Friends of the Earth Japan in Tokyo.  
Contact: [www.foejapan.org/en](http://www.foejapan.org/en)



Photo: Katy Harris

## TRN's new Russian Development Coordinator



My name is Katy Harris. I live in the UK, in Aberystwyth, Wales. I studied Russian and German at Manchester University and after graduating in 1999 worked as a volunteer for the NGO Baikal

Environmental Wave in Irkutsk. Since then I've been involved in environmental work in the UK and in Russia, have helped establish volunteer exchanges between Russia and the UK through the 'European Voluntary Service' programme and worked as a trainer on a programme called 'leading sustainable development' on Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East. Most recently I have been working for the Centre for Alternative Technology eco-centre in Wales. I am looking forward to the opportunity to use my Russian again, and hope that my fundraising and partnership experience can assist TRN in supporting work of partner organisations in Russia.

TRN hopes the new Russian Development Coordinator will offer a strong liaison for the network's activities in Russia. We hope to devise a new strategy for capacity building and coordination of activities in Russia. I invite all interested



Photos: Katy Harris

organisations to get in touch with ideas and questions. For organisations in Russia – the program will be what you make it: let me know what you would like from TRN! For organisations in other parts of the world – we need organisations that want to support and work with our partner organisations in Russia. If you think you have relevant ideas or knowledge and would be interested in working on joint projects, please get in touch!

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# Ecotourism: conservation or exploitation?



Koryak and Itelman village, Kamchatka  
Photo: Kaisa Raitio

When Russia entered the reforms of perestroika in the 1990s, tourist organizations, previously propped up by state support, went out of business and many tourist centres were privatized. The reforms also lifted many restrictions on traveling abroad, and Russians who could afford to travel signed up for cheap tours to Turkey or Egypt. The result of these changes was a depletion of domestic tourism services in Russia.

This development coincided with an increase in ecotourism activities in the Russian Far East (RFE) after growing interest in the region from the global environmental movement and greater international demand for adventure tourism. Ecotourists were attracted to the RFE by the Siberian tiger, rare plants, wild salmon rivers, vast intact forests and a unique marine environment. The Seattle-based tourism operator REI Adventures played a significant role in providing low-cost ecotourism services to the area at that time.

Ecotourism brought a means of conservation and subsistence to a region that was heavily dependent on resource extraction. Local communities

Right: Rafters in Kamchatka's wilderness.  
Photo: Zhanna Dolgan



set up unsustainable ecotourism activities in restricted zones, jeopardizing some of Russia's most valuable natural areas like the Geizer's Valley in Kamchatka and the Marine Preserve in Primorye. Tourist pressure and industrial interests in these regions have led to a series of lengthy court cases, public discussions and environmental protests from Lake Baikal to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Even the conservation status of UNESCO World Heritage Site, awarded to the Baikal watershed, Bystrinsky Park and Central Sikhote Alin, may not guarantee their future conservation.

There is also more generic opposition to ecotourism. Some feel that any development of ecotourism puts the Zapovedniks' natural value in jeopardy. Dr. Olin B. Rhodes, Jr., an assistant professor of wildlife ecology at Purdue University, has argued that the introduction of tourism would ultimately lead to the Zapovedniks' demise. Furthermore, some argue that Zapovedniks are state-owned territories and should be funded by the state budget, and not be dependent on any alternative sources of revenue.

The positive and negative effects of tourism is a controversial issue. One group that seems to be benefiting from it is an indigenous community in the Bystrinsky natural park of Kamchatka (see page 7). Kamchatka is a veritable ecotourist's paradise and boasts some of the world's most unusual scenery. It hosts wild coastlines, thermal springs and

geysers, spectacular mountain lakes and some of the most active volcanic zones on the planet. The Bystrinsky natural park is home to the native Eveny people and is presently gaining popularity as a destination for cultural tourism. One problem that has arisen has derived

from the large gold deposits within the borders of the park, which have led to mining companies and some Eveny disputing the park's boundaries. The development of ecotourism in the region may provide locals with a more dignified and sustainable form of income.

**Stephan Nielsen** is currently doing an internship for the Taiga Rescue Network. **Anatoly Lebedev** is an activist with the TRN partner organisation BROK in Vladivostok.

## Ecotourism on Kamchatka

On Kamchatka, a relatively undeveloped infrastructure has not impeded the growth of ecotourism. Zhanna Dolgan, an organizer of nature and cultural excursions in Pionerskiy village in Elizovo region, investigates and reports on this new phenomenon.

In the Bystrinskiy region of northwestern Kamchatka there is an indigenous group, the Eveny people, who for the last three years have been organising ethno-cultural tourism in their community. Originally reindeer herders and people who revere the larch-tree they have always had an intimate connection with the taiga and tundra. Nikolai Indanov, the chief and elder of the Manadak community agreed to give an interview.

### What activities do you have in your community?

The aim of our community is keeping our traditions and sharing the culture of our people through ethno-cultural tourism. From the beginning the idea was to have educational activities – to teach our children the Eveny culture and traditions. And only after we started that did we realize that the education must be supported by something sustainable. That is when we decided to develop the tourist activities.

We got three grants of 90,000 rubles (about 2650 €) and started to develop. We got the equipment, horses and salaries for five paid teachers. Today we have seven horses and two reindeer (in the spring we will have seven head of reindeer).

### And what about summer season this year – was it a good one?

The season was normal. We had French, German and Japanese tourists visiting us. They lived with us in our traditional way and made some trips to Sleeping Beauty Mountain and Lake. They were taught some handicrafts – birch bark carving and skin tanning — and all the things they made they were able to take with them as souvenirs.



Illustration: Gun Hofgaard

### Do the youth in your community participate in the activities?

They do! And, as always, we organized a camp for students. This year we accepted 38 young people from Kamchatka Pedagogical University. We have also two dancing groups: *Or'yakan* (aged 7 – 10 years) and *Nurganak* (aged 20 – 30 years).

### What are your plans for the future?

We want to build a museum of art and develop winter tourism activities. We also have plans for expanding our sales of herbal tea. It has been quite successful and we want to continue with it. We have given some of our tea (made of fireweed, wild rose, and honeysuckle) in exchange for a packing machine and drying machine. We are also planning to secure the long term ownership of our area — not the temporary lease we have had in the past but ownership for traditional land use.

### Have you had some conflicts with the federal government regarding land use?

Not at all. They are interested in having us in this area – We pay taxes and they see there is a benefit for them in having cultural activities in the region. But I suspect we will have a conflict demanding our rights in another area, where there is gold mining now.

### What is your motto?

Go ahead till the last point, while you have strength and even when you do not have it, go on!

This interview was prepared by **Zhanna Dolgan**, an organizer of nature and cultural excursions in Pionerskiy village in the Elizovo region of Kamchatka. Zhanna also leads a group of young dancers called *Yalgyt* (Walkers) in the Koryaki language. For more information contact: [dolgani@yandex.ru](mailto:dolgani@yandex.ru).



## Lessons from the Sakhalin

**Anatoly Lebedev** works with the TRN partner organisation the Bureau For Regional Outreach Campaigns (BROC) in Vladivostok. He has campaigned to stop oil extraction in the Sakhalin and is currently campaigning for more indigenous involvement and ecologically responsible development in the Russian Far East.

The development of the oil and gas industries has become a sort of sacred mantra for the current Russian government, who see it as a short-cut to major export earnings. In Siberia and the Far East, the construction of pipelines has posed a serious threat to vast regions of intact boreal forests and tundra as well as jeopardized the traditionally rural cultures and economies.

Although there have been some recent local wins such as moving the route of

*Above, left: Sakhalin forest*  
Photo: Katy Harris

Many experts suggest alternative forms of development on the lands allocated for pipelines based on the sustainable use of renewable local resources, such as wildlife, fish, recreation, non-timber forest and agricultural products. Thousands of such ideas have been submitted to different officials and oil transport managers across Russia during public hearings, impact assessments, expert witness hearings and court cases, but have rarely received serious attention.

After years of environmental and indigenous groups protesting against the multinational oil companies on Sakhalin Island, where salmon spawning rivers and other unique habitats were being destroyed, the Russian government has finally paid attention to the problems associated with the local pipeline and stopped operations of Shell, Mitsubishi and Mitsui consortium Sakhalin Energy. A large delegation of experts, both from government and NGOs, went to Sakhalin in late September 2006 to verify reported legal and environmental violations and estimate the environmental impact. During the meeting, Sakhalin Energy's vice president, Igor Ignatyev, said that economic loss from their shutdown could reach US\$10 billion. Responding to that, Deputy Minister of Nature Resources, Oleg Mitvol, said that the environmental impact of registered violations could exceed US\$50 billion.

Some ask where the Russian government was during the 10 years of aggressive promotion of the Sakhalin project. Throughout this period there were constant appeals from environmentalists regarding the character of the Production Sharing Agreements, signed by Moscow in the mid 1990s. The Russian Far East and Siberian environmental community shouldn't expect any serious attention from the current Russian administration about the risks associated with the construction of the pipeline.

In order to succeed, campaigns to guarantee the transparency and legality of the pipeline planning process must become more professional and have to include the combined and coordinated efforts of the environmental movement and indigenous people associations.

### Oil and gas on Sakhalin

Sakhalin Island is situated off the Far East coast of the Russian mainland and is approximately the size of Austria. With more than two-thirds of the island covered in forests and three quarters of the terrain mountainous, it has a wide diversity of plant and animal life. The economic livelihood of the local population has been traditionally tied to fishing and forestry.

Oil and gas has long played a part in the Sakhalin economy. The scale of developments increased significantly in post-Soviet times with the development of projects part-owned by international oil companies, under Product Sharing Agreements signed by the Russian government. Sakhalin 1, part owned by Exxon Mobile, started oil production in 2005. Sakhalin 2, the focus of much recent international attention, is part owned by Shell International (55%), Mitsui and Mitsubishi. The first stage of the project is an offshore oil drilling platform in the sea to the north east of the island. The second stage, still under construction, is an onshore pipeline running almost the length of the island, and construction of the largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant in Russia in Aniva Bay on the southern shore of Sakhalin, to process gas for Asian markets. This stage of the project has given rise to much international attention due first to the ongoing consideration of EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) as to whether to fund the project, and more recently due to the Russian government threatening to suspend Shell's permit to operate, on environmental grounds.



*LNG gas plant being built in Aniva Bay.*  
Photo: Katy Harris

### Siberia-Pacific Pipeline

Russia's state oil pipeline monopoly, Transneft, plans to build the world's longest oil pipeline – over 4,000 kilometres long – from Eastern Siberia to the Pacific Ocean. Transneft claims the pipeline will have the capacity to pump up to 80 million tons of oil a year to markets in Asia, primarily to Japan. Early plans had the pipeline passing 800 metres from the north shore of Lake Baikal, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site, and placed the pipeline terminal in Southwest Primorye, home of the critically endangered Amur leopard. After widespread international environmental protests, Transneft moved the oil terminal (February 2006) and announced a longer and less mountainous route 400 kilometres north of the lake (June 2006). These decisions have been supported by environmentalists; however, there are still concerns about what the exact route of the pipeline and new terminal location will be and which communities and ecosystems will be affected by the changes.

**For more information see: Sakhalin Environment watch [www.sakhalin.environment.ru/en](http://www.sakhalin.environment.ru/en), Pacific Environment [www.pacificenvironment.org](http://www.pacificenvironment.org) and <http://www.baikalwave.eu.org/Eng/index-e.html>.**

Environmental campaigners have four major concerns with the project:

- The construction of offshore drilling platforms and pipelines underwater in the Pacific will disturb the critically endangered population of Western Grey whales that has summer feeding grounds off the northwest coast of Sakhalin.
- The proposed pipeline construction along the length of the island crosses 1000 rivers and streams, damaging salmon spawning sites and endangered bird species.
- The livelihood of fishing communities is also seriously threatened by both the damage to salmon rivers and construction of a

shipping port on the south end of the island at Aniva Bay.

- Indigenous communities whose livelihood is tied to salmon fishing and other traditional natural resources are also threatened.

NGOs both local and international have long been active on Sakhalin. One of the most active, Sakhalin Environmental Watch, has for many years watched and fought the oil developments, exposing cases where the construction companies have violated environmental legislation through allowing excessive erosion, cutting larger areas of forest than agreed, or inadequately restoring river beds after burying the pipeline underneath.

With only a handful of paid staff, they have become experts in environmental law, in photographic documentation of environmental damage, in communication with local communities, and in international campaigning. International NGOs WWF and Friends of the Earth have both led high-profile campaigns against the Sakhalin oil projects, as has the CEE Bankwatch, and California-based Pacific Environment. Using mainly the evidence produced by Sakhalin Watch, the most important target of the international campaigns has been to attempt to persuade the EBRD not to finance the project due to environmental concerns.

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Moreover, throughout the Pacific Rim, Pacific Environment has expanded the work of the Ring of Fire Coalition, which includes communities from Papua New Guinea, Russia, Malaysia and Chile. In 2001, the coalition met in Malaysia where members committed to developing a citizens' forest-monitoring guide.

### Chinese environmental groups: waking up for global action

Although the majority of Chinese environmental groups are occupied with overwhelming domestic problems, they have gradually begun to look beyond the country's borders. Many international groups, including Pacific Environment, WWF, TRAFFIC, Greenpeace, Forest Trend, CIFOR, EIA, Global Witness, Conservation International and Forest Action Network, have worked with Chinese researchers and conservationists to discuss China's role in global environmental issues.

Workshops and press conferences have served as good venues for sharing information and discussing the impact China is having on illegal logging and timber trade in the Russian Far East and Siberia.

In 2005, Greenpeace-China launched a year-long campaign against Asia Pulp & Paper's (APP) plan to cut down indigenous forests and plant monoculture plantations in Yunnan and Hainan provinces. Greenpeace did not target provincial governments, however it has been the Yunnan and Hainan governments who have been actively seeking investment from the APP and continue to be the most important supporter for this scheme. Although the State Forestry Administration shared the same concerns as Greenpeace, as is often the case in China, the central government agency's policies were not implemented at the local level.

Although APP could be an easy and visible target, a more pressing problem is that, as China develops at breakneck speed, hundreds of thousands of smaller enterprises have responded to the growing demand for timber products, for everything from paper to furniture to disposable chopsticks. For instance, the popular Swedish home-goods chain IKEA now has 10 stores in China and hundreds of similar Chinese-brand furniture stores have sprung up in all urban centres.



Russian logs at Suifenhe, Heilongjiang province, Russia.  
Photo: Wen Bo

While Chinese green groups still need to learn details about China's role in deforestation from the experiences of their international counterparts, they are already calling for reducing the demand for forest products in China.

Since 1995, Chinese student environmental groups have been campaigning to reduce consumption of disposable chopsticks. Since then, most of university cafeterias have abandoned the use of disposable chopsticks. Another example is the adoption of the "Reducing Greeting Cards, Saving Trees" campaign by Chinese groups under the leadership of Friends of the Earth Hong Kong. The popular campaign has gathered support of State Environment Protection Agency officers as well as primary school students.

### *Understanding that local people know best how to protect their environment, Pacific Environment has been actively supporting the development of an environmental movement in China for the past five years.*

In particular, Pacific Environment has partnerships with two NGOs (one in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and one in Heilongjiang province) which, because of their locations, are in a unique position to monitor illegal timber trade between China and Russia.

In general, Chinese groups' lack of resources inhibits them from traveling abroad to examine deforestation, yet they are increasingly aware of this global problem. As more information becomes available to groups in China, and as the environmental movement develops in general, they will become key players in promoting the need for forest conservation in northeast Asia.

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Logyard at Suifenhe, Heilongjiang province, Russia.  
Photo: Wen Bo

## TRN Biennial Conference



Alexander Markovskiy, from SPOK, a Karelian NGO, makes a presentation at the conference.  
Photo: Birthe Weijola

More than 150 people met in Cambridge, U.K. in mid-September for the 8th biennial conference of the Taiga Rescue Network.

Co-hosted by Forest Ethics, UNEP WCMC, and three international birding organizations, the conference brought together scientists, activists, and representatives from indigenous groups, government and the paper industry to discuss the Global Importance of the Boreal Forest to birds and paper.

Highlights of this year's conference included the launch of new mapping tools to identify intact boreal forests of high conservation value, reports on market driven paper campaigns and discussions about boreal birds as indicators of the health of the boreal forest.

Tony Juniper, the Executive Director of Friends of the Earth U.K. gave the keynote speech to the conference about forestry practices that have led to widespread degradation of bird habitats in the last two decades. He talked about the danger of rapidly increasing paper and wood consumption in China and India and the need to lobby both paper producers and paper consumers to stop taking paper for granted. Juniper urged activists to make consumers aware that their choices can save or destroy boreal forests and bird habitats around the world. He also urged paper producers to take corporate responsibility to adopt better logging practices.

The World Resources Institute and Global Forest Watch introduced a new set of maps of intact forest landscapes and boreal areas of high conservation value in Canada, Alaska and Russia. These computer generated images are intended to be used by policy makers and forest managers to help them manage forests more responsibly. The maps were produced from a set of LANSAT satellite images of the North and updated and verified by fieldwork in the three major boreal nations. Peter Lee, of Global Forest Watch Canada said many people, including most Canadians, still think of the North as an untouched wilderness. The maps show that more than half of Canada's vast forest resources have already been logged or fragmented. Lars Laedstadius of World Resources Institute said the maps offer information about intact boreal forest areas that are important for conservation and preservation and are intended to be as widely accessible as possible. The maps are available on interactive CDs from WRI or GFW.

Birdlife International, the Boreal Songbird Initiative and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Birds brought a new perspective to the Taiga Rescue Network with workshops on birds as forest health indicators and new modeling to assess the role of the boreal as a significant "exporter" of birds. Jeff Wells, from the Boreal Songbird Initiative outlined the work his organization is

doing to educate North Americans about the importance of the boreal forest as a nursery for most of the birds they see at feeders. Forest activists can capitalize on the fact that there are 40-60 million birdwatchers and bird feeders in America and a similar or higher proportion of "twitchers" in Britain. If these people realize the birds at their feeders are threatened by irresponsible forestry practices and wasteful paper consumption, they may be motivated to help conserve boreal forests.

Discussions about paper consumption included plenary panels on the environmental paper network's Common Vision, buying paper with a clean conscience and market drivers for sustainability in the paper industry both from the point of view of suppliers and consumers. There were also workshops on green publishing, the state of the paper industry and the forest certification process. Katie Stafford from Marks and Spencers described how the company has moved from using wood from rainforests three years ago to introducing FSC paper wrappings for sandwiches in more than 400 shops in the U.K. Yalmaz Siddiqui from Office Depot explained how they have seen a doubling in requests for purchases from 2004 to 2005 in the U.K. and a 373% increase in German demand between 2003-2005. Both corporate environmental advocates stressed the importance of keeping messages simple for consumers and suppliers.

# SHRINK

## Tackling the madness of over-consumption

Paper consumption is rising all over the world, and is already so large in Europe and North America that if everyone on earth used as much paper as we do, several planets would be needed to provide it. Somehow we need to break our paper addiction.

The Common Vision for Transforming the European Paper Industry, led by Taiga Rescue Network and signed by more than 50 NGOs from 21 countries, includes a target to cut current paper consumption levels by half. How can we do this?

- **Increasing efficiency:** people in the paper industry often react to the language of 'reducing consumption' as anti-business. Let's turn the language on its head: call it 'increasing resource efficiency' and talk about making bottom-line gains by cutting unnecessary wastage. Think 'travelling light' rather than going on a diet.
- **Work with the biggest consumers:** a small number of people working for magazine publishers, catalogue producers, governments, banks etc., make procurement decisions for enormous quantities of paper. Big cuts could result from understanding how these people work and helping them to make savings.
- **Personal commitment:** we each need to identify our regular bad paper habits and give them up. Read your news online or listen to the radio. Don't print, or if you must, be sure to duplex. Refuse the paper serviette. Use fewer sheets of toilet paper.
- **Tell positive stories:** Bank of America saved half a million dollars by making ATM print-outs optional, smaller and lighter; Hewlett Packard reduced breakage by wrapping printers in clingfilm instead of cardboard, so they look fragile and are treated gently; Tullis Russell, a UK cheque producer, increased profit margins with new security features despite volumes decreasing 6% annually.

We need to help industry to see that consumers can continue to enjoy services such as hygiene, information or entertainment, while supply-chains are transformed to be more resource efficient, making savings that are both good for business and for the planet.

**Mandy Haggith** is the former editor of *Taiga News* and a researcher with World Forests. She is currently writing a book about pulp mills and paper. Contact her at [hag@worldforests.org](mailto:hag@worldforests.org).

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**Next issue:** The next issue of *Taiga News* will focus on climate change. The deadline for contributions is February 10, 2007.

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