

that Forestry is not cracking down on domestic users' abuses or is zealously enforcing unreasonable environmental restrictions.

The Foresters' Reply

In 1996 we interviewed seventeen foresters, technicians, and silviculture specialists in the Canadian Forestry Service or the Newfoundland Forest Service, all but one of whom has worked on or supervised the Great Northern Peninsula (forestry management districts 17 and 18). We presented them with the residents' criticisms of forestry management and invited their rebuttal.

For their part, provincial foresters are critical of residents' use of the forest. Like the residents, they varied among themselves in ranking the problems and the intensity of their criticism.² But there was consensus on this list of problems in residents' forest use: (1) they log selectively ("highgrade," or remove the best trees); (2) they log or saw inefficiently, wasting large tops and slabs, dropping merchantable timber to rot, and leaving long stumps during winter cutting; (3) they log the wrong timber, either by cutting sawlogs into firewood, cutting in the wrong area, or poaching from company land; (4) they remove more than their permit allows or than they need, and then let it rot or sell it (a complaint many residents share, also); and (5) they remove (and sometimes sell on the black market) so much timber from Crown land as to be in competition with commercial sawmillers. These criticisms express fears that residents' use will degrade stand genetics, weaken the local woods industry, and reduce the annual harvestable volume of timber.

Putting aside the criticism of residents' practices, which deserve separate treatment, we look now at the responses which foresters give to residents' complaints. These responses are given at public meetings, in the local press, in forestry documents created or distributed on the peninsula, in conversation with residents, and in interviews with us.

Foresters agree that there has been overcutting. In the last ten years the AAC has been set above the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) to remove "overmature" and "bug-killed" timber from lands which have recently come under Crown control and whose value on the stump will otherwise drop quickly from rot and blowdown. The overcut is short-lived, however; the most recent five-year management plans (1997-2002) for northern Newfoundland districts call for reductions in AAC of 20%

² One topic on which there is variation among foresters is the concern about the volume of Crown land timber logged for domestic firewood. Canadian Forestry personnel express greatest concern. They note that Newfoundlanders are by far the heaviest firewood users in the nation, consuming 1.2 m³ per person per year, nearly six times the Canadian average (Trelawny n.d. {1995}). It is frequently remarked by residents and foresters that domestic firewood cutters consume over 200,000 m³ of timber in a year—enough to support a fourth paper plant in the province. Western foresters are less concerned than Eastern ones about domestic firewood demands because western supplies are greater and the population smaller. Foresters on the Great Northern Peninsula (except the St. Anthony subdistrict) are even less concerned, for the same reason.