

Water Conservation Problems and the Scientific Council on the Biosphere, under the USSR Academy of Sciences and the former USSR Ministry for the Timber and Paper Industries. It was ratified by G.I. Marchuk, President of the Academy of Sciences and M.I. Busygin, Minister for the Timber and Paper Industries.

It stresses the priority which should be given to ecological recommendations and the need to correct past mistakes. More than a year has passed and yet the announced good intentions have not been put into effect. The Ministry for the Timber Industry pushed this program to one side. Our country still profits from the knowledge that we are very rich in forest resources. That is why our forest management and timber utilization practices have been so wasteful. Our traditional approach is based on the idea (not unique to the Soviet Union but common to all mankind) that natural resources are inexhaustible."

Q. "This attitude began to break down about 20 years ago, did it not?"

A. "It is still very much in evidence, although perhaps it exists more in the subconscious. Take our water resources, for instance, where our approach is founded on another false assumption. The Ministry for Water Resources believed, as it still does, that its main task was to provide water to consumers and satisfy everyone's requirements: industrial, agricultural, and domestic. This led to a false assumption that there were water shortages in some regions, and a decision was made to redirect river drainage. Our water policy should have been based on determined efforts to preserve the natural qualities