

A: Yes, of course. We had accumulated a great deal of experience in the economic development of territories in the Soviet North, Eastern Siberia and Soviet Far East. Thanks to this experience, the principles of efficient environmental exploitation for the entire mainline were defined correctly. They were based on three concepts, 1) engineered structures to protect the installations, 2) conservation of nature, and 3) transformation of natural complexes, i.e. alteration of areas of land to ensure high operational reliability of the installations and a high-quality environment.

The experiments carried out by specialists of the Permafrost Institute of the Siberian Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow University and the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Transport Construction have enabled designing organizations of the Ministry of Transport Construction to complete a substantial volume of work on individual projects of the mainline.

The use of new engineering solutions has made it possible to save natural resources and money.

Q: Were the new developments always followed up successfully and on time?

A: If only they had been, we wouldn't have had the problems we did. In 1977, due to the melting of ice-laden permafrost sandy ground, a small washed-out hole formed on the spot of the by-pass canal in the Goudzhikit R. valley in the western sector of BAM. It was not filled then and there. Three months later, a troublesome gully appeared in its place. Thirty-two thousand cubic metres of fill was required to eliminate it. Similar situations arose in other areas as well, for example in the