

the lake is polluted with dozens of harmful substances. It is painful to say this. And yet construction on Lake Baikal's north shore and along the rivers flowing into the lake is continuing! Rest and leisure areas, state farms, factories - if these are not to harm the lake we must keep a close eye on the new factories and plants, which should be fully equipped with purification devices.

Irresponsible logging is still going on in the conversation areas around the lakes and rivers. The forested strip on the lake shore should be 200-300 metres wide on the streams and up to half a kilometre wide at the mid-sized rivers. But these norms are not being observed. The destruction of the taiga on the shores of streams and rivers is leading to rapid erosion of the shores. Nature is highly vulnerable here. Udokan geologists observed over a 10-year period how a rut left by an all-terrain vehicle turned into a ravine 800 metres long, 30 metres wide, and 8 metres deep. How many more scars like this have appeared along the highway!

Construction of most of the settlements and stations along the railway line began with clear felling of the forests and destruction of the soil surface. This was convenient for the construction workers. Administrative convenience is now costing the railway-builders who live here dearly: in the summer they swim in clouds of dust and in the winter they breathe in soot. There are dozens of methods to protect the trees, bushes, and soil during construction. These methods have been successfully used along the railway line, but unfortunately very rarely, although efforts to protect the green zone near settlements more than pay for themselves, because trees and vegetation absorb up to half the dust and harmful pollutants from heating units.