

Residents' sentiment against clearcutting comes from information gained from television coverage of clearcutting in western Canada and the U.S., the local newspaper, their travels into the country to hunt, gather, fish, log, trap, picnic, and snowmobile, the reactions of their tourist clients, and publicity by environmentalist groups in Newfoundland. A recent syndicated column in the local newspaper stated,

According to the provincial government's recently released forestry plan, forests are nothing more than a tool to enhance the profitability of large corporations...We let our natural resources be wrecked so that a few shareholders can get even richer...Just ask the thousands of fishing people made idle by the rape of the cod resource (Hanrahan 1997:A7).

An eastern Newfoundland environmental group sent a letter stating,

...it's becoming painfully obvious to most Newfoundlanders that the pathetic state of our forest has already reached a crisis level comparable to that existing in our fishery" (Northern Pen 1994b:4A)

Residents claim that clearcutting has these drawbacks: (1) it dries out and heats up the soil, increasing fire risk and reducing regeneration of seedlings; (2) it eliminates wildlife habitat; (3) it tears up the soil, leading to erosion of topsoil and siltation of fishing waters; (4) it looks unattractive to residents and tourists; (5) it destroys nonmerchantable trees useful for fruit, animal browse, and firewood; and (6) it increases windfall damage in surrounding timber stands. The effects of clearcutting, residents say, will be to slow regeneration, reduce ground coverage, diminish tree species diversity, and shrink wildlife populations and diversity.

Residents holding the second view argue that there is no overcutting, or at least no crisis is pending, and that clearcutting is not harmful. Most loggers, sawyers, small independent contractors, some silviculture workers and local elected officials, who are all supporting an active woods industry, claim that there is sufficient timber locally for current levels of logging and that loggers are more closely supervised than ever. Loggers have defended their current methods in letters to the editor of the local newspaper. "Clearcutting is one of the best things to come to this area," one wrote. He noted that he efficiently utilizes all material from the cutover for sawlogs, pulp, and biomass, and that the clearcut generates jobs in planting and thinning. "Every cutover I've seen over the years has come back." (Northern Pen 1992). While most residents are deeply suspicious of current logging methods and volumes, those in the woods industry lobby for more forest access roads, new areas to be opened, assistance to purchase more machinery, and increased quotas for timber removal. Nevertheless, in private some loggers express reservations about the extent of cutovers or the techniques and machinery used. Loggers too are critical of Forestry, but for different reasons than other residents give. They say