

Practically all of the forest of the Mezen taiga has been cut down, there is no water left in the Mezen River, and all of the streams in the taiga have dried up. Motor boats used to travel these waters all summer but now a boat can no longer pass. The same fate awaits the Pechora.

What is especially troubling is that we have grown accustomed to such facts: we say "maybe it will work itself out..." The same attitude towards responsibility prevails on the part of those who are destroying nature. For example, in Naryan-Mar a well was drilled without following regulations. This well gushed for six years, poisoning the Pechora with hydrogen sulfide. Fish stocks suffered colossal damage. And would you think that the guilty party was punished? No! He left for a higher position.

Of course, it isn't just a matter of levying fines. We have to make it so that there is an advantage to protecting the environment. By not investing a certain amount of resources for environmental protection in the development of a project, we are condemning the environment to destruction at the outset. In this event, the best laws on nature protection are of no avail.

From time to time acute discontent about ecology crops up in various regions of our country, and then, as a rule, government agencies quickly come forward with the funds, equipment and specialists. But our land cannot be saved by emergency measures.

The only solution is to have a carefully thought-out ecological program and to subject it to the same strict controls as applied to the housing and food sectors. This will at least give our wounded environment some change of survival.

V. Nosov, USSR
People's Deputy for
UST-Tsilma district,
Komi ASSR
Izvestiya
6 July 1990
Page 3 (slightly
abridged)