

But you got to be careful with grass." (Coles 1996)

Finally, residents' complaints of overcutting and clearcutting appear to be influenced by two processes we'll call the lag-time effect and the salience effect. By the lag-time effect we mean that the public's shared understanding of what is wrong in the forest lags a couple of years behind actual developments. Even though the peninsula's grapevine can be surprisingly fast and accurate about some items of news, the accumulation of bits of evidence into a consensus that trends are changing takes time. As we entered the field in 1996, much about the forest was in flux. Biomass harvest for the power plant had ended, the AAC had just been lowered for the next five year management plan, clearcuts had become smaller and "modified," and environmental regulations were in place to protect waterbodies and wildlife habitat. However, most residents' criticism of forest management was the same as that we collected in 1992 and 1994. Only some of the most active in the woods—loggers, sawyers, and silviculture workers, for example—were aware of the changes in progress or considered the new evidence to signal a permanent change in trend.

The salience effect refers to the tendency of most people to statistically weight individual cases in proportion to their dramatic impact (Slovic, et al. 1974). When residents see a particularly disturbing clearcut on their drives in the forest they weight it heavily as evidence that the forest is being cut down. Limited in education and living close to the land, most northerners depend upon direct observation of a phenomenon for validation. Statistical reasoning, sampling, aerial surveys, GIS and modeling procedures are all suspect, especially after federal fishery scientists using similar methods failed for years to support locals' claims that the northern cod were "getting scarce." Badly shaken by the collapse of the northern cod stocks after thirty years of heavy fishing, residents vow not to lose any more critical natural resources.

As foresters will also point out, the salience effect is increased when residents take their drives on forest access roads, which were built specifically to get loggers to stands to be clearcut. In these drives residents also witness many cutover areas in the process of regeneration, either naturally or after re-planting. However, they know that trees grow very slowly in the north, taking sixty or more years to reach sawlog proportions, and so a clearcut represents two generations of waiting. On a drive with us among some weakly regenerating cutovers, a retired forestry employee said, "It will take a hundred years for the trees to come back here. These areas we cut with skidders in the 1970s have small patchy fir, only eight feet tall. Even my grandchildren aren't going to see this come back."

Residents' critique of northern forest management depends much on "representative" thinking. They emphasize the similarity between the northern forest and those elsewhere in Newfoundland and Canada. Their objections to clearcutting draw upon knowledge of the objections to clearcutting of old-growth forests in western Canada. (The differences and similarities between northern Newfoundlanders and their counterparts in British Columbia deserve analysis, but are beyond the scope of this paper. We