

FORESTRY

Inadequacies in Forest Fire Prevention and Control Arrangements Cause Heavy Losses

More than 28,000 fires originated in the past year in the actively protected territory of the general forest lands administered by the State (Goslesfond). The loss to the country's forestry amounted to 204,800,000 roubles. Fire damaged or destroyed 65,400,000 cubic metres of standing timber, 87,600 cubic metres of finished product and 1,200,000 roubles worth of industrial and residential buildings. Two people lost their lives. Such are the doleful results of the forest fire season.

In the Order (prikaz) issued by the USSR State Committee for Forestry (Goskomles) it is stated that in comparison with earlier years the loss has increased 4.1-fold. True, in the document it is pointed out that this figure attests to the more accurate method of calculation now in use. But the fact remains that fires affected 2,070,700 hectares of area overall, including 1,646,300 forested hectares.

The journalists and specialists who took part in the "Ecological Task Force 01" organized by our newspaper provided the readership with quite detailed information on the state of affairs in the nation's "hottest" spots, namely the Tyumen' and Tomsk oblasts, Sakhalin and the Khabarovsk Krai. Almost a fifth of all the fires reported took place in these regions. It was also noted that an extremely unfavourable situation had arisen in the forested areas transferred to the integrated timber enterprises of the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry. Scarcely anyone can refute this statement. The following figures confirm it. In the territories of the integrated enterprises 6,900 fires were recorded (a quarter of the total number) and 1,082,300 hectares of overall area, including 929,500 forested hectares were damaged. This is already more than half of the total for the country.