

Q: "Petr Fedorovich, fires are causing a great deal of damage to the forests. Is fire prevention and control within the competence of the State Inspectorate?"

A: "Definitely. A forest fire is of course, a disaster of the first magnitude. This year, about 15,500 fires were recorded and 650,000 hectares of forest were destroyed throughout the Russian Federation. Losses to the economy amounted to more than 30 million roubles. But this figure indicates only the losses of directly marketable timber. Who can say that the losses were in terms of destroyed regrowth and also the animals, birds and cranberry patches that were killed. What is going to grow there in the future, when will this happen and indeed, will anything grow at all? At least 40 per cent of the fires are exclusively of human origin.

"The present situation is making it possible for agencies of the State Forestry Inspectorate to act in close concert with the law protection agencies. Reference to this was made at the recent plenary session of the Supreme Court of the USSR."

"Of course, our task does not only consist of taking punitive measures. Every year we print and disseminate hundreds of thousands of leaflets, billboards and pamphlets appealing for a cautious attitude towards fire in the forest. Also, co-workers of the Inspectorate present lectures and reports to collectives of enterprises and residents of logging communities."

Q: "What can be said about help given by aviators in preventing and controlling forest fires?"