

fate of our Pinus sibirica forests and draw up a programme for their preservation and rational use. Obviously, it is not only the bitter lessons of the past that will be of value here, but also the fragments of experience gained in those regions where the situation is more or less favourable.

It is among the latter that I place our Chita Oblast'. It is now seven years since the allowable cut in the Trans-Baikal was extended to include the Siberian nut pines. Which means, of course, that the loggers were fully entitled to enter the Pinus sibirica forests and cut, cut, cut.... But not a single felling gang has worked in these forests, either prior to 1982 or since. Why is this?

The Oblast' Forestry Directorate (now Association) was categorically opposed to this. Despite the existence of an allowable cut, we did not mark out any coupes. We were authorized to take Siberian nut pine, but took the risk of prohibiting it. I am not saying that this was easy. The directors of the "Chिताles" Association, the fuel industry directorates and the other forest users exerted pressure from all sides, and the more they did, the greater the resistance. It was after that that we took the final, decisive step: we appealed to the Oblast' Executive Committee of the Party for a ban on industrial fellings of Siberian pine, and our appeal was upheld. In July of 1982 the requisite decision was taken by the Oblast' Executive Committee.

Make no mistake: the campaign was not in vain. Superb stands of pine have been preserved along the Chikoi, Khilka and Ingol' rivers (the basin of Lake Baikal). Moreover, they have increased in area. The Chita Oblast' is the easternmost limit of the range of the Siberian pine. Here it lives, as