

Chemical Spraying Volumes Reduced in RSFSR Forests

"The application of chemical preparations is the sole effective method of countering the undesirable tendency of coniferous forests to be transformed into deciduous stands of little commercial value. Over the course of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan the industry intends to carry out an even greater volume of chemical spraying. Nevertheless, various local government organizations continue to shower the Ministry with protests against the use of chemical preparations in the forests..... The RSFSR Ministry of Forestry hereby requests the USSR State Planning Committee to issue a decree instructing the regional and oblast executive committees not to meddle in chemical treatment programmes in the forests."

This document with its request to "pressure" the local Soviets of People's Deputies, which, as is well known, are endowed in accordance with the Soviet constitution with full power, was not born during the infamous period of stagnation and total submission to bureaucratic ambitions. It actually appeared in the spring of 1987 when perestroika was gaining ground and proclaiming its aims aloud. Getting a bit ahead of our story, we note that the request fell on deaf ears: no-one "instructed" the Soviets to cease and desist. The facts behind this case are as follows.

The public has long been expressing its concern over the use of the toxic chemical 2,4-D (butyl ether) in our forests. There were good grounds for this concern. Even someone with strong nerves would be shocked upon entering a forest that had been treated by this chemical. Imagine the following scene. Wherever you look there are naked, dried up birches and aspen. There is a disgusting