

FORESTRY

Industrial Expansion Brings Trouble to the Northern Forests

Forestry workers in Western Siberia were happy when the oil industry moved to the region. The oil boom promised to bring great changes to the entire regional economy. It was hoped that the forestry sector would move ahead as well.

The years passed by. Tyumen' became one of the country's main oil and gas centres. The Oblast is miles ahead of other regions in terms of utilizing capital investment. The network of roads and railways is tens of thousands of kilometres long. An entire constellation of new cities has grown up here. But the foresters' dreams never materialized. With hindsight they can see that they were right off track from the very beginning.

The geologists, oil, gas, power, and transport workers and communications experts that serve the industrial sector, have already occupied several hundred thousands of hectares of state forest lands. The amount of land allotted for permanent or temporary use to the oil and gas sector is equal to the area of land logged annually in main-use operations.

The good thing is that the taiga has come alive, that people have come here to work and live. What is upsetting, however, is what they have brought with them to this hitherto virginal landscape.

The forest stands are being destroyed everywhere for no apparent reason. The earth is being damaged and the soils are being mixed up together to a considerable deepness. Large areas are becoming polluted with oil