

Third, besides being an extractable resource for anyone, the woods are also the "home" or backyard of residents. Many locales in the region carry names evoking historical events or people and even religious and aesthetic significance (Firestone 1967; Humber Environment Action Group n.d. {1996}; Pocius 1991). That someone from outside the community could enter these locales with government encouragement and remove the timber for his profit seems akin to theft or desecration. Should some of the woods companies be owned by foreigners (or Ontarians, or urban business interests) then the sense of being exploited is even greater.

Forestry is one of several federal and provincial government agencies, such as Crown Lands, Wildlife, or Fisheries and Oceans, whose regulation and stewardship of what was commons has intensified in the last few decades. As a result, residents' concepts of land tenure and use-rights in the forest have been threatened. Forestry management districts consolidated many communities' traditional user-right territories; two districts make up the entire Great Northern Peninsula north of Gros Morne National Park. These units are much larger than the old environs in which residents, or even the paper companies, operated. Residents may speak of "our forest," and resent people from "over there" entering it to cut firewood, but foresters try not to recognize any community's historical link to any part of the forest as grounds for special treatment. They intend to manage all parts of the unit with a single management plan. In principle, foresters could assign loggers or silviculture crews from one area of the unit to work in another area, though for practical reasons this is not common.

The decoupling of settlements from their surrounding forest and the denial of traditional use-rights have prompted northerners to assert repeatedly their nonstatutory claims to the forest, as they have in their outcry against overcutting and clearcutting. Non-statutory claims refer to claims of the moral right to influence the future of their adjacent forest, even if they do not own it (Fortmann and Starrs 1990:191). Northern Newfoundlanders do not claim that they ever owned the forest, as do some native North Americans, but base their claim instead on their history of residence and economic dependence on the forest.

A fourth and fifth reason residents are alarmed is because the timber harvest has increased quickly and recently and is more visible than in the past. Commercial and domestic extraction levels were higher in 1995 than they have been since Bowater Newfoundland conducted extensive pulpwood operations on the peninsula in the 1960s. The volume of timber harvested increased ten-fold between 1980 and 1992. As harvest rates were accelerating, the network of forest access roads was also spreading, permitting residents to drive into many more regions of the backcountry and see the effects of logging more easily than when most travel was on foot or dogteam. The cod moratorium has given the fisher-logger more discretionary time, which is often spent in the woods. More families are in the forest at cabins, trout ponds, moose watching drives, and scenic picnic spots. Cable television, arriving in the 1980s, brings nature programs and conservation views and news into northern homes regularly.