

The annual volume of felling in the Urals region is 55-57 million cubic metres. Timber is being felled faster than it is growing. If we add to this the fact that millions of cubic metres in deciduous stands are not being harvested annually, while the allowable cut for coniferous species is being greatly exceeded, it is not hard to imagine the rate at which highly valuable fir and pine forests in the Urals are vanishing.

The fact is that the pace at which felling is being done here is totally exhausting the forest reserves, notwithstanding the many articles published in local and national newspapers advocating protection of the forests in the Urals.

Continuous over-harvesting above the allowable cut and the placing of the entire forested area under the jurisdiction of the logging industry in the 1960's made the threat of total exhaustion of forest resources in Perm Oblast' a very real possibility. In the last twenty years alone the reserves of mature wood in the forest areas leased by the Permlеспrom Association have fallen to only half of what they were, 15 logging enterprises have suspended operations, 108 forest settlements have ceased to exist or been abandoned, and more than 20,000 workers and their families have left for other sites. These are the social consequences of irresponsible logging. The tendency to rely on part-time loggers proved disastrous, primarily for the loggers themselves.

Many tens of thousand hectares of fir trees, the main source of the raw materials used in the Oblast's pulp and paper industry, have been felled during the last 25-30 years in the area worked by the Komarikhin logging enterprise. The harvesting volumes exceeded a million cubic metres annually and have involved an area of 5000 to 6000 hectares. In some years the allowable cut has been exceeded by a factor of 3 to 4.

As a result of the catastrophic decline in the reserves of the ripe coniferous forests, the Troitsky and Shushanky logging enterprises were closed, and the Ilich,