Gassinski Model Forest

Country: Russia
Location: Far East
Year joined IMFN: 1994
Area of Model Forest: 400 000 hectares
Regional affiliation: Russian National Model Forest Network

Forest and resource profile

There are approximately 20 villages and two towns located in the Gassinski Model Forest (GMF) area, which is situated in the Amur River valley on the western edge of the Sikhote Alin mountains. In easily accessible areas, the region's forests have suffered from over-harvesting and wildfires, however, valuable stands of ash, elm, birch, oak, fir, larch, and other species remain. In upper elevations, there are highly valuable stands of Korean pine, which are protected and being reintroduced throughout the area. One-third of the population is indigenous Nanai or Udege. Lowland areas include a mixture of wetland, pasture, and hardwood forests. Highland areas are mixed forest.

The GMF landscape is made up mostly of plain wetlands (70%) and mountains (30%). Of this, the National park "Aniuiski" covers about 49% of the GMF site and includes protected territories, such as that of endangered Siberian tigers (11%) and forest lands previously announced as those traditionally used by indigenous peoples (24% of the Park area).

Economic profile

There is high unemployment in the area. Forestry is the dominant economic activity, but it has suffered from a lack of investment, poor practices, low prices and problems associated with Russia's transition to a market-based economy.

Other important economic sectors include fisheries (salmon), non-timber forest products (birch sap, ferns, mushrooms, cedar-pine nuts, and berries) and hunting (particularly important for indigenous people). Value-added wood processing is increasingly seen as a viable way to revive the local economy.

Why a model forest?

Improving the health of tree stands, forest protection, wildlife conservation, improving the monitoring and reporting of resource conditions, integrating natural resource disciplines into an improved management regime and maximizing the forest's economic benefits for the local population on a sustainable basis are priority concerns in the Russian Far East.

As a member of the IMFN, the GMF hopes to increase its sphere of influence in setting forest policy, and expand its communication ties and cooperation with other model forests worldwide. An open exchange of experiences and knowledge will help further the propagation and implementation of the model forest approach to SFM and biodiversity conservation.

Partners

- Government agencies (8%)
- Academia—educational institutes and universities, research and designing institutions (25%)
- Forest stockholders (57%)
- NGOs (10%)

Strategic goals

- To promote the economic and social development of indigenous communities

- To promote the conservation of biodiversity, and the protection of rare and endangered species

- To achieve and support SFM through decision-making processes that take into account the interests of the local people living in and around the Gassinski Model Forest, and which are based on monitoring of the condition of forest and water ecosystems

- To promote environmental knowledge among forest specialists, students and academia

- To conduct and support forest research for SFM

- To monitor local level indicators (LLI) and provide the information to the public

Accomplishments to date

- Drafting and adopting a long-term sustainable economic development strategy for the Model Forest region

- Mitigating conflict between indigenous Nanai, forest users and state forestry officials

- Creating an effective, cross-disciplinary partnership

- Attracting additional resources from foundations and other aid agencies

- Participating in the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) certification initiative

- Increasing employment for the indigenous Nanai people from 20 to more than 60%

- Training and development of a value-added wood processing industry

Resources

The Model Forest has published numerous works over the years, with subject areas ranging from forest fire fighting to water quality to eco-tourism. These publications are accessible to a wide range forest researchers and decision-makers.

Contact information
Address: Sosnovka, Khabarovsk, 682305, Russia
Phone: 7 (4212) 92-24-17   and 21-92-57
Fax: 7 (4212) 21-98-67
Website: http://www.gassi.khv.ru

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-99188-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html