

INSPECTION REPORT

On the 19th of May 2016, several cutting sites within the borders of the planned nature protected areas “Oxboloto” and “Vachozero” were inspected by a group of specialists with the following membership: Anastasiya Philippova, regional nature protection organization “NeoEcoProject”, Tuuli Hakulinen, The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Viktor Säfve, Swedish environmental NGO “Protect the Forest”, Robert Svensson, Swedish environmental NGO “Protect the Forest”. The inspected cutting sites are situated within the borders of the “Metsa Forest Podporozhye” Ltd leased forest areas and are included in the Leningrad Region Land-use Planning scheme (adopted by Leningrad District governmental decree dd 29.12.2012, revised and amended as 29.10.2015 and 21.12.2015, decree №490).

I. Podporozhskoye forest area, Tokarskoye forestry, 1st kvartal, 25 videl, planned nature protected area “Oxboloto”

Old spruce forest of 15 hectares (information from a cutting post) with high conservation values was logged. According to the growth rings, the oldest tree which age was determined was over 280 years old, others were of 135-165, 180, and 265 years old. The old spruce forest, which was clear-cut, has probably been untouched by forest activities for a relatively long time (probably over 100 years). The annual rings on the stumps of the felled old-growth spruces testify that something happened with the growth historically, when the slow-growing spruce trees suddenly began to grow more robustly. This was presumably a result of historical selective cuttings of larger pines and other trees.





The cutting was made on the edge of the peat land and no appropriate buffer zone was left. Dead wood together with the cutting wastes were removed from the logging site and were probably used as material for the forest road building.



On the remaining trees at the logging site and near the peat land, indicator species of the old-growth forests and red-listed species of Federal and regional level were found which confirms the nature conservation value of the logged forest and the surrounding forest zone:

Alectoria Sarmentosa (the Leningrad Region Red List), *Lobaria Pulmonaria* (the Leningrad Region Red List, Federal Red List), *Evernia Divaricata* (the Leningrad Region Red List), *Phellinus Chrysoloma* (indicator species), *Phellinus Ferrugineofuscus* (indicator species), *Phellinus Populicola* (indicator species), *Phellinus Viticola* (indicator species), *Callidium Coriaceum* (indicator species), *Neckera Pennata* (indicator species).

Thus, this high conservation value forest with old spruce trees and big aspens, which is a habitat for red-listed species, was logged. As a result, the previous local micro climate which prevails for lichens like *Evernia Divaricata* and their habitat was destroyed. The old-growth forest was a part of the planned nature protection area “Oxboloto” which central mission is to protect low-disturbed peat land complexes and fragments of biologically valuable forests in its frontier areas. On the logging site, some damages to the soil were made, including absence of functional buffer zones to protect the peat land.



II. Podporozhskoye forest area, Tokarskoye forestry, 58, 63, 73 kvartals, planned nature protected area “Vachozero”

Several cutting sites close to lake “Vachozero” were inspected.

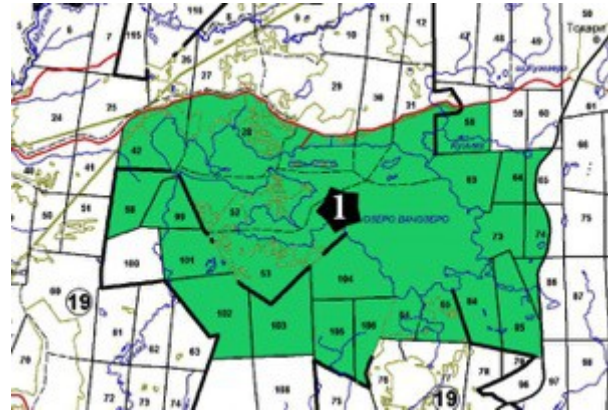


Old productive mixed forests with high conservation values and huge old aspens and spruce were logged. In some parts of the left forest there are unusually big standing trunks of dead deciduous trees and laying dead deciduous trunks.





The loggings are made in the planned protected area “Vachozero” which is of high conservation value.



Indicator and red-listed species found at the logged sites and the direct surrounding forest edge zones for assessing the nature conservation value of the logged forest are listed below:

Alectoria Sarmentosa (the Leningrad Region Red List) *Neckera Pennata* (indicator species), *Bryoria Fremontii* (**Federal Red List**), *Lobaria Pulmonaria* (**the Leningrad Region Red List, Federal Red List**), *Phellinus Chrysoloma* (indicator species), *Phellinus Ferrugineofuscus* (indicator species), *Phellinus Populicola* (indicator species).

As well *Numenius arquata* (Federal Red List) and *Dryocopus martius* (indicator species) was detected in the area between the cutting sites.



In 73 kvartal of Tokarskoye forestry a road has been constructed between two of the logging sites. This road crosses a wetland forest area and a natural stream. The water flow of the stream is negatively affected by the road.





According to the Logging Regulations adopted by the order of Federal Agency of Forest management dd 1st of August 2011 N 337, article 13, it is prohibited to use rivers and streams' beds as skidding trails and forest roads.

SUMMARY

The high conservation value forests, habitat for Red- listed species, were logged in the planned nature protected areas “Vachozero” and “Oxboloto”.

According to the Russian Federation legislation, Federal Law “Concerning the Protection of the Environment” (article 3) business activities of legal bodies and private individuals causing impacts on the environment must be carried out on basis of the compulsory nature of assessment of effects on the environment in case when decisions are made as to the pursuance of an economic or other activity. According to the article 60, plants, animals and other organisms belonging to the Red-listed species are to be excluded from economic use. Activities that lead to their depletion in numbers or worsen their habitat are prohibited.

Thus, the “Metsa Forest Podporozhye” Ltd loggings in the planned nature protected area “Oxboloto” and “Vachozero” violates the Russian Federation legislation.

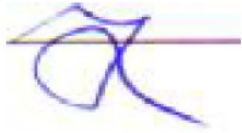
According to the FSC principles and criteria (FSC-STD-RUS-V6-1-2012):

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria (principle 1).

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest (principle 6).

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes that define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach (principle 9).

Thus, the “Metsa Forest Podporozhye” Ltd loggings in the planned nature protected area “Oxboloto” violates the FSC principles.



Anastasiya Philippova, regional nature protection organization “NeoEcoProject”



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