
Master’s Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Brandeis University
Department of History
Gregory L. Freeze, Advisor

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts
in
History

by
Allison Brown

May 2016

A thesis presented to the Department of History

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

By Allison Brown

In the decades following Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet government largely continued his policies of accelerated industrialization. This drive for industrial growth had a profound impact on Soviet forests and the industry that was responsible for their management. While certain sectors of the economy, such as the military and space programs, enjoyed significant attention and monetary contributions from the government in the latter half of the twentieth century, the forestry industry was less fortunate. The Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras (1953-82) were plagued by poor communications between state officials and the management structure of the forestry sector, a lack of investment to train specialists and to develop new technologies and techniques, little commitment to waste reduction and more efficient use of resources, and an inability to break “old habits” that had beset that sector of the industry for decades. While the forestry industry struggled to modernize and reorganize, city planners faced challenges in meeting the demands of city-dwellers and state officials, who demanded the inclusion of urban green spaces and forest belts in both old and new cities.
This thesis analyzes the contemporary Soviet press from the mid-1950s through the early-1980s regarding the functioning of the Soviet forestry industry and the development of urban green spaces and forest belts, revealing the inefficient systems that directed these areas of interest and concern. Although the press reported some areas of progress (e.g. the development of a common positive perception of urban green spaces by the 1980s), the overall assessment was negative, with little tangible improvement in the primary areas of concern. Of the various factors that contributed to this failure, the most egregious included poor communications, disinterest of local and national government officials in the long-term projects, and underinvestment in modern technology, techniques, and infrastructure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historiography</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematica</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology and Sources</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organization of the Forestry Industry</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Planning and the Forestry Industry</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One Boss for the Forest”</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Beyond the Conifers: Mushrooms, Deciduous Trees, and Other Forest Products</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mushrooms Have Been Known for Too Long”</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When You Cut Wood the Chips Fly. But Aren't There Too Many Chips?”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans and Optimism for Urban Green Spaces</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Is Wrong with the “City’s Green Attire”</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Conclusion</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Sources</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

The forests of Russia currently constitute about one-fifth of the world’s forestland.¹ Throughout the centuries Russians have used and treasured their arboreal wealth. Out of sheer necessity, they have made the forest and its products an important part of their survival strategy, but they have also celebrated its beauty and made it a core element of their national identity.² Over the centuries, well before the breakneck industrialization of the Soviet era, Russian governments and ordinary inhabitants—like peers in the West—not only used, but abused, their forest assets. But in the Soviet era deforestation, like industrialization, took on an entirely new scale, altering the Russian landscape beyond recognition.

From the first five-year plan to the last, the overarching, oftentimes sole, priority was industrial growth—at any cost. The Soviet environment was not immune to this process. The plan sacrificed not only people, but nature, sometimes in highly dramatic form (such as the fouling of Lake Baikal and semi-desiccation of the Aral Sea).³ Nor did the industrializers spare

---

² The forest figures prominently as a source of sustenance, fear, and spirituality for the Russian people, as far back as the era of Mongol dominance, in James Billington’s cultural history, The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture (New York, 1966).
³ For a brief overview of the project to dry the Aral Sea, in order to create an area for growing crops, and the subsequent attempts to reverse the process, see M. Murray Feshbach, Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature under Siege (New York, NY: New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1992), 82–88; Michael Glantz, ed., Creeping Environmental Problems and Sustainable Development in the Aral Sea Basin, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For more information regarding the degradation of Lake Baikal, see P. Josephson, An Environmental History of Russia (Cambridge, 2013), 224-229. These pages address the industrialization projects and pollution that threatened the Russian landmark and the mobilization of a national effort to protect the lake during the Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev years. Interestingly, Josephson reveals that the final resolution of the Central Committee on Lake Baikal in 1987 placed blame on numerous government and party organizations and leaders who had failed to implement restrictions on activities in the Baikal region (page 229). For details on the resolution and the groups and officials who were forced to take responsibility, see Pravda, May 16, 1987, 1 (in
the forests, which were over-exploited for use at home and export abroad. The regime prioritized short-term growth and assumed that the vast size of the country’s territory made forest wealth inexhaustible. Soviet leaders, therefore, gave little attention to forest conservation, which—amidst all the other priorities and problems—did not rank high on the agenda of Politburo meetings and Central Committee plenum. To be sure, the regime did indulge in environmentalist propaganda, but that had little to do with reality. As Stephen Brain observes: “As is the case for the debate about the Soviet project as a whole, there is (or was) an official position espoused by the Soviet government, corresponding poorly to the historical record, claiming that communist societies did not and could not do significant social or environmental harm, as capitalist societies often did.” And when problems did arise and could no longer be ignored, the regime characteristically believed that science and technological advancement could right any wrong, including the environmental issues that provoked mounting attention in the Soviet Union and around the globe amidst rapid economic growth in the postwar era.

These issues elicited growing public discussion—if not resolution—in the post-Stalin era. N.S. Khrushchev (first secretary, 1953-1964) sponsored the famous “thaw” that entailed not only de-Stalinization but considerably greater freedom of the press. Although censorship remained, Soviet society had greater opportunity to express dissent and castigate bureaucratic wrong-doing and incompetence. To Khrushchev’s surprise, the outcry proved to be far more critical than the leadership had ever anticipated. That disapproval did not spare the tension between rapid economic growth and rudimentary protection of natural resources. Douglas Weiner fairly


describes the regime’s vision and policies: “Khrushchev’s vision of progress was driven chiefly by one idea: more. Communism would produce more milk, more meat, more wheat, more electricity. Its hydropower stations would be the biggest, and its rockets the heaviest. The idea of demonstrating Communism’s *qualitative* superiority over capitalism had escaped the unimaginative Soviet leader.” The Soviet model called for more, and more was what it received.

The optimism of the early thaw period inspired confidence that the Soviet Union could quickly “catch and overtake” its Western adversaries. To reach that ambition, it was necessary to harness an unruly natural environment—a gargantuan task, given the country’s sheer expanse, inadequate transportation system, harsh climate, and remoteness of many critical natural and mineral resources. But, in the regime’s judgment, it was only by tapping these resources—especially in Siberia and Central Asia—that the country would be able to maximize economic growth in the industrial sector. Khrushchev’s “Virgin Lands” program to bring new steppe land under production was his signature policy and most catastrophic environmental blunder, but it was not the only one: the damage he wrought in the forest was hardly less devastating. Desperate to build infrastructure and to increase output from the wood, pulp, and paper industry, the government launched a massive assault on the most accessible forests—those located along waterways, thereby triggering massive erosion that would pollute even the country’s greatest treasure, Lake Baikal. Khrushchev’s brash decision to jumpstart the Soviet economy, coupled with limited concern for environmental repercussions, set the tone for the remainder of the twentieth century.  

---

6 For a detailed look at “Virgin Lands” program, see: ibid., 147–152, for more information on the damage done by the forestry industry, see: 155-162. For the more comprehensive list of environmental blunders during the Khrushchev years, see: 136-181.
From Khrushchev’s deposition in 1964 to the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, four party leaders occupied Khrushchev’s position, but none deviated from the policy of “industrial growth” above all else and at any cost. To be sure, the regime did pay lip service to environmental concerns and formally adopted legislation to curb abuses—so long as this did not curb the rate of growth. L.I. Brezhnev’s time as general secretary (1964-1982) is often identified as the “era of stagnation”, but in fact did not slow the assault on the environment. Paul Josephson catalogues this decade, referring to unsuccessful efforts to create environmental legislation, establish protected areas, and prohibit the destructive practices of industrial and the agricultural sectors:

The lack of true openness regarding the extent of environmental degradation and the insistence of leaders in emphasizing tried-and-true, but environmentally costly, development programs doomed those efforts to failure. These included a continued emphasis on heavy industry and the so-called Brezhnev Food Program, which contributed to the poisoning of agricultural lands. At the end of Brezhnev’s tenure, the problems of air, land, and water pollution had only grown worse.7

The pollution and environmental catastrophes that resulted from the development of large-scale industrial projects put the health of the environment, wildlife, and the people of the Soviet Union at risk. The newspaper and journal articles that address the health of the forest throughout this period reflect these concerns that Soviet officials and citizens held for the state of their natural environment.

_Historiography_

Previous scholarship has given some attention to the relationship between Russians and their forests, but has focused mainly on late-Imperial Russia and the first decades of the Soviet era (up to Stalin’s death in 1953). Jane Costlow provides a thoughtful depiction of the deep-seeded cultural link between Russians and the forest and examines illustrations of the forest in

---

7 Ibid., 185.
the works of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Repin, and Shishkin. Drawing also on the writings of scientific experts, Costlow suggests that the intelligentsia were aware of the human impact on the forest. Her chapter on Dmitrii Kaigorodov (a writer and professor at the St. Petersburg Forest Institute) broadens the discussion from the cultural sphere to include the scientific dimension. The natural scientist’s evocation of a conservationist ethic in his pupils in the years leading to the Revolution is a sentiment that can be drawn out of a number of the sources that this thesis project is based on. As Costlow writes, “All of these examples [of expressions of Russians’ relations to the forest]—scholarly as well as popular—suggest a relationship of both affection and need, in which humans’ dependence on resources (for fire, warmth, building materials) often exists in uneasy tension with more obviously emotional or symbolic associations.” This is a relationship that can be tracked beyond the years of Stalin and his reshaping of Soviet priorities with regards to forestry management.

Stephen Brain’s *Song of the Forest: Russian Forestry and Stalinist Environmentalism, 1905-1953*, begins where Costlow’s book ends. While Brain does explore the cultural roots of the Russian relationship to the forest, he focuses mainly on the policies that shaped forestry management in the early decades of the Soviet Union. He seeks to question the assumption that these policies, particularly those under Stalin, were especially damaging and mark a turning point in the way that Soviet people were forced to relate to the forest. Brain studies the environmental values of the early Bolshevik leaders. A theme running throughout is the changing degree of prevalence of Georgii Morozov’s forest management technique throughout Brain’s

---

9 Ibid., 7.
period of research.\(^\text{11}\) This focus on Morozov and his “stand type” theory in Soviet forest management helps to develop a conversation surrounding the romantic, religious, and cultural values that shaped Soviet conservationist values and the economic and industrial calculations that drove Soviet policy. This relationship can be extracted further from the press of the post-Stalinist era.

Paul Josephson offers a chapter that provides a unique comparison between the forestry industry and progressive deforestation in of Maine and Arkhangel'sk province in the twentieth century.\(^\text{12}\) Josephson explores the scientifically-rooted and economically-motivated techniques that both regions’ lumber industries employed. He describes the vulnerability of the forests in both locations due to brute force technology, which was capable of greater productivity and greater destruction:

> Revolutions in felling, power generation, milling, and transport led to deeper penetration into the forest and more regular delivery of products. In this way, brute force technology creates its own markets of consumption for housing, for paper, and for other products, that is, nurturing consumer demand while destroying nature. . . . Whether in capitalist Maine or in socialist Russia, the ideology of progress overwhelmed the trees.\(^\text{13}\)

The chapter examines the industry in Maine and then the development of forestry in Russia since the thirteenth century, the rise in the lumber industry during the reign of Peter the Great (1689-1725); an increase in public awareness about threats to the vitality of the forest in the late-1800s; and the changes that the industry underwent once the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. Mentions

---
\(^\text{11}\) Georgii Fedorovich Morozov was a professional forester and professor at the St. Petersburg Forest Institute in the years leading up to the Revolution. Combining his scientific knowledge with a belief in the unique quality of Russian forests, Morozov developed his holistic theory of stand types, which drastically changed the way Russian foresters approached forestry management. The theory classified different areas of forest based on the species of trees present, the quantity of trees, the climate, the soil, the geography of the land, and the activities of humans that might affect growth. Each of these factors would help to determine the proper treatment of each tree stand. For more information of Morozov and his theory, see: Ibid., 8–10; 30–34.


\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 74.
of the industry in the post-Stalin era refer to a project to create green zones around cities in 1965, the creation of a largely-unfollowed law that should have created “beauty strips” along highways, railroads, and rivers, the generally poor conditions in which Soviet loggers lived and worked, the unsuccessful efforts to encourage waste reduction and greater productivity by utilizing wood chips in the 1970s, the continuation of Stalin’s plans to build forest belts along major rivers, and the unrelenting disagreements over the proper cutting techniques. These areas contribute to a solid base for investigation of mentalities of the government and citizens in the Soviet press after 1953.

With regards to scholarship directly related to the relationship between the environment and the press, Paul Josephson has offered insight into the role that the Soviet press and literary figures played in the conversation about the environment, particularly during the Brezhnev Era. In *An Environmental History of Russia*, he draws attention to the increased focus on environmental concerns, in part, due to the focus of local lore (*kraevedenie*) organizations. These organizations varied in their stance, from conservative and nationalistic—*Nash sovremennik* (Our Contemporary), *Pamyat’* (Memory), *Oktiabr’* (Oktober)—to relatively liberal—*Novyi Mir* (New World). Josephson briefly touches on the renewed vigor with which Soviet journalists sought information regarding environmental issues and industrial failures, particularly in the two major newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. The enthusiasm for this genre of journalism encouraged activists to seek out coalitions with organs of the press, but censorship of some issues remained. Many articles did pass the Soviet censors, and furthermore, Josephson utilizes an additional source base that contributed greatly to discussions of the treatment of the Soviet environment. This base involves the perspectives that Soviet novelists contributed to the conservationist conversation. He specifically outlines the agendas of Leonid Leonov and Valentin Rasputin, who
both contributed prose that encouraged an appreciation of the Soviet landscape, but who also actively took a stand in campaigns to protect the environment.\textsuperscript{14}

Douglas Weiner’s book, \textit{A Little Corner of Freedom}, provides examples of each. Weiner offers an extensive look at the “Bochkarev Affair” and how it was covered in various publications.\textsuperscript{15} Both sides of the affair were published in \textit{Izvestiia} and \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}, but the visual proof of the incident that was printed in the satirical biweekly journal, \textit{Krokodil}, drew the greatest response and dispelled any of Bochkarev’s potential claims to innocence.\textsuperscript{16} Following the release of the \textit{Krokodil} article, the Presidium that was overseeing the case failed to respond for more than a month. The executive committee of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature (VOOP) drafted a letter that called for a response from the Politburo, the removal of Bochkarev from his leadership position, and full coverage of the affair in the press. Soviet newspapers heeded the call and printed articles concerning the VOOP president’s undeniable guilt in the current affair and his reportedly inferior track record when asked to stand for environmental protection.\textsuperscript{17}

Weiner also explores the campaign to protect Lake Baikal in the late-1950s and 1960s. Since the 1930s, Russia’s major waterways were vulnerable to river diverging projects and plans to construct massive hydroelectric plants, dams, and canals.\textsuperscript{18} Hopes to continue with these

\textsuperscript{14} Josephson et al., \textit{An Environmental History of Russia}, 248–250.
\textsuperscript{15} On August 22, 1964, Professor of Zoology at Moscow State University, V.G. Geptner, discovered M.M. Bochkarev, the head of the Russian Republic’s Main Forestry Administration and president of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature (VOOP), poaching on the Oka River with a dragnet. Bochkarev claimed he was innocent, and many party bureaucrats defended him. Geptner’s film recording of the incident spelled doom for Bochkarev. It took just under a year, from the time that the incident occurred, for VOOP to officially replace Bochkarev and for the affair to come to a close. For more details on the event’s proceedings and the inferences that Weiner made regarding the aftermath, see Weiner, \textit{A Little Corner of Freedom}, 340–354.
\textsuperscript{17} Weiner, \textit{A Little Corner of Freedom}, 341–350.
\textsuperscript{18} For further information on the Soviet Union’s plans for major construction on and around their waterways, see: Josephson, \textit{Industrialized Nature}, 15–68.
projects persisted beyond Stalin’s death in 1953, but, as Weiner states, “After the ‘thaw’… it became possible to speak out against them.”\footnote{Weiner, \textit{A Little Corner of Freedom}, 356.} Plans to detonate an explosion at the point where the lake flows into the Angara River drew passionate responses from locals, scientists, writers, and some factions of politicians.

Weiner discusses the role of writer and previous chair of the municipal soviet of Iakutsk, Frants Taurin, in the project. Taurin drafted a letter and collected signatures to call for the cancelation of plans to alter Baikal in 1958. Upon publication of “In Defense of Baikal” in \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}\footnote{The following is Princeton University Library’s description of \textit{Literaturnaia Gazeta} (USSR; Russia, 1929-): “Established on April 22, 1929 with the support of writer Maxim Gorky, Literaturnaia gazeta is a landmark publication in Russia's cultural heritage. With its focus on literary and intellectual life, it allowed Soviet Russia's preeminent authors, poets, and cultural figures a particular podium for commentary, affording perhaps fewer restrictions than might be possible in other publications. Was considered the most open among newspapers of the Soviet era, and it remains popular among the intelligentsia in today's Russia.” The digital archive of the newspaper is available to those with access from Princeton University at http://library.princeton.edu/resource/5047.} on 21 October, “the appeal touched a nerve in the newspaper’s readers. Within a month more than one thousand letters from all over the country poured in to \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}, many bearing the signatures of whole groups and collectives.”\footnote{Weiner, \textit{A Little Corner of Freedom}, 358–359.} As the plans to alter Baikal for industrial purposes continued, Taurin and his comrades continued their appeals to protect the lake, calling for it to become a \textit{zapovednik} (nature reserve). As the battle continued into the 1960s, other publications (\textit{Komsomol’skaia pravda}\footnote{\textit{Komsomol’skaia Pravda} (USSR; Russia, 1925-) was originally published as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, the youth wing of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Its general aim was to teach the youth of the Soviet Union about communist values. In the post-Soviet era, it functions as a daily tabloid.}, \textit{Sibirskie ogni}, \textit{Oktiabr’}) and academicians, writers, and journalists joined the fray. In the end, it is unclear whether the protests in the Soviet press had any significant impact on the protection of Lake Baikal, but as Weiner writes, “That nature protection issues could have such resonance testified to their evocative power in a modernizing society, on the one hand, and to the special status they enjoyed...
as a “protected” area of dissent in the neo-Stalinist state, on the other.”23 This sentiment reflects the mood of the Soviet Union at a time of a political regime change, but also at a time when global concerns for the health of the environment still on the horizon (i.e. the United Nations Stockholm Conference of 197224).

Based on the aforementioned works, there are important gaps in the historiography of Soviet environmental history that require attention. Firstly, the time period from Stalin’s death to the Soviet Union’s collapse has garnered significantly less coverage. The scholarship around forestry management during the Lenin and Stalin eras necessarily attempted to determine the origins of shifts in the Russian stance on how to relate to the forest, and the systematic shift towards embracing unrestrained exploitation of natural resources in general. As this conversation wanes, a modification in focus to the latter decades of the twentieth century creates an opportunity to uncover connections to current environmental questions in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

A second major area where scholarship is lacking involves coverage in the press of specific features of the Soviet environment across multiple decades. Although Weiner’s study of the press coverage of the movement to save Lake Baikal spans decades, the focus is on a single lake. A project that considers the coverage of a major environmental feature that impacts the

---

23 Ibid., 373; For more information about the history of Lake Baikal, the threats that the Soviet government posed to it, and the campaigns to protect it, see: Weiner's full chapter in A Little Corner of Freedom, 355-373 and Josephson, An Environmental History of Russia, 224–228.
24 The United Nation Stockholm Conference took place in June 1972, in order to discuss the global nature of environmental concerns and the responsibilities of different nations to ensure that such issues were addressed. This conference is often seen as the commencement of the global conservation movement of the latter-half of the twentieth century. For a description of the conference’s agenda, priorities, and values, see: Wayland Kennet, “The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment,” International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 48, no. 1 (January 1972): 33–45; For another perspective on the developments of the global movement, see: Norman Myers and Dorothy Myers, “From the ‘Duck Pond’ to the Global Commons: Increasing Awareness of the Supranational Nature of Emerging Environmental Issues,” Ambio 11, no. 4 (1982): 195–201. Myers and Myers discuss the primarily national nature of the concerns that were addressed at the Stockholm Conference and the way that challenges that faced the global environment developed into supranational concerns in the decade that followed.
lives of people in all regions of the Soviet Union provides greater opportunity to explore national attitudes. The evolution that mentalities underwent during Khrushchev’s “thaw” and Brezhnev’s “stagnation” surrounding forestry management and the integration of the natural environment in everyday life indicate greater awareness of threats to the health of the forest by both the government and citizens. Furthermore, the dearth of changes to policy-making and practices that impacted the forest and urban green spaces, reveals the deeper-rooted problems that had yet to be adequately addressed. The relaxing of restrictions to freedoms of speech and press allowed concerns for the economy and the environment to be expressed in a public forum. The level of attention in the press that these concerns drew throughout the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years, and the actions that were taken to address and ignore them, set the stage for contemporary issues. This is an area in Russian environmental history that necessitates greater attention.

Problematica

A study of environmental discourse in the Soviet Union should examine four main areas. The first concerns the primary actors that shaped the environmental discourse: what actors played a part in the discourse and what implicit positions did they represent? Next, how did this discourse change during post-Stalin era? Third, who held the positions of power in this discourse and why were certain areas of criticism tolerated to such a great extent? And, fourth, what impact did the discourse have on policy-making? Did it alter the processes that were curbing modernization and contributing to waste? These four areas of inquiry are developed further in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, which actors took part in the ongoing conversation regarding the treatment of the Soviet forests? The answer to this question is not as easy as simply naming the groups whose voices are represented most frequently (see Methodology and Sources). Answering this question
also requires an inquiry into the reasons why these groups wanted their voices to be heard and from whom, if anyone, they were attempting to provoke a response. These questions are the first to broach the subject of Soviet mentalities and ideologies. What ideology and political goals motivated the state to develop and introduce their particular views concerning the handling of forestland? What mentalities encouraged scientists and subjects of the Soviet state to express their thoughts and concerns? And what were these expressions realistically attempting to achieve?

Second, how did this discourse change throughout the post-Stalin era? With a study that spans multiple decades and various political regimes, it is possible to observe shifts in the mindsets of the actors who took part in the discourse. Changes in substance of the discourse, or lack thereof, is an important area of focus in this study. Are new points of contention entering the conversation and have earlier subjects started to recede? If new topics appear, is this because changes in policy or practice have brought about new opportunities for conversation, or is it due to a rise in awareness of preexisting issues? And if topics fade from conversation, is it because concerns have been adequately addressed or because new sources of greater concern have surfaced?

The expressions of a variety of concerns and opinions leads to the next major set of questions regarding power. In what might be thought of as a largely repressed society with regards to freedom of expression, why were criticisms concerning the treatment of the environment and the Soviet forests repeatedly allowed an opportunity to be voiced? Were concerns regarding the management of the forest and Soviet environment simply so low on the list of priorities, that it was deemed unnecessary to censor voices of dissent? When responses did appear, what issues were being brought to the government’s attention, and why did they garner a
reply? Finally, what can be ascertained regarding the disconnect between the Soviet government and its citizens based on the topics of concern that repeatedly appeared with no substantive responses? These questions provide a sense of the importance of power in the construction of the interaction between the Soviet state, its citizens, and the forest. Which actors during the post-Stalinist era held the power to select the agenda that was to drive forestry policies? What power did scientists and environmental specialists have to impact these policies? As the recently-popularized term “Anthropocene” suggests, humans have the power to drastically change the environment, for better or for worse, but some also hold the power to alter other humans’ understandings of the proper ways to relate to and interact with their surroundings.25

These questions of power leads to the final area of inquiry: what impact did the environmental discourse have on policy-making? Did scientists, forestry specialists, and environmental advocates have the power to influence the policies that affected the Soviet forest and the implementation of urban green spaces? If so, what steps did these actors take to create change? If not, did they respond with acquiescence or with greater demands and further negotiation? And what steps did government officials take in order to determine the areas in which they were willing to make concessions and heed the calls of outsiders? In the end, the answers to these questions allude to the fate of the health of the Soviet environment and forests.

Methodology and Sources

This study focuses on representations in the Soviet press of various views regarding the utilization of forestland in attempts to industrialize and modernize the Soviet Union in the period

after Stalin’s death, through the years of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras. The main body of primary sources utilized here is drawn from long-standing Soviet newspapers and journals that represent a variety of organizations and perspectives. The primary newspapers utilized are Pravda, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Izvestiia, the official organ of the Soviet government, expressing the official views of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. While these newspapers were not independent from the power structures of the Soviet Union, they do provide multiple points of view on topics relating to the treatment of the environment and offer varying levels of dissent. Although authors who contributed to the works utilized in this analysis did not always lay out their underlying motivations for questioning certain aspects of the Soviet Union’s forestry management and urban planning departments, the formation of their arguments and the strength of their critiques create a clear sense of their concerns.

In this paper, four categories of Soviet peoples, whose points of view concerning forest management and conservation were repeatedly represented in the post-Stalinist press, are identified: 1) leaders of the Soviet state and Communist Party; 2) local government officials; 3) scientists and forestry specialists; 4) Soviet citizens and press correspondents. Although it is not realistic to assume that each individual’s opinion is entirely representative of the group mentality, their statements are a solid starting block for observing the consistencies and changes that overall attitudes underwent from the 1950s to Brezhnev’s death in 1982. The articles that speak about particular topics relating to forestry management often relate to previous articles and create make-shift conversations between government officials, scientists, and civilians. This sort of exchange offers insight not only into the priorities of the different groups involved, but also

the expectations and respect that they hold for one another. Perhaps just as telling are the articles
that repeat the same concerns, but never attain a solution. These interactions are the primary
focus of this analysis.

In addition to the five categories of people who were participating in the discussions in
the press, I have also isolated five recurring topics of conversation and concern regarding the
treatment of the forest and the Soviet people’s relationship with the natural world. They are as
follows: 1) the problematic relationship between Soviet officials and planners and the leadership
of the forestry industry; 2) the complicated management structure within the industry; 3) the
disinterest of planners and procurement officials in integrating many secondary forest products
into the economy; 4) the unsustainable practices utilized by the industry that led to immense
waste of stands of trees, woodchips, and other wood byproducts; and 5) the desire to create urban
green spaces and forest belts around Soviet cities and towns.

The majority of these areas of concern (1-4) strongly pertain to the connection between
the environment and the economy. The analysis of these topics largely illustrates the dominant
concern for economic progress in official policy-making. The following analysis works to unveil
the conflicts that existed between official ideologies of the state, the actual practices that were
utilized, and the mentalities of non-governmental groups towards nature and the environment.
This information helps to determine whether or not Soviet citizens’ understandings of their
relationship towards the forest that existed in the pre-revolutionary era was dominant enough to
persist beyond the infiltration of Stalinism. The fifth topic of conversation, the creation of urban
green spaces and forest belts, offers an additional perspective on the Soviet peoples’ relation to
nature and the forest. The expression of a desire to be connected to the environment, particularly
for those who live in urban areas, can be telling. Certain arguments that are present in the articles
of the third group will also add to this perspective because of the historical cultural significance of gathering mushrooms for the Soviet people. Throughout each section, references to the economy and five-year plan fulfillment, poor communication and inefficient management structures, a lack of modernization and specialist training, the waste of time and resources, and environmental sustainability are frequently made. These areas receive significant attention in this paper.

The structure of this thesis primarily follows the five major areas of concern that continually surfaced in the Soviet press from 1953 to 1982. Again, briefly, they are 1) the relationship between the government and the forestry industry; 2) the management structure of the industry; 3) the lack of integration into the economy of secondary forestry products; 4) the waste of timber and wood products; and 5) urban green spaces and forest belts. One section is dedicated to the first two areas, the second to points three and four, and the third to the fifth area. Each section will proceed chronologically in order to show the progress or regression that took place throughout the period, with the exception of the section on urban green spaces, which contains one subsection of generally optimistic articles, and a second, which focuses on concerns. Those two subsections each proceed chronologically. I will discuss the different actors who participated in the conversations in order to deduce the mentalities of each group and the motivations that drove them to publicize their beliefs at those particular moments.
2. Organization of the Forestry Industry

The years of Nikita Khrushchev’s rule, from Stalin’s death in 1953 to Khrushchev’s own unseating in 1964, are often characterized by the First Secretary’s attempt to de-Stalinize the Soviet Union. Policy efforts to separate the image of the Communist Party from that of the former Soviet leader were initiated with Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. He denounced Stalin’s actions of the previous three decades and set into motion alterations to the structure of the Party and its leadership. These plans reversed the changes that Stalin had implemented throughout his rule in order to maintain a watchful eye over activities across the nation. Gregory L. Freeze states the following about the first of Khrushchev’s major areas of reform: democratization:

He was profoundly suspicious of ‘bureaucrats’ and ‘partocrats’ (party functionaries). And their numbers were legion; as a Central Committee resolution (21 May 1957) acidly observed, since 1940 primary party organizations had increased twofold, but their number of salaried functionaries had grown fivefold…. The objective, as a party resolution explained in 1957, was to eradicate the cult of personality and ‘ensure the broad participation of the working masses in the management of the state’.28

Khrushchev was prepared to snatch power from the top leadership in order to empower the people, and furthermore, he was willing to shift policy- and decision-making away from Moscow and into the periphery:

By 1955 Khrushchev had already transferred 11,000 enterprises (along with planning and financial decisions) from central to republican control…. Republican authorities gained so much power that their prime ministers became ex officio members of the USSR.

27 The highest position in the Communist Party during the Stalin era was “General Secretary”. Nikita Khrushchev renamed the position to “First Secretary” when he came to power, and the post of “General Secretary” was reestablished in 1966, when Leonid Brezhnev held the position.
Council of Ministers…. The underlying idea was to bring decision-making closer to the enterprise to ensure better management and greater productivity.\textsuperscript{29}

A reduction of power at the top and in the center was meant to reshape the image and the practical functioning of the Soviet state, contributing to a more liberal society and, perhaps more importantly, a more efficient economy.

Concerns regarding the impact of Khrushchev’s changes to leadership were often reflected in conversations in the Soviet press based around the functioning of the forestry industry in the years following Stalin’s death. With the decentralization of power from the center to the provinces, regional committees were charged with the task of coordinating the sectors of the forestry industry, from procurement and transport to processing and production. In theory, this localized power would lead to greater productivity, as area officials would have greater familiarity than Moscow with the available resources and with the functioning capacity of the enterprises under their jurisdiction. In reality, the complexity and disjointedness of the management structure led to unproductive practices. Moreover, inefficient communication between the central and local authorities contributed to the establishment of unattainable quotas and to insufficient attempts at streamlining processes and responsibilities. While themes of inefficiency are present throughout each section of this paper, this section specifically focuses on discussions in the Soviet press that had a direct relation to the disorganization of the industry leadership and of state planners. These areas fall into two major themes:

1. Poor communication between state and industry leadership, which often contributed to difficulty supplying the country’s demand for wood products and to poor location selections for the establishment of enterprises.
2. Inability to implement a more streamlined industry structure that would eliminate unnecessary middle management and allow for the smarter allocation of resources and delegation of responsibilities to the most productive enterprises.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 421.
Throughout the following section, conversations in the Soviet press regarding the functioning of the forestry industry management and state planning officials are discussed. These seven articles, whose original publication dates range from April 24, 1962, to August 1, 1981, provide insight into the structural issues of the industry that were most troubling to scientists and specialists, local party and government officials, journalists, and high-level state officials. Most importantly, this analysis helps to reveal the degree to which adequate changes were made in order to address these concerns.

State Planning and the Forestry Industry

The first selection of articles addresses the lack of coordination and communication between state planners and ministries and the forestry industry leadership. The three articles discussed in this subsection reveal concerns regarding the ability of local enterprises to fulfill the demands that are placed on them by Soviet planners; planners who were frequently unaware of the capabilities of the industry and of the resource pools within different regions of the country. Furthermore, local industry leaders were frustrated by state officials’ plans for focusing efforts to erect new enterprises in regions that were not ideal for productivity; a circumstance that appears in the first article. On April 24, 1962, Pravda published an article entitled “Urgent Question: On Problem of Transporting and Planning the Reprocessing of Lumber”. The Secretary of the Perm Province Party Committee, the Chairman of the Perm Economic Council, the Director of the Kama River Navigation Line, the Chief Specialist of the Russian Republic Council of Ministers’ State Committee for Coordinating Scientific Research, and a Pravda staff correspondent combined to author the article, and their focus is the wasteful allocation of funds for the building of wood-processing and transshipment enterprises in unforested areas. They criticize the USSR State Planning Committee and the Russian Republic State Planning Commission, as well as the
All-Russian Economic Council, for choosing to pour money into enterprises in the Lower Volga region, “many thousands of kilometers from the raw-material sources.”  They highlight the vast distance from raw material sources.

The pitfalls to such a plan were numerous, and discussed extensively in the article.

The authors denounced this use of capital as an “old habit.” They dedicate a significant portion of their argument to describing the benefits that the industry could gain by casting down this “old, erroneous tendency” and diverting funds to the development of greater infrastructure in the Middle and Upper Volga. They identify the northern provinces of Perm, Kirov, and Kostroma, in the Upper Volga and Kama River regions, as ideal locations for the construction of new sawmills. Without processing centers located in theUpper Volga, forestry workers were forced to navigate timber 2,500 kilometers downstream to the centers in the Lower Volga. Paul Josephson describes the immense waste that would occur on rivers across the country each year during the float process: “They cut far more than needed, for they could count on losing much of it…in rivers during the spring float…. From Arkhangel to the Volga, huge quantities of timber were lost to miscalculation of the onset of spring freshet. Logs spilled over onto floodplains, disappeared into the mud, and sank to the bottom.” The losses were immense, and the authors of this article appealed for changes to be made. Although two of the writers of the article were local officials of Perm, while a third was charged with responsibilities dealing with the Kama River, their potential biases should not discount the basis for their argument. As they state, “The mass floating of logs to the Lower Volga is uneconomical from all standpoints.” Furthermore,
the chief specialist of the Russian Republic council represents the voices of a broader group of Russian specialists whose focus is the economic viability of the whole republic.

The loss of time was one of the authors’ primary arguments against the construction of processing plants in unforested areas. It would take months once the lumber-floating season began for the raw materials to reach their destination, causing the processing enterprises to lay idle. Furthermore, the longer voyage created greater opportunity for lumber to be lost due to unsuccessful raft passages through hydroelectric dams: “The losses this causes on the roadsteads of the Volga region alone are counted in many millions of rubles.”34 This was not only an issue of distance, but of an archaic transport system. They call for the development of ships to replace the rafts currently in use. The utilization of ships would have allowed for more efficient transport of raw materials to the distant processing centers, and it would have limited the amount of wood lost on rivers and streams due to passage through dams. While access to articles that prove the results of this appeal were not available for this analysis, at various points throughout the next section on the unnecessary waste of forest products, questions regarding the reliance on old or traditional techniques and technologies are oft repeated, revealing the systemic nature of the primary concern in this article.

The primary anxiety in the following article also involves themes of waste that dominate the next section. The author’s focus on the impact of poor management by state officials and industry leadership on the creation of waste provides a useful case study in this section. Pravda published the article on November 23, 1969, and its author, staff correspondent V. Danilov, criticized the management of the forestry industry in Sverdlovsk Oblast and the forests surrounding the Ural Mountains. The engineers and technicians in the region focused their

34 Ibid.
strength to improve productivity and meet the plans set by the government. But because they relied on orders from republic and union-wide agencies, their timber reserves did not meet the state-determined quotas for the previous two years. Furthermore, the situation was worsening: “The year before last, for instance, they were 315,000 cu. m. short and, last year, 400,000 cu. m. short. And things are no better now.” The correspondent emphasized the negative trend and pointed to the great volume of raw material that should have been allocated by planning officials. Danilov describes the frustration of the forestry workers and provided specific figures to support their attitude:

The workers of the timber enterprises unequivocally declare that, in defiance of nature and to the detriment of the timber industry itself, the grown and overgrown timber outside the established bases is not consigned for felling. There are almost 1,000,000,000 cu. m. of it in the province, according to the purveyors. If 25,000,000 cu. m. of such timber were removed every year, there would be enough to last for 40 years. If not removed, the grown timber will be overgrown and then turn into debris.

The correspondent points to the economic and environmental consequences of the improper usage of the region’s timber.

Danilov makes clear that the blame for failing to meet targets did not solely rest on the local enterprises, but also on the central planners. Large stands of mature and overgrown trees were left untouched because state planners did not call for the forest’s comprehensive assessment, and furthermore, this led to the felling of young stands that should have been allowed to mature: “More than 300,000 cu. m. of timber not fully grown was removed this year alone,” indicating that foresters were pressured to fulfill short-term goals, at the cost of great damage in the long-term. He used the shortages of raw materials at the Talitsa, Yushala, and

36 Ibid., 29.
37 Ibid.
Lobva Sawmills and the Novaia Liali Paper Combine as examples of the potential epidemic that could spread throughout the region if planning did not include forest restoration. The Pravda correspondent completed his argument with the following denunciation:

The directors of the Sverdlovsk Timber Industry Trust are aware of [the environmental consequences or their work], of course; but they cannot always be kind to nature without the necessary understanding in the planning agencies and without direct support from the USSR Ministry of the Lumber, Pulp-and-Paper and Wood Processing Industries.

The ministry does not always take the forces and possibilities of the purveyors into account. The industrial timber reserves of Sverdlovsk are not unlimited. How long will they last? This question is legitimate, unless one lives by the principle: “Tomorrow will take care of itself.”

By failing to direct the full assessment of forested land in the region, leading to the economically and environmentally harmful designation of stands to be cut, it appears that planning officials had internalized this principle with regards to the forests of the Sverdlovsk Oblast and the fulfillment of their economic plans.

Over a decade later, an article in Izvestiia expressed almost identical concerns regarding stand allocation and unsustainable practices. On August 1, 1981, N. Anuchin (member of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences), A. Oblivkin (Doctor of Technology), and Ye. Spiridonov (Izvestiia special correspondent) published a lengthy article, entitled, “Why is There a Shortage of Timber?” and subtitled, “Despite the Great Wealth of Our Green Ocean.”

The following excerpt is depictive of the target of the authors’ frustrations:

Ask the loggers what worries them most today, and they’ll answer: “We don’t know where to cut trees.” With our wealth of forests! -you’ll say in amazement. But the loggers’ concern is completely justified. The USSR State Planning Committee allocates them raw-material resources solely on the basis of the total volume of timber removed…. In order to obtain the raw materials specified by the plan for output “in kind,” it’s necessary to get the permission of the province Soviet executive committee and the republic Council of Ministers…. Timber resources are kept away from the loggers, under

---

38 Ibid.
lock and key. Even with the state plan in their hands, they are often unable to obtain the cutting-area structure they need.\textsuperscript{40}

The state planners were uninformed about the quality of wood that was available in the designated areas for cutting, and therefore, when forestry workers were sent out to fulfill plans, they confronted a dilemma; cut what had been designated, but risk fulfilling the plan; cut in areas with the necessary timber, but risk their jobs; or seek out permission to cut in the desired stands, but risk wasting time during the lengthy approval process. This 1981 article showed concern for the poor communication between the industry and the government planners, just as the author of the 1969 article feared the potential economic and environmental devastation due to similar inefficiencies in Sverdlovsk Oblast.

Anuchin, Oblivkin, and Spiridonov dedicated a significant portion of their article to critiquing another inadequacy of the state planners that can be categorized under the previously referred to “old system” of practices that so frustrated the authors of the 1962 article. In 1981, the complaint pertained to planners’ failures to reallocate for cutting lands in strategic locations (i.e. close proximity to infrastructure) that were previously considered depleted. They explain that massive portions of forest reserve land had been felled during and after World War II (Russia’s Great Patriotic War), but they were already reaching maturity. Moreover, forests in the European-Ural region were increasing in size rather than decreasing (by 8.2 million hectares in the last 25 years), and yet, the total areas assigned to logging enterprises were continually reduced. They question the logic behind allocations:

What scientific criteria were used to justify the exclusion of 23.3 million hectares of forest from the assets of the European-Urals zone? It would be futile to look for them…. How can one explain the fact that in Novgorod, Vologda and Kostroma Provinces just 3.5% to 5% of forest land has been removed from exploitation, while in Azerbaidzhan [sic] and Georgia these figures are 68% and 82%?\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 11.
Their criticism and confusion at these figures illustrates the seemingly random manner in which forested land were designated for protection or for cutting. They recognized that certain areas that were protected did require time to regenerate after previous cutting campaigns, but the regrowth that had occurred over decades demanded that planners update allocations. This critique dominated much of the article, while another aspect of this article, regarding the internal disorganization that plagued the functioning of the forestry industry, will be discussed at the end of the following section.

“One Boss for the Forest”

A second set of articles address the problematic structure of the forestry industry’s levels of management, which contributed to deficiencies when attempting to fulfill quotas and complete projects. The press coverage of calls for changes to the structure of the forestry industry’s management hierarchy were predominant in the 1970s. The following four articles, published between 1969 and 1981, illustrate the foremost concerns of scientific and economic specialists, Soviet officials, and journalists throughout the period. As was often the case in the relationship between state planners and industry leadership, poor communication was one of the industry’s greatest pitfalls. This deficiency contributed to numerous issues, including the following: industry leaders failed to inform workers when plans were altered, causing them to unknowingly work toward their original goals; incorrect materials were delivered for use in construction projects; and enterprises were shut down and demolished under one manger’s jurisdiction, while other enterprises were slated to be built in the surrounding region. The authors of the following articles were adamant about the overarching inefficiency of the complex and disorganized hierarchy, which, if corrected, would lead to a reduction of these wasteful practices throughout the industry.
On December 22, 1969, an article in Pravda sets the tone for the coming years and the critiques of the organization of the lumber industry. The author was an engineer in the USSR Ministry of Construction’s Chief Administration for the Western Regions, and his report concerns the primary cause of the persistent lack of necessary lumber for construction projects in the Soviet Union:

While going from floor to floor and office to office in the large building on Sadovo-Spasskaya Street in Moscow that houses the supply organization called the Chief Administration for Inter-Republic Deliveries of Lumber, I involuntarily began to wonder why year after year new construction projects in Leningrad fail to receive a sufficient amount of lumber for crossties. As is well known, without them it is impossible to build a single railroad spur track to a construction project…. Why is it so difficult to obtain lumber?... Last year the chief administration received more than 80,000 letters and telegrams. This year the number is even greater.

The Chief Administration for Inter-Republic Deliveries of Lumber received thousands of inquiries into the matter, and yet they could not identify the source of the problem without further investigation. Smorodinsky explains that an extraordinary number of communications were necessary in order to determine the exact place of the breakdown. The USSR State Supply Committee received numerous inquiries about the unfulfilled deliveries; inquiries were sent by the Ministry of Construction and by local ministries to the nationwide department responsible for lumber deliveries. Furthermore, when those letters failed to produce an adequate explanation, letters were sent directly to suppliers in the Komi and Karelian republics where much of the lumber originated. In the most extreme situations, the engineer admitted that personal trips were made to individual suppliers in order to inquire about the missing material.

This complicated chain of requests for information is exacerbated further because each phase in the inquiry process produced different information. Smorodinsky describes the conversations:

We sent a telegram to the Komi Autonomous Republic Lumber Supply and Marketing Administration. It didn’t help. We went there ourselves. The suppliers replied that they didn’t have the necessary materials. They told the Chief Administration… the same thing, although the latter had tried to assure us that the shipment was delayed solely because of a shortage of freight cars. It was only after this information had been obtained that an explanation arrived stating that the supplier did not in fact have the necessary resources.43

In this circumstance, the lumber was meant to arrive, but the construction enterprises were not notified that it was not available at that time. In a second similar situation, a reduction of coniferous lumber allocations by 17-percent at a particular construction site in the Karelian Republic was not communicated directly to the builders when the change was made. Smorodinsky explains, “Not the holders of the allocation orders, but the suppliers and producers, received this startling news…. We ended up with no coniferous lumber. We were offered deciduous species, but they cannot take the place of the materials we need.”44 Smorodinsky was frustrated by the ignorance that accompanied the expectations that different species could be utilized interchangeably and that valuable conifers might be used for temporary structures. These issues were encompassed within the overarching concern about poor communication between different parts of the industry, which threatened to cause setbacks at each stage of production.

The engineer requested that communications be streamlined and that the heads of the Chief Administration for Inter-Republic Deliveries of Lumber take responsibility for being aware of lumber availability and demand, and for making others aware. This article focuses specifically on the breakdown of communication in the industry more than any of the previous

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
articles. It is therefore a primary example of the efforts that the press made to mask the incompetency of the top leadership and failing infrastructure in the industry by blaming a specific flaw that could have a solution. Poor communication is a serious issue, but one that could be corrected with restructuring. If incompetence is the issue, as may have been the case in the Soviet forestry industry, the solutions are far fewer. While the success of the industry was not entirely hopeless, it was plagued by deep-rooted problems. It was far less damaging to publicly frame the problems as “poor communication” rather than general incompetence. Keeping this consideration in mind helps to better understand the concerns that were expressed in the press regarding the functioning of the industry, which are discussed further in the remainder of this section.

Smorodinsky’s article mentions only a few actors within the industry who were a part of this chain of communication, but a 1971 article written by the Minister of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry, N. Timofeyev, describes the complicated web of managing bodies, which contributed greatly to the inefficiencies that plagued the forestry industry. The Minister explains, “The management pattern of combines, trusts and chief administrations has throughout proved to be clumsy and insufficiently flexible,”45 which led to efforts in the past four years to improve functionality by creating new and simplified structural divisions. He hoped to achieve a structure with only three levels: The Ministry of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry at the top, followed by the various associations, which could encompass a particular segment of the industry or a particular economic region, and lastly the individual enterprises. All other middle-level structures would be liquidated to enhance communication and efficiency, which, as was made clear in the 1969 article, was a great concern. Timofeyev held the top position at this time.

in the industry. His acknowledgement on a public platform of the need to reorganize the management structure, renders plausible the belief that greater efficiency was on the way. As the analysis of the following three articles reveals, this change is not inevitable.

N. Medvedev (a Ph.D. in economics and member of the Collegium of the USSR Ministry of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry) published an article on the three-tiered system two years after Timofeyev’s article. On June 27, 1973, Medvedev reported that the Ministry had, to a large extent, implemented the management system of the lumber industry that was described by Minister Timofeyev. He reports that this reduced overall operational costs by 107,000,000 rubles. These savings would create opportunities for scientific and technical development, and, he explains, “emphasis will be placed on the creation of lumber combines and production, research-and-production and major territorial associations”\textsuperscript{46} in the future. This information creates a sense of success within the industry, as Medvedev describes their substantial progress toward achieving a specific restructuring goal, and he indicates that their next aim was to become more efficient through improved technology.

The author placed the achievements at the forefront of his article, but he was adamant that some challenges could not be resolved automatically by restructuring the management hierarchy. One hindrance to achieving full efficiency in the lumber industry was the vast number of small collective operations (34,000) that did not operate under the umbrella of the Ministry of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry, though they supplied approximately the same volume of timber to the national economy as the 847 enterprises under the Ministry. Medvedev demanded that these efforts be streamlined, as the cost of each unit from the small enterprises far

exceeded the cost for each unit from a state enterprise. Furthermore, they utilized less sustainable methods of felling in order to save costs:

The independent logging organizations make far less efficient use of available timber. They cannot, and in some cases do not want to, engage in the comprehensive processing of wood. The independent logger cuts out just one of two types of wood from the trees he fells – he takes only the type he needs. The rest of the wood is irretrievably lost.47

This waste was problematic and a concern for many within and outside the industry. It was particularly frustrating in this situation for members of the Ministry of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry because the sawmill facilities under their jurisdiction were operating at just 85% of capacity.48 If they were to take on the work of the small operations, they would, in theory, more efficiently produce the country’s demand for lumber in a more sustainable manner.

An article in Pravda on August 11, 1976, raised even greater doubt that a three-tiered system of management improved the industry’s efficiency. The authors were V. Litvinov, a regular correspondent for the forestry industry newspaper Lesnaia promyshlennost’, and Zh. Chesnokov, a Pravda correspondent. The two journalists aimed to promote awareness of the extreme inefficiencies in the Karelian Autonomous Republic, which were largely caused by overlapping managerial jurisdictions within the forest. Forestry stations, timber-chemical enterprises, logging enterprises, and district executive committees each had a say in the use of the forest. The article describes the wasteful and inefficient processes that were occurring throughout the nation because the bosses of the forest were not able to coordinate their efforts:

Judge for yourself. The Karelia Timber Industry Association’s Derevyanka Logging Enterprise closed down operations and, with no one to transfer the physical plant to, bulldozed it. Shortly thereafter the Karelian Autonomous Republic Forestry Ministry’s Petrozavodsk Forestry Station set up operations at the same spot, built a railroad siding, a

47 Ibid., 11.
48 Ibid.
mechanized warehouse for preparing saplings for planting, and auxiliary shops, duplicating structures that had been there before.  

The destruction of infrastructure in a region that played a prominent role in supplying the nation with wood products, only to be followed by the construction of the same buildings and equipment was a blatant waste of energy and materials. Moreover, Litvinov and Chesnokov made clear that the incident was not isolated.

A similar situation was slated to occur at the Girvas Milling Depot of the Kondopoga Lumber Enterprise, although the waste specifically involved the use of raw materials, rather than the industry infrastructure. The enterprise on the western bank of Lake Onega was suffering from a decreased supply of raw material, which was like to cause operations to shut down. The authors explain that foresters in the adjacent forests were cutting timber “for forest improvement”; this was an important process to support sustainable regrowth, but the timber was left to rot because the two operations were not coordinated. Litvinov and Chesnokov report that the heads of four lumber enterprises in Karelia—Lakhkolamba, Medvezhegorsk, Ladva, and Olonets enterprises—acknowledged an urgent need for a single boss to organize all forest and lumber enterprises. Both economic and conservationist improvements would benefit from the implementation of such a system. Circumstances in which time and resources were wasted in order to duplicate operations that were already available to the industry would be eliminated, and the felling of trees to supply processing factories would be reduced if those charged with forest management were directed to communicate with procurement and processing managers about the felled timber that they produced.

50 Ibid.
If the leaders of four lumber enterprises located in one of the nation’s most predominant forestry regions recognized the immense waste due to poor communication, it seems likely that a coordination of efforts in the industry would become a priority. By returning to the 1981 article, which provided a sense of the inadequate sharing of information between industry leaders and state planners in the previous section, the degree to which the lumber and processing industry management were able to reorganize their operations by the early-1980s can also be deduced. While the article written by Anuchin, Oblivkin, and Spiridonov largely focused on the relationship between the state and the industry, one specific excerpt describes the internal disorganization that continued to plague the industry, despite the fact that changes to the complex management hierarchy had been requested for over a decade. The concerned specialists and journalist state, “We must steer a course aimed at the concentration of logging operations. We can no longer tolerate a situation in which 10,000 enterprises under the jurisdiction of 34 different ministries and departments operate in the forests.” The solution that they proposed was to make the Ministry of the Timber, Pulp-and-Paper and Lumber Industry responsible for approving all major decisions within the industry. Although the workload of the Ministry itself would increase dramatically, this is the only scenario that the authors felt would provide the necessary coordination and communication for an economically viable industry.

Conclusions

The press accounts suggest that efforts to reform the organization and productivity of forest industry management were unsuccessful. An analysis of the press from the 1950s to the 1980s shows little change: the concerns that were addressed in the Soviet press of the previous two decades largely mirror the anxieties of Anuchin (member of the Academy of Agricultural

Sciences), Oblivkin (doctor of technology), and Spiridonov (*Izvestiia* correspondent). A reliance on “old habits”, which was first seen in Konoplev’s 1962 article, flows throughout the articles in this section. One witnesses both state planners and industry officials employing out-of-date practices, including the utilization of obsolete equipment and techniques, the selection of locations for new enterprises in less-than-ideal locations based on the use of those areas in the past, the disinterest in reallocating mature stands for cutting because they were previously depleted, and the inability to implement an adequate change to the management structure in order to improve efficiency.

This section illustrates the effort to transform the industry hierarchy. Unfortunately for those who advocated for the three-level system (such as the Minister of the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry, N. Timofeyev), the progress was not sufficient to attain the necessary results. Whether Medvedev’s report in 1973 regarding the implementation of the three-tiered system was entirely representative of the actual circumstances, the remaining deficiencies, which the economist himself identified, were an unjustifiable source of substantial material waste and economic loss. The press clearly blamed state officials for squandering time, money, and natural resource. For example, Konoplev’s 1962 article regarding the time that would be wasted to allow for timber to reach processing centers in the Lower Volga—not to mention the loss of timber itself—and in Danilov’s 1969 article regarding planners’ disregard for reallocating stands for cutting in Sverdlovsk that contained overgrown trees. Furthermore, waste was also a major issue, most notably in the cases described by Litvinov and Chesnokov in 1976, in which closings and destruction of enterprises, followed by construction and openings of nearly identical operations within the same region, were carried out due to a lack of communication across the industry.
3. Beyond the Conifers: Mushrooms, Deciduous Trees, and Other Forest Products

Although the dominant feature of any forest is the trees, a great abundance of other species, both plant and animal, are of great economic and aesthetic value. Russian forests contain a plethora of organic materials—from the wood utilized for building homes, furniture, and crafts, to the mushrooms and berries used for enhancing Russian cuisine. Although many of these products were cultivated and harvested on a minimal-scale by individuals and small collectives, the great coniferous trees found across the nation were already an integral part of the economy when the Soviet Union was formed in the 1920s. They continued to be the primary focus of the forestry industry and economic planners throughout the next seven decades. As the years progressed, economic and forestry specialists became increasingly concerned with the sustainability of the areas that were continually being logged and with the vast quantity of materials that were either being destroyed or allowed to go to waste. While the infrastructure and management of the forestry industry that existed throughout the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s was inadequate for the efficient and sustainable extraction of conifers for lumber (described in the previous section), it was even less suited to support the procurement and utilization of other natural resources.

Berries, nuts, plants, and mushrooms were left to rot, deciduous tree species were overlooked, and woodchips and other organic waste from trees littered the forest and factory floors after enterprises moved on to their next extraction site. Many charged with the task of

52 Paul Josephson offers the price for these goods as one cause for the industry’s lack of focus on utilizing the secondary forest products and wood byproducts. He states, for example, “Many managers, such as those of
organizing the nation’s economy and determining the goals of each Five-Year Plan were wary of integrating these materials into the forestry industry on a large scale. It was clear that new technologies to extract and process these goods, additional training for specialists, managers, and workers, and greater familiarity with the land and the value of the products that the land encompassed would be necessary to take full advantage of the wealth of the forest. Based on the conversations in the Soviet press from the 1950s through the 1970s, and into the 1980s, Soviet officials were not motivated to diversify the forestry industry, fearing the initial investments that such a program would require. The articles under analysis in this section discuss various materials that could have been utilized to a greater degree, both to enhance the economy and to provide Soviet citizens with the necessary goods for a healthy lifestyle. Numerous solutions are suggested, a few of which are repeated frequently throughout the decades. Much can be learned considering the motivations that underlie each appeal for greater awareness of the products that the forest has to offer and of the waste and byproducts that could be put to work for the people. In the majority of these articles, the authors wanted readers (and government officials) to be aware of the economic benefit of diversifying the forestry industry, but the infiltration of conservationist, and even preservationist, attitudes help to create a broader understanding of the complex mentalities of the Soviet people.

“Mushrooms Have Been Known for Too Long”

The tradition of gathering edible goods from the forest floor has occupied Russians during their weekends and holidays for centuries. Mushroom hunts, in particular, hold an important place in the lives of many Russians to this day, as they seek to bring a piece of the enterprises in the Bratsk and Ust’-Illinsk forest complexes, refused to use wood chips to produce mineral spirits, tar, turpentine, or pressboard for furniture. Gosplan (the state planning administration) set prices for these products too low for them to make a profit. So chips continued to rot in warehouses or in the open air. The Chuna, Taishet, and Lena Forestry Trusts lacked the technology even to process chips.” See: Josephson, *Industrialized Nature*, 121.
Russian environment into their kitchens. The Russian-born Valentina Pavlovna Wasson, in the book that she wrote with her husband about ancient human relationships with mushrooms in cultures around the world, describes her earliest memories in 1909 of happily entering the woods to gather mushrooms with her sister. Wasson explains, “All Russians know the mushrooms, not by dint of study as the mycologists do, but as part of our ancient heritage, imbibed with our mother's milk.” Such activities persisted throughout the Soviet era, but with the rise of industry and urbanization, the degree to which people sought out the fruits of the forest decreased. This can be partially attributed to the fact that more people were living in cities and large towns, and therefore had less access to the countryside on a regular basis. It can also be related to a change in mentality of the Soviet workforce. The author of a 1962 Izvestiia article describes his perception of the change from the pre-Soviet years:

The majority of the population in the country was rural, and even in the cities life was simpler, people were resourceful, and children, old people and housewives gathered

53 For an outsider’s perspective on the mushroom-gathering of Russians into the 21st century, see: Akhil Sharma, “If You Are Normal, You Search for Mushrooms,” The New York Times, October 3, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/06/travel/if-you-are-normal-you-search-for-mushrooms.html. Sharma is a professor of Creative Writing at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. He shares his conversations with Russians regarding their love of the mushroom hunt and the respect that they have for the treatment of their harvest. He also describes his personal experiences gathering mushrooms in the forests surrounding Moscow and St. Petersburg.

54 Valentina Pavlovna Wasson and R. Gordon Wasson, Mushrooms, Russia and History, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 3. Later in the first chapter, entitled “Mushrooms and the Russians,” Wasson describes the significance of the forest’s mushrooms, even to city-dwellers like herself, in the pre-Soviet era: “We were Muscovites. My parents belonged to the Russian intelligentsia, and were city bred. We children spent most of our childhood in the immense cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and only our vacations in the country. Yet to no one in all Muscovy could it have seemed strange that Tanya and I, and all our little playmates, made ourselves useful, when in the country, by gathering various kinds of mushrooms and bringing them home in childish rivalry and glee to the kitchen. When we were naughty, our mother would punish us by forbidding us to go mushrooming” (4).

55 Following the completion of the 1970 Soviet Census, Chauncy D. Harris completed a study of the urban and demographic revolutions that took place across the nation throughout the previous decade. He states, “During the intercensal period 1959-1970, the total population increased by 16 percent, the urban population increased by 36 percent, and the rural population decreased by 3 percent. In 1970 there were 221 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, and ten cities with more than a million” (102). He attributes urban population growth to natural demographic changes that occurred within cities (birth rates increasing and mortality rates remaining relatively level), updated designations of settlements from rural to urban, and the migration of residents from rural to urban areas. See: Chauncy D. Harris, “Urbanization and Population Growth in the Soviet Union, 1959-1970,” Geographical Review 61, no. 1 (1971): 102–24.
mushrooms. Now enormous masses of the population have gone into industry. There are fewer people in the villages and there is plenty of other work for them to do.\textsuperscript{56}

The massive push for industrialization that began with Stalin in the late-1920s had an impact on the day-to-day activities of many Soviet citizens. While the desire to maintain ties to the practice of gathering mushrooms and other goods from the forest persisted for some, others saw the general decline in such activities as a void that needed filling.

Articles that made reference to the abundance of mushrooms and other secondary products in the forests, but also to the declining availability of these products to regular Soviet citizens, regularly appeared in the Soviet Union’s major newspapers throughout the latter-half of the twentieth century. An article that appeared in \textit{Izvestiia} on September 14, 1953, just half a year after Stalin’s death, speaks specifically to the abundance of wild mushrooms in the forests of the Moscow region and the great supply that could be found in collective farm markets. But the author, Vice Chairman of the Kuibyshev Borough Soviet Executive Committee, I. Smirnov, displays concern regarding the availability of mushrooms to those without access to the collective markets because of the dearth of the product in local consumers’ cooperatives and produce stores. Smirnov explains that the problem rested with the aims of those who procured products for these locations. He quotes clerks at a local store, who said, “Our procurement organizations don’t bother with such things.”\textsuperscript{57} The store managers sold what they were given, regardless of the consumers’ wants. Smirnov goes on to describe the situation in Belarus, where the Belorussian forest’s wealth of mushrooms largely went to waste, “All because the Belorussian Union of Consumers’ Cooperatives did not attach the necessary importance to


\textsuperscript{57} I. Smirnov, “From the Editor’s Mail: Concerning Procurement and Processing of Mushrooms,” \textit{The Current Digest of the Soviet Press} 5, no. 36 (October 17, 1953): 23.
mushroom procurement and processing.”\textsuperscript{58} The author places responsibility for the greater use of these products with state officials, but he does not allude to an urgent economic need. In this 1953 article, the tone is mostly instructive, pointing to an area where growth was possible, but it will become clear in the analysis of later articles that Smirnov’s message foreshadows intensified calls for integration of mushrooms and other secondary forest products into the preexisting forestry industry.

The next article appeared nearly a decade after Smirnov’s, and it shows a major contrast in tone and the degree of concern regarding the significance of mushrooms in people’s lives and in the Soviet marketplace. The occupation of the author of the Izvestii a article of August 26, 1962, is unknown, though based on the title (“From the Editor’s Mail: Concerning Procurement and Processing of Mushrooms”), it is likely that he was not affiliated with the paper. Furthermore, based on his message and tone, it is similarly unlikely that he was a government official. The style of this piece is personal, drawing the attention of everyday Soviet citizens, but it also makes numerous references to the deficiencies present in the forestry industry with regards to the scope and capabilities of their operations.

The author introduces his note to the editor with exasperated humor. He describes the great effort that scientists are devoting to the extraction and development of new food products from organic matter in the sea. He expresses ironic confusion with regard to their work because the Soviet forests held a great wealth of mushrooms:

Would it not be more expedient, before cooking microbes or trying the taste of the inside of shells, to utilize mushrooms, which are truly beneficial and delectable? Indeed, when hearing about these discoveries, one can only regret that mushrooms have been known for too long.

What would have happened if mushrooms had been discovered only in our time? …Scientists would tell many interesting things about them. Geologists would work days and nights in search of new deposits. Mines would have been sunk into the depths of the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
earth. And I am not exaggerating. Who would dare to assert that sea cabbage, Chlorella or even flounder tastes better or is better for the health than mushrooms?\textsuperscript{59}

Yakovlev pokes fun at the state’s intense drive for scientific advancement and pointed to the irrationality of exerting these particular efforts when the beloved mushroom was readily available in the nation’s forests. Furthermore, when the lack of technological advancements in the field of forestry become more apparent and additional layer of absurdity is added to his reservations about the focus on scientific development of new food sources from the sea. These technological deficiencies in the industry are discussed extensively throughout this section.

The concerned citizen’s next source of consternation was another criticism of Soviet priorities, but rather than critiquing the scientific community, he turns his attention to the changed lifestyles of everyday people, and particularly those who live away from the countryside. Yakovlev infers that, despite their continued proliferation, “Mushrooms have disappeared from sale. What has happened? It has happened not to mushrooms but to people. There is nobody to concern himself with mushrooms.”\textsuperscript{60} His argument harkens back to the earlier quote of Wasson regarding her family’s constant attachment to the countryside and its mushrooms; Yakovlev explains that this strong tie between Russians and nature has been altered throughout the last four decades. Previously, all Russians either lived in rural settings or, if they lived in cities, they maintained a connection to the countryside and sought out the forest. In the 1960s, these same people so drastically shifted their focus to their work and urban lifestyles, they did not go out of their way to gather mushrooms. Furthermore, those who lived in villages gather enough only to maintain subsistence levels. Mushroom collecting as a recreational activity had lost its appeal.

\textsuperscript{59} Yakovlev, “Izvestia in the Family Circle,” 28.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 29.
Despite this negative message, Yakovlev argues that mushroom gathering remained a part of the Soviet character and should be encouraged. The author utilizes a cultural comparison between fans of football (soccer) and fans of mushrooms. He described the nearly religious passion of football fans and the masses that gathered at stadiums on game-days. He then describes the even more extreme enthusiasm for mushroom gathering:

What is at the basis of this mass attraction? Of course, not only the contents of the basket. The road to mushrooms leads into the forest. And the forest is the Russian forest, our own forest. The gathering of mushrooms makes people communicate with our own nature. The ideas of the homeland and of our own nature are inseparable. Love of nature ennobles and elevates the human personality.61

Yakovlev discusses the respectable qualities that are fostered in a young Soviet citizen when they go to the forest without a particular agenda, only with the goal of collecting mushrooms and enjoying their country. He fears this simple activity is being lost to the rigorous schedule of the Young Pioneers and Komsomol.62

Although the authors of articles throughout the coming years frequently did not express a concern for the need to rekindle the emotional relationship between Soviet citizens and the forest, Yakovlev’s final point is shared and built upon to a great extent. At the end of his letter to Izvestiia, he reiterates a sentiment that is present in the 1953 article regarding the need for those

61 Ibid.
62 Karel Hulicka reported on the ideology that motivated the organization of the Young Communist League in the Soviet Union and how this ideology directed their discipline and regimentation. The following are relevant excerpts from the article: “The Komsomol not only provides training in Soviet citizenship but also prepares future Party members. Some of its goals and tasks are to increase and utilize initiative, to instill discipline (which is supposed to be voluntary) and love for work (whether manual or mental but especially the former) …to improve discipline in the schools, to cooperate with teachers,” etc. (365). “Self-sacrifice for the common cause is demanded of Komsomolites. Every member of the youth organization is to develop strength, courage, initiative, and to become an educated, diligent, accurate worker with a high sense of responsibility, a true servant of the people” (366). “To achieve communism, youth has to be raised in the spirit of collectivism, hence regimentation” (371). The article was written in 1962, when more open interaction between the Soviet Union and the West was possible, but it was still at the height of the Cold War. Hulicka’s tone appears to contain some judgement, but in the final pages, he does make an effort to show a desire for common understanding: “That we as Westerners may not approve of regimentation does not relieve us from the need to understand Soviet motivation” (371). See: Karel Hulicka, “The Komsomol,” The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 42, no. 4 (1962): 363–73.
in positions of authority to take the initiative in implementing important and readily available products in locations that are accessible to all Soviet people. He refers to the logistical aspects that should be addressed if mushrooms are to become a more prominent product in the market, and he explains the potential for failure if the state does not appropriately manage the industry:

This work has to be well prepared. Trade organizations must organize receiving and salting centers in various places. And we must see to it that they do this, because in trade there are quite a number of people who have become accustomed merely to distributing what is ready, what they have received from the state. And they are not in the least ashamed that there are no mushrooms in the stores…. What a headache! It would be better to import mushrooms from Africa.\(^\text{63}\)

Once more, Yakovlev utilizes sarcasm in his suggestion to import mushrooms from Africa. Perhaps it would be less work for the government to do so, but after advocating for the importance and abundance of mushrooms in the Soviet Union, he clearly would not support such a proposal. This statement represents Yakovlev’s final jab at the government’s apprehension toward investing in the capital that would allow the Soviet forestry industry to diversify and utilize secondary products that had been disregarded at the time.

Conversations in the press during the 1970s continued where those of the previous two decades left off: with appeals for the utilization of mushrooms and other secondary forest products for the benefit of the Soviet people’s health and the nation’s economy. Two telling examples of the persisting concerns in this decade regarding the lack of interest by the government in the large-scale procurement of mushrooms, berries, nuts, etc. appeared in Pravda in 1972 and 1975.\(^\text{64}\) Like the concerns of the authors of the 1953 and 1962 articles, these articles express dissatisfaction at the short-sightedness of those who organize and direct the forest

---

\(^{63}\) Yakovlev, “Izvestia in the Family Circle,” 29.

procurement industry, but they also introduce various points that add significant weight to their argument for the expansion of the forestry industry. The writer of the 1972 article is identified as a Candidate of Economics, and the writer of the 1975 article is a forester. While their articles do not contain impactful sarcasm and nostalgic references to the romantic relationship between Russians and the environment, the authors’ specialized training in these areas allows them to soundly criticize the current utilization of the forests’ products and to propose plans to alter these management methods.

Yu. Tupytsya introduces her 1972 article with a story of success, albeit limited, regarding the integration of mushrooms and berries into the market of the Volyn Oblast of northwestern Ukraine. The Forestry Station Procurement Personnel and local enterprises in the region took part in the inventorying of berries and mushrooms in the forests to determine where they could cultivate and harvest the greatest yield. Individuals from across sectors were involved in the process, from those who valuate the forest and those who procure the goods to those who process the berries and mushrooms and those who manage the cultivation and regrowth of the best quality goods. Tupytsya praises the work in this particular corner of the Soviet Union, but, “Unfortunately, this thrifty, sensible attitude toward the forest’s gifts has not yet become a large-scale, general phenomenon. It is based largely on the initiative and enthusiasm of individual workers and does not have a proper economic basis.”

Despite the small scale of the operations in Tolyn, this is an improvement from the situations reported in the 1962 and 1953 articles, when neither industry workers nor state officials showed interest in reorganizing their efforts to integrate these products into the economy and the daily duties of the procurement personnel. But in order to have a significant impact on the national economy, they needed the support of

---

ministries and departments to gain sufficient funds and technologies for the harvesting and delivery of products.

The development and implementation of proper procurement and distribution of mushrooms, berries, and other secondary forest products was essential to the success of such a massive industry shift, but Tupytsya indicates that they first need to perform large-scale surveys of the forest’s resources. Without reevaluating the full wealth of the forest, it would be impossible for procurement personnel to properly focus their work. And perhaps more importantly for the Soviet economy, economic planners would not be able to appropriately set quotas for the next Five-Year Plan. The economist explains the deficient evaluation system currently utilized:

At present, value is determined only for standing timber that has been earmarked for cutting. The annual volume of this timber in the country comes to about 400,000,000 cubic meters—less than 1% of total reserves. The rest of the standing timber, as well as all secondary products, is not evaluated.\(^66\)

Tupytsya refers not only to the secondary products that are not considered in the evaluation, and therefore excluded from the nation’s extraction quotas, but also the immense volume of timber that is omitted from the survey. While mushrooms, berries, and the like are the primary focus here, concerns about the misuse and disregard of other wood products is the dominant point of discussion in later sections.

The following declaration concludes the 1972 article: “The ‘green ocean’ has a right to receive an appropriate monetary valuation. This is a vital requirement for the systematic intensification of the forest branches of the national economy and for increasing their economic effectiveness.”\(^67\) The author wrote this statement with the intent of appealing to state officials who, as perceived by concerned scientists, foresters, and citizens in the Soviet press, focused

\(^{66}\) Ibid.  
\(^{67}\) Ibid.
their efforts on unsustainable forestry management tactics and limited resource extraction in what appears to be an effort to avoid the initial costs associated with modernizing technologies and techniques. This discussion of modernization leads into the article written by a forester, V. Shumakov, which shares an almost identical message. Pravda printed forester Shumakov’s article in 1975, which includes specific data regarding the forestry industry’s continued failure to survey the forests for all potential sources of wealth and sustenance into 1975. He was not only concerned with the economic loss that was accruing, but also the negative ramifications for the dinner table. While there was a shortage of products such as berries, mushrooms, nuts, and medicinal plants in many Soviet homes, a great reserve was left to rot in the forest:

Scientists have calculated that it would be possible for us to harvest around 5,000,000 tons of wild fruits and berries a year, as many mushrooms and 1,000,000 tons each of cranberries and nuts. Our forests contain large reserves of various medicinal plants…. They offer unlimited possibilities for the development of beekeeping.

Harvesting the forest’s riches is an important and necessary undertaking. In some places we still have shortages of fruits and berries. For example, the supply per person in Siberia is only one-tenth the specified norm…. As strange as it may seem, mushrooms, wild berries, nuts and honey have become a rare delicacy on our tables.68

Based on the author’s numbers, 99.6 percent of the available mushrooms and cranberries, 99.0 percent of pine and other nuts, and 98.0 percent of berries and fruits were unharvested each year.

While the source of these figures was not identified, the author’s profession infers a sense of familiarity with the situation. Regardless of the complete accuracy of the numbers, the message is clear—foodstuffs were available in the forests, while many Soviet citizens were unable to personally attain the recommended amounts. In this example, Shumakov appeals to the authorities’ concern for supporting a healthy population.

The article turns next to the economic loss that the nation was enduring due to the current system, and the forester utilizes data taken from the dissertation of another forester, D. Telyashev:

The mature timber from a hectare of forest yields around 3,500 rubles of income, while the wild bounties of nature from the same hectare yield 1,000 rubles more than that…. If you were to figure it for the entire cycle (the time it takes a forest to grow from seedlings to maturity), you’d get a total of around 250,000 rubles.69

State ministries and departments were primarily concerned with what can be gained from timber, but these numbers tangibly show the revenue that was lost due to such policies. Like the previous article, Shumakov illustrates the large-scale possibilities with an example of particular regions where new practices were producing results. Isolated areas of the nation were developing fruit orchards and walnut tree groves, laying out cranberry and mushroom, building fruit and berry processing, and introducing beehives to the forest. With the help of secondary- and higher-education students, foresters in areas like the Northern Caucasus were taking part in the cultivation and processing of the products. Shumakov reports that there was a 10-percent increase in harvests of those products, but those numbers could have grown exponentially with greater effort from above. Despite the support of specialists, these experiments were conducted “as [they were] in the old days,”70 meaning, without new technology and without sufficient planning for the extraction of secondary products from the naturally-growing areas around the cultivated projects.

Once again, the focus returned to the frustration regarding the absence of surveying forests for mushrooms, berries, nuts, etc. Shumakov questions why this is still the case:

Can it be that this is an unattainable objective? Not at all. As an experiment, employees of the All-Union Forestry Research Institute and the All-Union State Design Institute for

69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
Forestry Enterprises determined the “forest harvest” in three provinces. But why wasn’t this matter taken any further?

After all, there is a special forestry organization service that periodically surveys all of the country’s forests. Why do nontimber resources remain beyond its range of concern?\footnote{Ibid.}

Minor efforts were being made, but it was left to the initiative of individuals who see the potential impact of determining the possible harvests. While some, such as Professor N.A. Obozov and his students at the Bryansk Technological Institute in the Bryansk Oblast (bordering the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics), were producing maps that showed the distribution and density of mushrooms and berries in the province, most regions went unmapped. Shumakov ends his article with an appeal for authorities to require all foresters to “become full-fledged proprietors in the forests,”\footnote{Ibid.} which would streamline the process of surveying for secondary forest products, leading to a more diverse Soviet economy and to healthier diets.

By the early part of the 1980s, the global conservation movement was firmly established, with the United Nations Stockholm Conference taking place in 1972. Specific articles in major newspapers like Pravda and Izvestiia reveal that members of the Soviet scientific community had subscribed to conservationist agendas and supported notions that improving the vitality of the forest would be necessary in order to bolster the forestry industry and the nation’s food supply. It is important to note that representatives of the Soviet Union did not attend the conference because the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was denied an invitation.\footnote{Aaron Schwabach, International Environmental Disputes: A Reference Handbook (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 19.} The Soviet Union and a group of other socialist nations chose to boycott in support of the GDR, but a brief glance at the Soviet press in the year following the conference reveals that Soviet citizens and officials were to some degree a part of the global conversation about the
environment. In particular, the journal *Voprosy filosofii* published a series of four articles from January to April 1973, entitled “Man and His Environment.”

The series reports on a meeting of scientists and specialists from various fields who met at the journal’s offices in November 1972 to “formulate a comprehensive approach to the issue of man’s relationship to the natural environment.” They discussed issues of demography, the availability of natural resources, pollution, conservation, and preservation, among others. The January article reported on the international outlook of members of the scientific community:

M.I. Budyko, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, called attention to the need for better organized research in the field he calls “global ecology.” Because of the broad interdisciplinary nature of the field, he said, much of the research now being carried out by individuals or small teams of scientists from individual institutes in our country can only be termed an inadequate pioneering effort.

Budyko pointed to the efforts made in the USA to organize research in this field, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in particular. He also cautioned against out-and-out rejection of the books on global ecology.... In spite of their errors, he said, they represent an interesting attempt to model mathematically the natural and economic conditions of the future.

The scientist specifically refers to *World Dynamics*, a book written by Jay Wright Forrester in 1971 about global economic, population, and ecological sustainability. Although he mentions their errors”, it is important that he is aware of the groundbreaking work being done in the West with regards to sustainability, and even more significant that he acknowledges the need to engage with their efforts.

---

74 Miller and Miller explain, “The journal *Voprosy Filosofii* was instituted after Zhdanov’s speech to the philosophers in June 1947...as the principal philosophical journal published in the Russian language” (210). For information about the development of the journal, see: J. Miller and M. Miller, “Voprosy Filosofii (Problems of Philosophy),” 3 (1948), *Soviet Studies* 1, no. 3 (1950): 210–30.


76 Ibid.

Factions of the Soviet academic community and the government were in tune with global conversations about a sustainable future, but by the early-1980s, scientists and specialists continued their fight to bring change, both economic and environmental, to the forestry industry. A 1981 *Pravda* article by a leader of the “Nature Conservation Society” and the director of an experimental forestry station introduces new themes that relate to novel ideas of conservation, but the major points of the article are strikingly similar to the concerns that existed in the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. Based on the authors’ titles alone, it can be surmised that I. Veselkov and A. Orlov felt responsible for advocating for sustainable techniques and legislation that would support the health forest ecosystem. Their arguments that draw attention to economic concerns were likely made in an effort to gain the attention of the Soviet state. Furthermore, the economic concerns and potential areas for growth that they address were not new. Whether or not it was the authors’ primary goal to include them, their repetition in the 1980s helps to reinforce the government’s lack of movement on such issues.

Veselkov and Orlov opened with a blanket statement, claiming that mushroom collectors in Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic region, and Russia were extracting fewer mushrooms each year, and they attribute this to a decline in the areas where previously-common species were growing. Because of this decrease in the potential areas of extraction, “Mushroom yields have fallen by more than half, and commodity stocks are now 30% of what they once were”78 (specifically in Ukraine). While the problem of declining growth rates pertains to environmental changes to the forest, the conservation society leader and the experimental forestry station director chose to report the issue in economic terms. They describe the reduced commodity stock, and in the following paragraph, the authors advocate for developing a branch of the economy focused

---

solely on growing mushrooms. Once again, the training of specialists who could determine where mushrooms were most prevalent and how they could be sustainably cultivated was essential.

Such calls for training that explicitly address forest products outside the realm of timber are not novel in the Soviet press, and therefore, add relatively little to the conversation, except in that it helps to show that previous appeals were not heeded. What is particularly new and interesting in this article is that mushroom-collecting has become more difficult in numerous Soviet republics. As was mentioned previously, the authors equate this to a reduction in availability, which is a different message from those purported in the 1953 Smirnov article, the 1962 Yakovlev article, and the 1975 Shumakov article, all of which claim a great abundance of mushrooms and other secondary products. A 1983 article in Izvestiia written by an “economic commentator” provides specific data that supports Veselkov and Orlov’s inference about the changes in mushroom extraction and availability overall. This article was published after Brezhnev’s death, but it provides important commentary regarding the situation at the end of the Brezhnev era. In his article, V. Romanyuk explains that people in the industry questioned his support for industrial production of mushrooms because collecting by individuals “works so well.”79 The economist rebukes this claim by explaining that the collection of mushrooms across the USSR has decreased from 24,000 tons in 1980 to 20,000 in 1982.

It is possible that the overall volume of mushrooms collected has decreased because of the continued decline in interest in entering the forest on a regular basis, as described most extensively by Yakovlev in 1962, but there is also something to be said for the environmental impact of the over-exploitative forestry practices that were being carried out at the time. With

such an intense focus on procuring the wood products that were deemed valuable by the state economic planners, utilizing techniques that would maintain the vitality of the species that were left behind was not a priority. Had Soviet officials required that forestry managers take an all-encompassing approach in their extraction of forest products, environmental and economic specialists in the 1980s would have been less-likely to report on the reduced availability of mushrooms, berries, and other secondary products.

“When You Cut Wood the Chips Fly. But Aren’t There Too Many Chips?”

Throughout the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, economists, forestry specialists, and citizens battled against a lack of support for integrating secondary products into the job responsibilities of the forestry industry and into the national economy. Products such as mushrooms, berries, and nuts that were left to rot on the forest floor each year could have provided an additional source of revenue for the industry and had a positive impact on the quality of people’s diets. Yet state authorities made few changes from the mid-1950s to the early-1980s to indicate that they had any interest in expanding the scope of the forestry industry’s assignments. The focus of this section provides an additional layer to the state’s unwillingness to invest in the development of the industry to reduce the waste of forest products. The squandering of valuable resources remains the primary concern, but in the articles under analysis here, the wasted materials were from the trees themselves, and oftentimes were whole trees and stands of trees. The disposal of wood chips and other tree byproducts, the frequent rejection of deciduous trees as viable sources of lumber and pulpwood, and the disqualification of entire stands due to protection laws that were often regarded as out of date were repeated sources of consternation.

The authors of the following articles encountered added frustration because, while mushrooms and berries were never in the scope of foresters’ official duties, wood products
certainly were. In the majority of the following cases, the underlying problem was that officials had not updated policies, technologies and techniques, and the categorization of lands in a way that supported the continued sustainable use of wood products. The following six complaints about the integration of more raw material into the forestry industry dominated the discourse in the Soviet press from 1963 to 1982:

1. Better training of personnel and acquisition of new technology is necessary to make the most of all wood products (7/7).
2. Woodchips and other wood byproducts are not being utilized, contributing to massive amounts of waste (6/7).
3. The “old system” of establishing temporary lumbering sites with poor infrastructure is unsustainable for the forests and for the laborers. Permanent sites should be established in the West, but also in the Far East and Siberia (6/7).
4. Deciduous trees are largely overlooked as a useful source of wood, often leading to the over exploitation of coniferous trees (5/7).
5. Lands previously categorized as “protected” contain mature trees that should be allowed to be selectively cut in order to utilize those timbers that would soon go to waste and inhibit the growth of young trees (4/7).
6. Foresters should perform all-encompassing surveys of the forests that include all potential sources of wood, not simply the timber slated for felling that year (3/7).

These concerns are ordered by the frequency with which they appear in the seven articles that are under analysis (frequency indicated in parentheses). Although every occurrence is not discussed individually, the list helps to provide some sense of the priorities of the economists and specialists involved in the field of forestry.

*Kommunist* (the official political and theoretical organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) printed an article in November 1963, written by N. Taraskevich, that was extremely critical of the forestry industry and of the planning process for utilizing all potential sources of income. Taraskevich, whose occupation was unidentified, indicated that the massive forest wealth of the Soviet Union should have been more than sufficient to match the demand of

---

the nation, but due to poor management and minimal utilization of lesser quality wood, demand often went unmet. The author of this article directly addresses all six of the areas listed above, setting the stage for future articles throughout the years of the Brezhnev regime. The most dominant point that can be extracted pertains to the industry’s continued utilization of the “old system” of organizing their work. This old system involves the establishment of temporary enterprises where the designated stands of can be logged as quickly as possible before the site is shut down and the workers are moved to another temporary site. This impermanence contributed to a plethora of problems for the quality and efficiency of the industry.

Taraskevich utilizes the situation in the Karelian Autonomous Republic, a hub of the Soviet forestry industry north of Leningrad, to express many of the pitfalls of the temporary extraction sites. First, the author explains that state planning committees’ decisions to regularly abandon timber procurement sites and establish new, temporary sites is largely based around the desire to reduce the costs of improving technology and providing the necessary training that would allow workers to remain at permanent sites for extended periods. Were they to acquire proper training and new equipment, they could implement practices of forest regeneration and sustainability to allow for a more constant supply of timber. As Paul Josephson explains, “Scientific forestry…lagged in development, for the scientists felt pressure to facilitate the achievement of immediate production targets, not to plan for reforestation.”81 This mindset was problematic, as cut areas were quickly abandoned, rather than supported and regenerated for future use. In Karelia, the focus on quickly extracting what they could without utilizing proper techniques led to the Russian Republic State Planning Committee and the Chief Forestry Administration to reduce their goals significantly. Upon reporting this news, the author questions

---

the decision, asking, “Can one really say the timber base has been exhausted when in Karelia alone there are 455,000,000 cubic meters of timber that are overdue for felling?”

The stands in the region were reaching maturity, and if they were not cut, they would go to waste and stunt the growth of young trees.

The cost that was associated with making frequent moves of entire enterprises drew funds away from projects to modernize the industry. Furthermore, the time, money, and materials that were necessary when reestablishing equipment and processing centers prohibited the allocation of funds and time for the construction of appropriate working conditions and tolerable living conditions for the forestry workers and their families. Taraskevich remarks that more funds had been allocated to improve the cultural and social opportunities, “However, it is impossible to solve the housing problem at the temporary lumber enterprises.”

To create the desired circumstances for these men and women at each new location, unobtainable amounts of time and money would have been necessary. The continued use of the “old system” of temporary work sites occurred in order to reduce the need for efforts to modernize and improve practices, but the state was forced to recognize, to some extent, the depth of this issue. Officials offered material incentive to placate their labor force, but retaining workers, engineers, and technicians remains a seemingly insurmountable task when comfortable, permanent living conditions did not exist.

Josephson remarks:

The reason workers failed to meet scientifically determined yields and targets is that in the forest, as on the farm and at sea, they remained underpaid, mistreated, and unmotivated to improve their unhappy lot. They realized that in comfy offices in Moscow sat cartographers, compilers, and codifiers who had no clue what life was like in a dump truck, on a tractor, or on a boat.

---

82 Taraskevich, “Use Forest Resources Wisely,” 15.
83 Ibid., 16.
84 Josephson, Industrialized Nature, 118.
This attitude led to a shortage of labor: “In 1962 the economic councils took on 250,000 persons for the lumber industry, while 260,000 left,” and an additional 600,000,000 rubles were spent on recruitment. Taraskevich says this should not be condoned. Such funds should have been allocated for “building high-quality, well-appointed housing, motion picture theaters, Houses of Culture, children’s institutions, hospitals and stores.” This could only be achieved by abandoning the utilization of temporary procurement sites.

Another concern that flows throughout the 1963 Kommunist article is the general disinterest in developing the technology to utilize deciduous trees and wood byproducts in the production of wood-pulp and paper. The need to integrate the use of deciduous trees was urgent because forestry managers did not utilize proper techniques for regeneration in stands where conifers were cut, often leading to the regrowth of undesired deciduous trees. Without the technology and skill to properly process this major source of wood, the frequent need to relocate enterprises was exacerbated. Furthermore, lesser quality woods and wood scraps from felling jobs should have been used to produce paper products in order to allow for the most beneficial utilization of high quality wood for lumber. Once again, Taraskevich indicates that state planners and industry managers had acknowledged this concern and initiated the construction of new, more productive enterprises with improved technologies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the author reports that “the large Krasnoyarsk Pulp-and-Paper Combine has been under construction for more than 11 years.” The overarching problem lies with the industry’s reliance on old technologies and systems, rather than sacrificing initial time and money to develop a forestry industry that was sustainable and could fulfill the needs of the nation and the Five-Year Plan.

85 Taraskevich, “Use Forest Resources Wisely,” 16.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 15.
Apprehension toward investing in forestry technologies is obvious in the reports in this section, and yet it does not match the perception of scientific advancement that the Soviet Union often exuded. Miron Rezun describes his view of the Soviet Union’s relationship to modernization, stating, “When the Communists came to power, they took the Westernizers’ view and chose to exploit nature for all it was worth.”\textsuperscript{88} While this perception of exploitation can be observed in the Taraskevic article, as well as many others, Rezun’s quotation of another scholar’s words is harder to relate to the concerns in the forestry industry as expressed in the press. Donald R. Kelly, et al. remark, “The problems of resource depletion…will be solved by improved technology.”\textsuperscript{89} While this may have been the case in other sectors of the economy, the articles analyzed here provide a different perspective; a perspective that leads one to believe that Soviet officials in the second half of the twentieth century viewed the forest as an infinite resource that did not warrant the development of modernized technologies. Josephson makes note of the underdeveloped technology of the forestry industry, explaining that, “Competition for resources with ministries whose work was deemed more important, such as hydroelectricity and fishing, ensured that forestry enterprises were among the last to receive modern equipment.”\textsuperscript{90}

This downgrade of the work of foresters precipitates the inability of the industry to fully utilize many sources of timber and other wood products available in the Soviet forest. These concerns persist into the 1980s.

On April 30, 1969, the Vice-Chairman of the USSR State Forestry Committee, V. Nikolayuk, printed an article in \textit{Pravda} which expressed a number of similar concerns to those in the Taraskevich article, including the need for modernization. Not only are critiques similar to

\textsuperscript{90} Josephson, \textit{Industrialized Nature}, 112.
those that were expressed over four years ago present, but the author’s position of relative importance on a state committee reveals that the slow development of the forestry industry is rooted in the highest echelons of the Soviet government, beyond the industry itself. Nikolayuk’s message represents the concerns of a group that has special knowledge of the Soviet forest, but that also has a stake in the economic vitality of the industry. The Vice-Chairman’s article expressed his fears that the industry lacked the proper mechanisms to fulfill the demands of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1971-1975). Nikolayuk explains:

The toilers of the forest are…working out economically substantiated proposals for the development of the branch over a longer period. Here too one encounters certain difficulties: Nearly half of the country’s forests have not yet been sufficiently studied. This makes impossible the precise determination of available reserves of raw materials and the proper organization of their exploitation.91

That he would take to the press, placing his anxieties on public display, indicates that his committee is relatively powerless to impact policy-making in a way that would improve the sustainability and productivity of the nation’s forest.

The previous quote, which is taken from the first paragraph of the article, refers to an overarching concern of the vice-chairman, a concern that was expressed by Taraskevich in his 1963 article, and furthermore, one that is rampant in the articles regarding the need to integrate secondary forest products into the national economy: surveying. For Nikolayuk, extensive surveying was necessary because the majority of the Soviet Union’s wood supply was being drawn from a minor percentage of the nation’s actual forested land. He provides the following:

More than two-thirds of the industrial cutting of timber in the country is carried on in the European part of the U.S.S.R., although less than one-fourth of the total timber reserves is concentrated there. Three-fourths of all timber resources are in Siberia and the Far East; however, only 30% of the total volume of timber is cut there.92

92 Ibid.
Nikolayuk acknowledged that their resources were vast, but without a more even distribution of procurement enterprises across the nation, they would quickly encounter negative consequences. Expansion eastward is under way, but, like the construction of the Krasnoyarsk Pulp-and-Paper Combine, it was not being carried out with any haste. Wooded areas beyond the Ural Mountains are being allocated for cutting, but 25,000,000 cubic meters of this timber goes uncut each year because of a lack of initiative and capability in the region. When this slow movement to the East is combined with an inefficient utilization of the byproducts that were created when timber was felled and processed, the outlook for the Ninth Five-Year Plan is bleak. Nikolayuk indicates that these byproducts could be used by the pulp-and-paper industry, but instead, pulp enterprises frequently use first-class lumber, allowing 90-percent of byproducts to go to waste in dumps, where they are subsequently burned. The vice-chairman considered it necessary to campaign for efficient expansion of the industry into relatively untouched regions, for a survey of the forests to determine what could most sustainably be cut at the new enterprises, and a reevaluation of the ways in which byproducts could be used to reduce the reliance on high quality woods in the pulp-and-paper sector.

Just over three months after Nikolayuk’s critical article appeared in Pravda, an official report describing a resolution that was recently adopted by the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers, entitled “On Improving the Organization of Work in the Lumber and Wood-Processing Industry,” was printed in Izvestiia. The first sentence of the article states, “The resolution notes existing shortcomings in the work of the lumber and wood-processing industry and defines the principal directions for improving the work of this branch of the

93 Ibid.
economy,”94 followed by seven bullet-points that suggest to readers that state and party officials have considered the appeals that were being made in the press throughout the decade. The first point directly addresses the most oft-repeated concern in this section, calling for the industry to “fundamentally improve the structure of production and to achieve a fuller utilization of raw materials,”95 including deciduous trees, low-quality conifers, and scrap material from the procurement and processing of the timber. The second point requests the exploitation of deciduous stands in the West to increase productivity in the European USSR, and the third indicates the need to focus greater efforts on developing infrastructure in Siberia. The fourth, fifth, and sixth points call for greater productivity through modernized technology and techniques, better-organized labor in the woods and in processing centers, and improved housing and cultural opportunities for workers and their families. The final point requests the improved training of engineers, technicians, and skilled workers.96

Each of these points address concerns from the articles written by forestry specialists, economists, state officials, and unidentified contributors, which have already been analyzed in this paper. The following four articles, published between 1975 and 1982, help reveal the degree to which the seven points of the resolution of the leaders of the Communist Party and of the Soviet State came to fruition. As the Ninth Five-Year Plan (addressed in the 1969 Nikolayuk article) was coming to an end, another official report of a meeting of state leaders regarding the inefficiencies of the national lumber and wood-processing industry was printed in Izvestiia. A joint conference of the Committees on Industry and Conservation of the USSR Supreme Soviet Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities took place on July 10, 1975, to discuss the

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 22–23.
fulfillment of the plan and the rational use and protection of Soviet forests. The report was written by V. Kurasov and V. Mussalitin, whose occupations were unspecified, though they are likely correspondents for the newspaper. This report offers a valuable comparison to the 1969 report of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers meeting because the information originates in the upper levels of state power, and it touches upon a majority of the seven points that were addressed in the 1969 meeting, as well as a majority of the six points that were laid out at the beginning of this section.

The report of 1969 specifically states that organizers of the lumber and wood-processing industry would focus greater attention on the fuller utilization of wood byproducts and low-quality woods that were largely overlooked by planners, on enhancing production in less-exploited regions of the nation, such as Siberia and the Far East, establishing more permanent extraction sites and camps, allowing for construction of higher quality timber-hauling roads and improved housing and cultural centers for workers, on acquiring new technologies to increase productivity and to enable the processing of different sources of wood, and training workers and engineers to utilize the new equipment and techniques. Each of these areas that are identified as points that should receive greater attention were, once again, addressed in 1975 as persisting concerns. The article opens with a statement regarding the advancements that have been made in the lumber, wood-processing, and pulp-and-paper industries in recent years. Although these are unspecified in the CDRP reprint, the subtitle, “Concern for the Green Factory,” indicates that it is unlikely that the original version in Russian focused on the minimal successes that were had. They quickly shift to outlining the complaints that were made by Soviet deputies from various regions and republics.
A committee was designed to analyze the industry, and they found that the timber production plans were not being fulfilled, largely because of “wasteful utilization of cut trees”\textsuperscript{97} and unsustainable use of forest resources. Kurasov and Mussalitin report the following:

Ministry executives who spoke at the conference recognized the complete legitimacy of the criticisms expressed in the report by the leader of the Deputies’ preparatory committee and assured the Deputies that they would take the necessary action to eliminate the shortcomings that were noted.\textsuperscript{98}

Once again, weaknesses are identified and acknowledged by leadership. The particular accusations of the deputies pertained to a lack of modernized equipment and supplies in the logging industry, failure to carry out plans for permanent road construction, rendering these roads useful for only short periods of time, and underdeveloped housing, cultural opportunities, and other services for logging industry workers. As was mentioned in Taraskevich’s 1963 article, the concern for workers and their families’ quality of life contributed to unjustifiable amounts of funds and effort for the recruitment of new employees each year.

Speeches were presented to advocate for the development of beneficial uses for lesser-quality woods and byproducts in order to reduce waste. Two speeches by party leaders from the northwestern region of Russia, V.N. Ptitsyn, First Secretary of the Murmansk Province Party Committee, and I.I. Senkin, First Secretary of the Karelian Province Party Committee, spoke about this need to utilize a wider range of wood products, specifically because it would open up a number of stands in regions of the European USSR that already have access to the industry’s infrastructure. In particular, they noted that the forests of the Kola Peninsula could provide them with an immense amount of wood and wood byproducts if the industry was provided with the funds and resources to implement the necessary technology. While providing an opportunity to


\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
make such reports about the current shortcomings of the lumber, processing, and pulp-and-paper industries at a national conference could be regarded as a sign of a state that was willing to adapt, the knowledge that almost identical concerns were acknowledged by authorities six years prior reveals a different story. The Soviet leadership in 1975 was still apprehensive toward making changes to the forestry industry that would provide modernized techniques and technologies, allowing for integration of new stands of trees and wood byproducts into production, and create a solid infrastructure for permanent enterprises and workers’ communities, lowering the industry’s costs in the long run.

Less than two years after the report on the meeting of the Committees on Industry and Conservation and the Council of Nationalities, the Secretary of the Karelian Province Party Committee, V. Posnov, revealed his concerns about the state of the industry in his region in Izvestiia. Once more, the majority of the areas of concern identified at the beginning of the section were on the radar of Karelian officials, and, furthermore, the major points of the July 10, 1975-meeting were reiterated. The overarching concern in Posnov’s article, originally published on July 10, 1977, is the problematic manner in which Karelia’s forests had been designated for cutting in the Tenth Five-Year Plan (1976 – 1981). The party secretary describes the current demands that are placed on the industry in Karelia, explaining that the region produces approximately one-third of the nation’s newsprint, more than half of its paper bags, and substantial amounts of lumber. Posnov then explains that, due to fear of overexploitation in the days surrounding the conclusion of the previous five-year plan, specialists in the region determined that annual targets during the current plan had to be reduced from 16 million to 12 million cubic meters to support regeneration. Based on the current demands of the nation,
enterprises from the Karelia Republic would need to produce 15 million cubic meters of timber and wood chips, primarily to support the paper industry.

While the regional soviet leader appreciated the importance of allowing forests to regenerate, he purports that there is a substantial volume of timber and byproducts that would go to waste if they adhered to this new target amount. The resources are available in the region, but the restrictions on certain areas and the target ceiling rendered it impossible to match the country’s demand. Posnov appeals to readers:

No, we are not magicians – we cannot turn 12 million cu.m. into 15 million. And it would be foolish to talk seriously about any deliveries of timber from outside. Karelia, whose forests are its pride and wealth, can and must—we realize this—solve the problem basically through the more rational use of its forests and through more skillful management.99

He was dissatisfied by the proposal for timber to be shipped to Karelia, partially because the region was historically responsible for providing others with wood, but also because he was aware that there are areas that are currently untouchable, despite containing important stands of timber that would benefit from intelligent cutting. The author specifically points to stands in water-protection zones that were becoming over-mature. When those stands began to die, the trees would no longer be useful for lumber or other human needs, and the debris would limit the growth of other species. Therefore, cutting these areas would lead to a greater availability of timber in the region for their future yearly needs. Posnov recalls a conversation that should have yielded results in this area:

During a discussion of the size of timber-cutting targets with experts from the USSR State Planning Committee, we agreed that it would be feasible to cut about 520,000 cu.m. of timber per year in protected zones, with the stipulation that the nature of operations in those areas be clearly defined by an authoritative commission of scientists and specialists.

More than two years have gone by since then, but we do not have the recommendation we need, and to this date no commission has been created.\textsuperscript{100} With the guidance of specialists, this project was deemed valid by top Soviet officials in the early days of the current Five-Year Plan, rendering the 1977 situation all the more frustrating.

While Posnov’s 1977 article addressed concerns in the western portion of the Soviet Union, from which the vast majority of the nation’s wood products originated for centuries, a second article that was published in the same year shows that equally significant concerns existed in the less-utilized regions of the Far East. On December 28, 1977, an article written by the director of the Botanical Garden of the USSR Academy of Sciences’ Far East Science Center was printed in Pravda. Although many of A. Zhuravkov’s sources of anxiety regarding the output of his region’s forests were identical to those mentioned in previous articles, such as the need for better trained workers, the development of more effective techniques and machinery, two specific points drove his report and offer additional perspective in this section.

The botanical garden’s director was most concerned with the slow pace of forest development and integration of trees and plants of the Far East into the nation’s economy. He places responsibility for this lag on the failure of officials to sanction broad surveys of the more recently-infiltrated region. The Soviet government and their specialists have had less interaction with the lands of the Far East in comparison to the land of the European region of the USSR, but he suggests that there was sufficient time to make progress toward fully understanding and valuing the resources that were available. Zhuravkov describes the work that a number of groups in the region had done to further Soviet scientists’ and forestry specialists’ understanding of the region, but he also describes their work’s inadequacies:

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
Nonetheless one can still only speak of the extent of the remarkable “natural riches” in a very approximate fashion: “immense,” “incalculable.” Only 23% of the land area here is covered by precise forestry management methods.

Comprehensive study of nature for the purpose of utilizing it rationally, enriching it and improving its conservation should become an urgent concern…\textsuperscript{101}

Similar to the concerns first addressed in Vice-Chairman of USSR State Forestry Committee Nikolayuk’s 1969 article, Zhuravkov sees the immense benefits that could be gained from attaining extensive knowledge of the vast forest resources of the Far East. Furthermore, a broad survey would have both economic and conservationist ramifications.

Zhuravkov appears to be following the global conservation trend that was mentioned in the analysis of the articles from the 1980s in the first portion of this section. In the previous quotation, he specifically refers to the “urgent concern” of “enriching and improving” the conservation efforts of nature. While Zhuravkov’s article appeals for corrections to many of the primary concerns that had been addressed throughout the 1960s and early-1970s, including his focus on Soviet specialists’ seemingly insurmountable unfamiliarity with the forest products of the Far East, hints of a conservationist attitude provide a new level of complexity to the questions that are persistently directed at authorities regarding the need for reform in the forestry industry.

As this analysis reaches the latter-years of the Brezhnev era, a final article from 1982 places each of the major concerns of the previous six articles into stark focus. On March 14, 1982, an article entitled “Returning to a Subject: With Concern for the Forest” was printed in \textit{Pravda}. The article was written by N. Moiseyev, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences and Director of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Forest Management and the Mechanization of the Lumber Industry, and P. Moroz, Director of the All-Union Association for the Designing of

Lumber-Industry Enterprises. The two specialists of the lumber and forestry industry ask, “Why are we experiencing a shortage of paper, plywood and lumber?” They follow this initial question with a critique of the functioning of the industry, referencing five of the six major concerns that are identified in this section (only point 6, a call for surveying, is not specifically made, although their recognition of a need for surveying can be inferred from discussions of underutilization of certain species of trees). The most impactful cause of the shortage of such supplies in the Soviet economy was attributed to poor utilization of the resources that their forests provide, and not to a lack of raw materials.

The authors explain that, while a variety of species of trees and waste material from the felling of high-quality timber was fully appropriate for use in the production of pulp and paper, a scant amount of what was available was utilized for this purpose. For example, just 6 to 8 percent of the 60 million to 80 million cubic meters of wood scrap that was produced by processing enterprises each year was reallocated to the pulp-and-paper industry. Moiseyev and Moroz purport that, “The recycling of all of this material would make it possible to triple the production of finished output without increasing the volume of procurements.” The full utilization of such materials would have a great impact on the supply shortage, and furthermore, they would immensely reduce the amount of scrap material the goes to waste. Similarly, the specialists describe the waste that was accrued in the forests of the European region of the Soviet Union due to the 40 million cubic meters of mature softwood species that go uncut. This material could have been utilized for paper production or for plywood. They explain the benefit of focusing attention on production of plywood:

103 Ibid.
It is considerably more economical than lumber, and it is in great demand. But its annual production has now been frozen at a level of about 2 million cu.m. for 15 to 20 years. Unfortunately, the USSR State Planning Committee and the USSR Ministry of the Timber, Pulp-and-Paper and Lumber Industry have not as yet taken measures to increase capacities for the processing of timber from deciduous trees.¹⁰⁴

The integration of deciduous trees into the production of wood-based products has been a topic of concern in five of the seven articles in this analysis. The first mention came in the 1963 Taraskevic article printed in Kommunist, and yet, nearly two decades later, this major source of wood has yet to be utilized in the way that the national economy demands.

A second issue that has been repeated since 1963 and is described by Moiseyev and Moroz is the inefficient “old system” of frequently relocating extraction and processing enterprises in order to ensure a steady flow of raw materials. They recognize that this issue demanded a solution for many years:

Development of…enterprises [that move from place to place] was once necessitated by a lack of roads for hauling out timber. Through inertia, the planning and designing of such enterprises have continued down to the present, however. And although the question of a transition to continuous forest utilization arose long ago, the USSR Ministry of the Timber, Pulp-and-Paper and Lumber Industry and its research and design organizations have yet to accomplish this task.¹⁰⁵

They reference the initial cause of the temporary procurement and processing sites, but they infer that such roadblocks to establishing permanent sites, which would ultimately lead to better infrastructure and residences for workers and families, were less inhibiting in 1982. Therefore, their continued support for such developments further illustrates the Soviet authorities’ disinterest in investing in substantial change in the forestry industry.

Conclusions

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 19.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
Moiseyev and Moroz’s 1982 article repeats the concerns that were voiced as far back as 1963, when Taraskevich questioned the causes of the forestry industry’s inability to meet demand when it was clear that the Soviet forests held an immense wealth of resources. Similar inquiries were made throughout the years of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras with regards to the availability and utilization of a variety of tree species, wood chips, and other byproducts, but also with regards to secondary forest products, such as mushrooms and berries. These secondary forest products required greater attention by planners and procurement officials if they were to have an impact on the Soviet economy and on the improvement of people’s diets, but little was done to alter forestry workers’ responsibilities. In particular, the failure to heed calls for the surveying to place a value on the land that encompasses these products, but also the less-desired deciduous trees and stands of trees that were not specifically marked for cutting at that time, were largely unsuccessful, based on the reports analyzed here. For these products to be harvested on a large-scale and processed successfully, industry leaders would need to invest in new technologies, techniques, and training, but it is clear that they were unwilling to do so. Instead, funds were continually diverted into construction projects of temporary extraction and processing enterprises.

The unsustainable practices that were carried out by the industry in order to extract the timber that was allocated as quickly as possible before moving onto the next temporary site contributed to numerous reports of anxiety. These areas of concern included the depletion of the most valuable tree species, which were not likely to return unless proper management techniques were implemented, and the inadequate housing and cultural conditions for forestry workers and their families. Furthermore, the potential harm to the other tree species and secondary products in the stands that were cut may have led to the decrease in availability of mushrooms, berries, nuts,
and other forest products, that were reported to be in abundance in the 1950s and ‘60s. To a large extent, the concerns of industry officials, scientific and economic specialists, and press correspondents remained consistent throughout the period, but concerns for the conservation of the Soviet Union’s natural resources began to find their way into reports toward the end of the 1970s and into the ‘80s. Although reports such as those from Veselkov and Orlov in 1981, regarding the reduction of mushroom growth, and Zhuravkov in 1977, regarding the potential economic and conservationist benefits of a survey of the forests in the Far East, are framed in a way that highlights the economic advantages—likely in order to appeal to government officials—hints of an environmental-ethical standpoint illustrates the presence of a deeper appreciation for the qualities of the nation’s forests, beyond the income that they can provide. Efforts to embrace these other qualities are the focus of the next section.

While Stalin’s plans for large-scale industrialization began in the mid-1920s, the implementation of many of his projects continued beyond his lifetime and into the 1960s. Designs for new Soviet cities, particularly in underdeveloped portions of the nation, such as Siberia and the Far East, were of great significance because of the demand for new hubs of scientific development and industrial production. Greater infiltration during and after the Khrushchev era into more remote areas of the Soviet Union, as well as the continued expansion of preexisting urban areas, gave rise to opportunities for the development of a particular cultural and forest-centric concept: the creation of urban green spaces and forest belts in and around cities. Soviet people, from regular citizens to state officials and trained specialist, were developing a common understanding of the benefits of retaining regular contact with the natural world, for both aesthetic and health-related reasons. This section differs from the previous two with regard to its focus on policy-making and plan-implementation that impacts Soviet cities and towns, rather than on the policies and infrastructure that directed the forestry industry. Despite

---

106 Geoffrey Hosking remarks on the Communist Party Line regarding industrialization, based on Stalin’s perspective during the development stages of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932): “Communists had always believed that a socialist society should be a highly industrialized one in which the means of production were owned by the people’s state…. [Some] recommended planning “teleologically,” that is, identifying a paramount goal and concentrating all resources on it…. As Stalin argued at a Central Committee plenum in 1928, heavy industry was needed by the one socialist country in a capitalist world” (455). In his chapter on the Khrushchev era, Hosking describes the continued focus on industry in certain sectors, despite immense setbacks since the postwar recovery: “Huge resources and authoritarian leadership still enabled the country to concentrate on areas of production deemed especially important, and to turn out high-quality products as needed. This was true of military and space technology, which carried high prestige and attracted the best specialists and administrators. But any branch of industry below the highest priority tended to fall into the hands of less capable and less ambitious people and therefore to stagnate” (525). This final sentiment is relevant in the previous chapters’ discussions of the forestry industry. See: Geoffrey Hosking, Russia and the Russians: A History, Second Edition, Second (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011).
this different perspective, the themes that flow throughout these articles help to create a fuller picture of the priorities of government officials, scientists and specialists, and Soviet citizens with regards to the forest and access to the environment. While the articles in the first two sections were primarily written with an economic bend, and some infiltration of conservationist ideals, the articles here place people’s needs at the forefront, exhibiting the value that many Soviet citizens placed on the forest beyond its monetary worth.

For many, particularly the landscape architects and city planners who were developing blueprints for new cities and plans to reinvigorate old, it was most sensible to infuse their designs from the beginning with patches of the natural environment. Their hope was that Soviet citizens would be able to enjoy the natural world that was cherished by their ancestors and retain access to the health benefits that trees and plants could provide. As was discussed in the previous section, Russians of all ages and professions traditionally made frequent visits to the countryside, and activities such as gathering mushrooms in the woods was enjoyed by all. As industrialization and urbanization took hold, regular trips to the forest became less widespread. City planners began to seek opportunities to provide Soviet city-dwellers with an escape from their modernized lives. Voices of specialists and advocates for soundly maintained green spaces infiltrated Soviet newspapers beginning in the 1950s. The tone of the reports that originated within official Soviet offices were often optimistic regarding the further enhancement of the nation’s quality of living, but not all reports shared this air of positivity. Although most acknowledged that plans for green

107 Frolic describes the goals of the modern city-planning procedure in the Soviet Union in his 1964 article. In his description of the plans for the “microrayons” of Kryukovo, a district of Moscow, he describes, “An attempt has been made to provide sufficient green space, parks and sports facilities for the population. In the centre of microrayon Number Three, for example, a garden and sports nucleus occupying 8 ½ acres has been provided. Approximately 15 per cent of the area in microrayon Number One is allotted to ‘green space open to the public’” (290). Later in the article, he explains the problems in Moscow planning, “Moscow’s projects are of immense size, and land is relatively scarce in the city. The problem is partly one in trying to fit an enormous number of people into a limited area, and under these circumstances, something must give way” (301). See: B. Michael Frolic, “The Soviet City,” The Town Planning Review 34, no. 4 (1964): 285–306.
spaces had been approved by top Soviet departments, a vast quantity of articles from the 1950s through the 1970s reveal that various obstacles were obstructing the proper implementation of such designs. Throughout the series of articles analyzed here, a trend emerges as it becomes clear that concerns and requests for assistance saturated articles pertaining to green spaces throughout the decades, though a slight shift in priorities did occur.

Prior to the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922, Russian urban centers were virtually non-existent beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg. Most Russians, whether they were landlords, peasants, or government officials, maintained ties to the natural environment in their everyday lives. When the early leaders of the Soviet Union confronted the nation’s underdeveloped economy, the decision to construct modernized cities from the ground up was made. It was recognized that with the construction of these urban areas and a reconstituted focus on industry, the number of Soviet citizens who had direct access on a daily basis to the lakes, streams, and forests of the Soviet countryside would be drastically reduced. Plans for parks and for the plantation of trees and shrubs in traffic medians and around buildings, but also for the creation of immense belts of trees around cities, were often introduced in parallel to the design’s for cities’ industrial, commercial, and residential areas. The following analysis includes eleven specific articles that were printed between 1956, in the midst of Nikita Khrushchev’s time as First Secretary of the Communist Party, and 1980, toward the end of Leonid Brezhnev’s time as General Secretary. The selections show a range of points of view, from those of engineers and architects to those of leaders of regional and republic soviet central committees. They reveal the

---

108 For a specific example of a Soviet city that was built from scratch during Stalin’s industrialization, see the story of John Scott, an American worker in the city of Magnitogorsk in the 1930s. In the prologue, Stephen Kotkin writes, “Founded in 1929, Magnitogorsk instantly became the symbol of the revolutionary transformation of society that the October Revolution had promised” (xviii). Plans for such industrial cities continued in the coming decades. See: John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia’s City of Steel*, Enlarged edition (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989).
variety of attitudes that were taken with regards to the planning of urban green space, from optimistic and enthusiastic about plans to discouraged and underwhelmed by results.

*Plans and Optimism for Urban Green Spaces*

On September 13, 1956, *Pravda* published an appeal by the Central Committee of the Young Communist League to young Soviet citizens across the nation, asking them to take part in a campaign to “dress cities, villages, factory and rural settlements, streets, squares, factory grounds and schoolyards in green.”109 The goals of the group are broad, from nurturing new parks and gardens and tidying streets and yards to breeding pigeons, ducks, and swans and planting 100,000 hectares of gardens, berry patches, and vineyards. Of the articles under consideration here, this is the earliest to be printed, and its tone is of a certain quality that is absent from the majority of the others—particularly those printed after 1960. The author of the article frames the project as something for which Soviet children can be responsible, allowing them to make a positive contribution to their communities and nation: “Y.C.L. members…have been entrusted with the honorable task of lining the Moscow-Simferopol highway with greenery by Nov. 7, 1957.”110 The language used creates a feeling of unity in a communal effort, and furthermore, it instills a sense of duty in the newest generation of Soviet citizens. They can contribute to the quality of life of their friends, families, and neighbors by infusing their homes with the natural environment.

Later in the decade, another *Pravda* article began with a similar air of optimism and pride in the advancements of Soviet society. The article, printed on April 19, 1959, speaks specifically about the new cities of Siberia that were mentioned previously, and it opens with a quote from

---

110 Ibid.
Khrushchev at the 21st Party Congress earlier that year: “The Far East is the pearl of our country as far as natural conditions are concerned.”\(^{111}\) Opening the article with a quote from the Soviet leader that evokes such pride in the region and that specifically links it to the nation’s beloved natural environment sets a positive tone for the information that follows. Like the previous article regarding the Komsomol Central Committee’s appeal to Soviet youth, the author of the article is unidentified, and therefore, represents the Communist Party’s voice—a voice of promise and forward thinking at the time. This article aims to inform readers of the elaborate plans for the soon-to-be-constructed Siberian cities.

While the predominant goal for these plans is to create hubs of industry that can continue to advance the nation’s economy and progress toward the fulfillment of the current Five-Year Plan, the Party makes clear that the families who are to become the first residents of the cities will not feel isolated from nature within the modernity of industry. For example, a thermal power station was to be built at Nazarovo in the southern portion of the Krasnoyarsk Krai, but a “broad green belt will separate the city from its industrial enterprises.”\(^{112}\) Similarly, a description of plans for Taishet, located near the border of Krasnoyarsk Krai in Irkutsk Oblast, focuses entirely on the importance of creating an environment that is engulfed by natural landscape:

> A new city is rising at Taishet, separated from the metallurgical combine by three kilometers of forest. Its site is at a bend of Siberia’s rapid Biryusa River. The residential quarters of four-story buildings will be separated by parks, or ‘happy pine groves,’ as they are called here. This city will not have continuous, solidly built-up streets; the buildings will follow the contours of the terrain. Each microborough, separated from its neighbors by a green belt, will have 5,000 to 6,000 residents.\(^{113}\)

In keeping with Khrushchev’s point of view that the region should be revered for its natural, physical qualities, the planners intended to infuse the cities with the features of the landscape,

---


\(^{112}\) Ibid.

\(^{113}\) Ibid.
and to limit the perception of residents that they were living in the midst of a booming metropolis. In particular, it is interesting that the plan specifically included green belts to minimize the populations within each “microborough” and that building construction will follow the naturally appearing features of the land. This indicates that Party officials perceived proximity to green space and maintained closeness to the countryside as greater priorities for Soviet citizens than participation in a modernized, urban city, such as Moscow or Leningrad.

A decade later, an article that addresses the careful planning that has gone into developing residential construction projects in Moscow, Kiev, and Leningrad delves into the methods that were to be employed to subdue these cities’ large, urban atmospheres, which the Siberian city-planners were so intent upon avoiding altogether. The correspondent who wrote the article refers to the fact that greater emphasis has been placed on identifying city-dwellers’ desires, rather than simply satisfying basic needs. This aim led Candidates of Architecture Georgy Platonov and Vera Ruzhzhe, who were creating novel plans for Moscow, to dedicate careful consideration to outdoor spaces around the apartment complexes:

Persons who live in a large city rarely go out of town or walk in the woods. Therefore we consider it important to introduce elements of natural surroundings into the housing development. The first version of our design provided for outdoor terraces with walks; the later version adds so-called green “pockets” which are in a way outdoor continuations of the apartments.114

Although the established cities do not easily allow for the establishment of major green belts and the construction of buildings that are integrated into a preexisting natural landscape, by 1969, architects have taken up the torch for incorporating highly sought-after greenery into designs for new residential projects.

114 A. Polovnikov, “We See Many Things Differently,” The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 21, no. 4 (February 12, 1969): 17. The CDRP article does not specify which Soviet publication originally printed this article.
Specialists assigned with the task of managing the development of preexisting Soviet cities encountered obstructions as populations in urban centers continued to expand. Conversations regarding how to most effectively house more residents in already densely populated cities emerged with greater frequency as architects and landscape specialists responded to public desires for natural elements in their communities. In the first half of 1971, the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers passed a resolution that called for plans to improve Moscow and its suburbs by creating a more enjoyable lifestyle for inhabitants. Plans were to be developed during the 1971-1975 Five-Year Plan. A call for the development of a protective forest belt and natural parks around Moscow was given particular emphasis.\textsuperscript{115} This belt would work to limit the further expansion of the city, to encourage the more expedient usage of the resources that are a part of the belt, to create a more balanced ratio between built-up residential and industrial zones and open green spaces, and to work “as a natural reservoir of clean air and a recreation place for the population.”\textsuperscript{116} The belt and parks, which would exist 50 to 60 kilometers beyond city limits, would be protected from commercial development, and they was to be managed by the same legislation and officials that are in charge of green spaces within the city.\textsuperscript{117} As Paul Josephson explains, this sort of plan was not unique to Moscow: “The Soviet government established such zones around all large cities, industrial centers, and workers’ settlements to a radius of 10-30 kilometers (km), about 6-19 miles, to provide some comfort, relaxation, cleanliness, and protection from burgeoning, smoke-spewing

\textsuperscript{115} In 1958, six British planners visited the Soviet Union to learn about their town planning and housing situation. Frederick J. Osborn reported on the trip, and states, “Green belts are valued, and city plans now reserve them and progressively deepen them. Moscow is extending its belt from ten to fifty kilometers.” See: F. J. Osborn, “Soviet City Development in 1958,” \textit{Ekistics} 7, no. 39 (1959): 45.


\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 12.
factories.” While it would be difficult to place large green spaces into already-established cities, the creation of these belts could offer residents of Moscow, Leningrad, and other large Soviet cities the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and clean air of their forests close to home.

A follow-up to the 1971 resolution appeared in Pravda in 1973, after a plan for the Forest-Park Buffer Zone was drafted and approved. Benefits of the zone were reiterated by the chief architect, with a striking declaration of the need to “prevent Moscow and nearby cities from growing until they touch one another,” demonstrating a concern that existed at the time regarding the ever-growing population of the USSR’s largest city and the impact that this growth would have on quality of life. The plans accounted for “green wedges” that would also extend into the city from the outer belt, bringing those at the center closer to the natural environment. These wedges would eliminate the potential for the development of substantial areas of land, creating a more complicated problem when trying to provide sufficient housing for current and future Muscovites. The architects’ solution to this issue follows:

There will be 2 times as much available housing as is currently in existence, which means that cities will grow upward rather than outward. Residential buildings of 9, 12 and 16 stories are included in the plans of future microboroughs. Most of the residential blocks will be surrounded by greenery. While the 1959 article about the development of the Siberian cities specifically referred to the construction of four-story residential buildings that would reduce the urban feel of the future centers of industry, designs to support Moscow’s expanding population had to incorporate new techniques that would also account for the high priority of access to green space. As the Soviet five-year plans that encompassed the late-1950s, 1960s, and 1970s required the nation to expand

120 Ibid.
preexisting urban centers and to develop new industrial hubs, unique challenges faced planners who were making an effort to implement the desired green spaces within and around residential areas. Based on the previous selection of articles, it appears that state and party officials and planners made a conscious effort to formulate specialized plans for each situation, but as will become apparent in the following analyses, these plans were not consistently carried out in a beneficial way.

Something Is Wrong with the “City’s Green Attire”

As early as 1958, specific concerns regarding plans for the development of green spaces within cities were consistently appearing in Soviet newspapers. Often, the authors of the articles did not take issue with the plans themselves: their complaints were directed at the implementation of the plans and the ongoing maintenance of the spaces. An editorial appeared in Izvestiia on June 4, 1958, in which the author makes clear that he is aware of the lofty goals that were purported in the plans for bringing nature into the nation’s cities and towns, but he is also cognizant of the way that perception of the success of such plans has been skewed:

If one is to believe the reports, every city has planted enough trees in the last ten years to have turned it long ago into a garden city. Actually, one sees along the streets only a few scattered, sickly trees. This is because by no means all city executive [committees] show the necessary concern for the planting of greenery. Trees that are planted in the spring often perish for lack of care or from disease, or are simply destroyed by hooligans. 121

It is clear that there are expectations of city executive committees to implement plans for the plantation of trees, but local officials appeared to be reporting the initial “successes” and doing little or nothing to ensure the long-term health of the planted areas.

The author describes situations in numerous cities and towns where reported figures mask the current state of their green spaces. One example can be drawn from the small city of

Vyatskiye Polyany, in Kirov Oblast, where the majority of 15,000 trees that were planted six or seven years ago were lost due to the city’s hungry goat population. Although the author describes the scenario with some humor, he makes clear that the city officials fully lacked concern for the management of these projects. In other cities, uninhibited goats are not the problem, but the city officials themselves. In Novosibirsk, a streetcar line was built through a botanical garden, forcing the unsustainable removal of 500 twenty-year-old apple trees, and in Lipetsk, plans were made to clear 700 hectares of tree-covered land for industrial and residential construction projects when large, empty lots were at the city’s disposal.122

Although not directly spelled out within the editorial, the amount of waste accruing under such circumstances was unnecessary: the time taken to plant and later replant trees is wasted, the natural resources that are allowed to die or be destroyed are wasted, and the money to support these projects is wasted. Just as demands for updated technologies and techniques to reduce the squandering of natural resources in the forest were made in the articles of the previous section, similar changes were necessary to maintain urban green spaces. Concerns of waste become a central focus in the articles of the coming years, though the author of this article places the greatest emphasis on the lack of properly trained and concerned city officials and technical specialists as a primary downfall of the system as a whole. He supports a proposal by Leonid Leonov for the creation of landscaping departments at universities in order to educate future officials on the most sustainable practices.123 This call for improvements to the Soviet education system in order to improve practices relating to sustainability and conservation is a persistent

122 Ibid.
123 Leonid Leonov was a Soviet writer whose stories were often infused with themes surrounding the Russian people’s relationship with the natural world and the struggles that were born of this relationship during the Soviet period. For details about the author’s life and works, see: Boris Thomson, *The Art of Compromise: The Life and Work of Leonid Leonov, 1899-1994* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). Thomson argues that while Leonov was supported by the Soviet regime for a significant portion of his career, the undertones of his works make clear his deep reservations, and even disdain, for Stalin and his policies.
trend throughout the articles under analysis in this study; particularly those that focus on the efficiency of forest management and timber procurement and processing enterprises, though also in the remaining articles about green space and forest recreation.

The next article under analysis addresses many of the same concerns as the editorial from 1958, and similarly does not yet identify wastefulness as a primary issue. On September 10, 1969, *Izvestiia* published an opinion piece that was written by the chairman of the Przhevalsk (today Karakol) Soviet Executive Committee about abuses to the trees and green spaces by various actors in the Kirghiz city. This particular article is included in the analysis because it provides a new perspective from a state official in a Soviet republic. While one might guess that the republics received less support for the creation of green spaces from the center, or that Soviet citizens in the periphery might have had a greater vested interest than those from the nation’s urban centers in preserving the natural elements that infiltrate their city, it quickly becomes clear that similar circumstances and concerns existed in the Kirghiz Republic to those that also existed in Russian cities and towns.

The chairman’s introductory paragraph illustrates his awareness of the history of his region—its recent existence as a relatively unaltered natural landscape and the great power that man has wielded throughout the last century to transform it into a modern city with access to the international community. He states, “Man’s nature is such that through his labor and persistence, he transforms the most remote corners of our planet and makes them comfortable places of habitation.” The author, Aksyonov, expresses his belief in the benefits of progress within the article, but he also makes clear that the maintenance of green spaces and tree plantations should be a high priority of officials and citizens, particularly as those projects were developed with the

---

planning and financial support of the government. Throughout the article, he identifies a number of specific instances when different groups of citizens knowingly damaged or destroyed significant numbers of trees. The diversity of the perpetrators concerns him most. Aksyonov describes two brothers who destroyed a valuable orchard of fruit- and nut-producing trees in order to sell the timber and a teacher at the medical school who led a group of students to cut several fir trees, but also a director of a local enterprise who instructed his employees to cut a grove of trees that was “one of the working people’s favorite resting places,” making specific reference to the utility that such areas have for the Soviet working class.

Many instances of destruction were carried out subversively and require a certain response to discourage them, while the cases in which supervisors instruct employees to eliminate trees demand an entirely different strategy. The chairman suggests that the new drive for developing green spaces in recent years should have been accompanied by new legislation to punish those who harm these spaces. In Russia specifically, laws were developed to fine those responsible for cutting city trees, while the Kirghiz Republic lacks such regulations. Therefore, perpetrators, such as the previously mentioned brothers, are fined 10 rubles for their actions, but are able to make a substantial profit by selling their timber for 100 rubles. Aksyonov suggests that altering these fines is essential for addressing this sort of cutting, but a fundamental shift in mentality is needed to curtail the other acts that are occurring on the job.

The author himself has well-developed insight into the precedent that previous Soviet leaders set with regards to the need to protect green spaces, down to what may appear to be an insignificant individual tree. He refers to specific charges that Lenin himself made when employees of a Gorky Sanatorium cut a healthy fir tree in a park at the order of the sanatorium’s

---

125 Ibid.
manager—a situation that is similar to the one that Aksyonov faces in his city. Lenin ordered that the sanatorium’s manager be imprisoned for one month, while others were warned that all involved in similar behavior in the future would also be punished. The charges seemed harsh for felling a single tree, but this proved to him that far more should be done within the Republic to respect Lenin’s standards. The author describes how the circumstances of Lenin’s charges were all the more indicative of his concern for such matters: “It was during the Civil War, with the country in flames and famine reigning in our cities. But Lenin personally wrote out a decision to punish a man who had given an order to cut down a fir tree. Just one fir tree!”

Aksyonov himself appears to have a well-balanced understanding of the benefits of trees and green spaces within his city and of the advances of a modernizing society, but he identifies the need for others to subscribe to these notions and for his republic to update their policies to match the changing ideals of the Soviet state.

The next article of interest is labeled as a “Letter to Pravda,” and it appeared in the paper on March 21, 1973. Although brief, its two authors, O. Aimaldinov and F. Zhadayev, identify concerns with the implementation of plans for green spaces in Gorky (Nizhnii Novgorod). Although the names of the authors are given, their occupations are not, which suggests that they are regular citizens who have observed deficiencies in the establishment and maintenance of green spaces, but based on the technical information and statistics that they gave, it is more likely they are Soviet officials or specialists who have intimate knowledge of the circumstances in Gorky. Similar to previously mentioned articles, the authors begin by acknowledging that efforts have been made to implement green spaces and tree plantations, but the follow-through by local

126 Ibid.
officials has been inadequate. Plans for new parks, and construction of some, have begun in Gorky, but they feel that the ratio of public green space to people in the region does not fulfill the desires of the inhabitants. Furthermore, the distribution of these spaces has not been done evenly, with certain districts containing just seven square meters of planted area per person or less, while others contain 14 or more.

It is a positive sign that planted areas are being created, but again, it appears that planners do not recognize the deeper significance of these spaces—as places where all should be able to have a relationship with the natural world and enjoy the health benefits associated with the trees and plants. It is likely more important for them to meet the minimum requirements for square meters of green space in the least demanding way. Hence, if there were more open lots in certain districts, they could create larger parks there without taking additional time and effort to rework the utilization of space in the other districts, to the detriment of those who lived there. The authors’ remaining complaints involve the lack of monetary allocations for park and shrubbery maintenance, the single nursery in Gorky that supplies greenery for the whole region, the absence of trained garden specialists to create sustainable plans and direct the maintenance process, and the lack of concern for grazing cows and poachers who strip bark from their city’s trees for tannin extraction. Regardless of whether or not parks were distributed fairly throughout Gorky, these initial, though minimal efforts to create green spaces would ultimately be unsuccessful due to a lack of support for the necessary people and institutions to cultivate and protect the trees and plants.

The frustrations expressed in this letter largely parallel those of the chairman of the Przhevalsk Soviet’s executive committee (1969) and of the editorial writer who spoke of problems with plan execution in Novosibirsk and Kirov Oblast (1958). These related concerns
help to paint a picture of dissatisfaction and inefficiencies that spans across time and space; from 1958 to 1973, from the Kirghiz Republic to Kirov Oblast and from Gorky to Novosibirsk. Questions regarding the implementation of truly impactful urban green spaces, the training of professionals who can see these projects through (from planning and planting to maintaining), and the legislation to protect these areas from damage, intentional or not, arise frequently. By 1975, some articles in the press begin to claim that the initial problems that hindered the movement to implement green spaces, parks, and tree and shrub plantations had passed, and that the time had arrived to place greater focus on the quality and sustainability of these areas. An article in *Izvestiia* on September 7, 1975, written by a trained “engineer-economist,” represents this viewpoint. The general tone of N. Dergachev’s article is neither fully pessimistic nor optimistic, but it does aim to show the nation that more should be done to create spaces that provide numerous high-quality benefits to the inhabitants of Soviet cities.

The 1975 article indicates that the author perceives that public opinion has become more supportive of funneling time and resources into developing urban green spaces: “It is no longer necessary to convince people that we need to preserve natural green landscapes as much as possible when building cities.”128 By this point, Dergachev recognizes a common understanding amongst Soviet people that these urban green spaces provide a link to nature that provides not only aesthetic benefits, but also the health-promoting benefit of purified air. The latest concern is that certain regions are not focusing enough attention on quality of the spaces; namely, which species of trees and shrubs are selected for the green landscapes. Dergachev writes, “Take Smolensk or Kursk Province, for example. The local Soviet executive committees there could do considerably more than they have done to plant, and especially to improve the qualitative

---

selection of, urban greenery.” He criticizes the use of attractive, yet impractical, greenery (lindens, poplars, willows, elders, lilacs, etc.), stating that the use of coniferous trees in the Gomel Province of the Belorussian Republic could serve as a model for other regions. He explains that coniferous trees can provide year-round health benefits to the citizens of colder-climate cities, whereas leaf-bearing trees cannot. This article appears to mark a new phase in the push to make Soviet cities more green, based on Dergachev’s understanding that citizens and officials are largely in support of such measures. Yet there is still immense work to be done to make such programs successful, particularly if one of the primary reasons for planting trees in cities—to provide better quality air—has not been adequately addressed.

Throughout the 1970s, similar stories continued to emerge regarding the ongoing implementation of urban green spaces and tree plantations, and furthermore, these articles described apprehensions, but also signs of improvement, similar to those expressed by Dergachev. A 1977 article in Izvestiia, written by a candidate of agricultural sciences and deputy director of the Central Siberian Botanical Garden, I. Taran, offers an example of a specific region’s successes, just as Dergachev’s article describes the encouraging progress in the Gomel Province. Taran’s article exhibits how it is possible to be mindful of preexisting forests when constructing new cities, based on the example of Akademgorodok, a district in Novosibirsk. The scientific and educational community was built within a forest in the 1950s, and those who were placed in charge of its construction and maintenance were mindful of the unique advantages that the original tree stands offered. As deputy director of the Central Siberian

---

129 Ibid.
130 Josephson delves into the conception, planning, implementation, and significance of the Soviet scientific community in his 1997 book. While the city was developed with the goal of creating an open and intellectual home for Soviet scientists, away from the politics of Moscow, in the post-Stalin era, Josephson remarks that the utopian vision of the planners was not fully achieved. Despite some setbacks, it did largely achieve the fusion between a modern city and the Soviet landscape that the architects desired. See: Paul R. Josephson, New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science (Princeton University Press, 1997).
Botanical Garden, Taran is one of the officials charged with the task of managing the natural spaces within Akademgorodok. He attempts to offer his city as a guide for other Soviet cities that have the potential to better utilize the forest resources that they have at their behest. Conception

Taran points out the aesthetic benefits to protecting the original forests, but he also indicates that the monetary advantages are significant: “It is incomparably cheaper to save the original trees than to replant the whole city with greenery, a process that takes decades.” To recognize these factors pertaining to waste provides an opportunity to recall the 1958-editorial that referred to the hungry goat population of Vyatskiye Polyany, the Novosibirsk streetcar line that was built through a botanical garden, and the Lipetsk commercial and residential building projects that were planned to be built over 700 hectares of trees when vacant lots were available. The author of the editorial negatively regards those acts, but he does not specifically acknowledge the monetary waste that accrues. Taran adds to the strength of his argument by referencing these specific drawbacks to inadequate planning. He then goes on to illustrate the particular precautions that planners of Akademgorodok have taken to ensure the prolonged stability of their community’s forests and green spaces. One strength involves the scientific considerations that planners took to account for changes to the land and soil quality that would occur over time. If they were to disregard these changes, the trees that they were attempting to preserve would struggle to adapt to changed conditions, and potentially not survive.

As the decade came to a close, it was clear that while much of the population had come to recognize the positive aesthetic and health benefits of green spaces and tree plantations within cities and town, many of the plans that were being developed within regions across the Soviet Union did not consider the most efficient use of funds or available natural resources. From the

---

years that followed Stalin’s death and Khrushchev’s rise to the top, officials and specialists were prepared to allocate funds and develop plans for the integration of green spaces into Soviet towns and cities, but the level of commitment from regular citizens, local officials, and state officials, who had a say in improving the training of specialists, was lacking. Unique circumstances existed for established urban centers in comparison to the challenges and opportunities that faced planners of new Soviet cities; particularly with regards to ways in which preexisting natural resources could be implemented into designs and how to continue to accommodate for growing populations. Some specialists encouraged others to use their regions’ models to better their own, as was the case with the Gomel Province’s increased use of conifers and Akademgorodok’s preservation of the established forest, but with regards to adequate housing, solutions understandably varied based on the preexisting space that was available. Interestingly, the reports of challenges within Russian cities were echoed in reports from Soviet republics. While plans were being developed and, to some extent implemented, across the USSR, a dominant mentality of some citizens and officials that led to the exploitation and destruction of green spaces and tree plantations precipitated serious concerns regarding the actual benefit to allocating time and effort for such projects. By the early-1970s, these concerns lessened, as authors of articles in both Pravda and Izvestiia in the late-1960s and 1970s stated that the majority of Soviet citizens recognized the health and aesthetic benefit of access to green space for all. Therefore, the time had come to place major emphasis on improving the quality and sustainability of these plans.

A reference to one final article will give a sense of the degree to which this refocused energy found success in the latter-half of the 1970s. On November 4, 1980, an article written by a candidate of architecture appeared in Pravda. It is titled, “Cities’ Green Shield,” and subtitled, “Why are Parks of Culture and Recreation Being Created at Such a Slow Rate?” Its content
should have served as an eye-opener for those who felt that significant improvements had been made with regards to the beneficial and sustainable development of urban green spaces. Author L. Lunts expresses the results of a study, which found that 100 of 138 cities involved had not created a single park in three years. Furthermore, the average green space per resident was 2.7 square meters, which is half of the state-determined norm (and more than four square meters less than what was reported in the 1973 article as the area per person in the districts of Gorky with inadequate green space). Lunts goes on to explain that, not only are new parks not being built, but areas that were designated for park and outdoor recreation sites are being reallocated for building construction projects, which helps to disprove the belief that respect for these projects was improving across all levels of society.

The author identifies two specific roots to the problems that still exist. The first is based on disorganization in the government: “In a number of cities, the green space that comprises the parks of culture and recreation is under the jurisdiction of municipal agencies, while all the personnel, management included, is subordinate to cultural agencies.” Without proper delineation of duties, spaces could be utilized for purposes that they were not originally intended for or forgotten altogether. While these spaces aren’t directly related, the issue of jurisdiction harkens back to the concern in the first section of multiple departments sharing jurisdiction in the forest, leading to the destruction and subsequent duplication of nearly identical procurement and processing enterprises. The poor organization of management across sectors pertaining to the natural environment contributes to systemic waste and unsatisfactory use of space. The second problem is one that was been repeated across the decades: there has been a lack of emphasis in

133 Ibid., 23.
the USSR Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education on specialized training of specialists who could successfully develop green spaces in cities. Lunts states, “The rather low qualitative level of many of our parks is largely a result of the shortage of trained personnel. The specialized training of landscape architects is not being conducted on the required scale. The [Ministry] is increasingly losing sight of the need to train personnel for parks.”¹³⁴ Not only was the training of specialists inadequate for the times, but Lunt perceives that education officials were becoming less interested in supporting these programs. Concerns regarding the training of specialists and government disorganization and mismanagement of natural spaces dominate conversations in the Soviet press of the 1950s – 1980s that pertain to all realms of forestry and environmental management and conservation, as has been exhibited throughout the previous sections.

Conclusions

While this section on the development of Soviet urban green spaces and forest belts around cities differs in many ways from the previous two sections, the concerns expressed in the articles analyzed here offer important perspectives on the dynamic that existed between Soviet citizens, scientists, the government, and the forest and natural landscape in the decades following Stalin’s death. The earliest articles in this report emit a sense of excitement and forward-thinking by party and government officials, who encouraged Soviet youth to take pride in the natural beauty around their homes and who were optimistic about plans for new Siberian cities that would encapsulate the region’s forests. But as soon as plans were underway to begin implementing green spaces and forest belts within and around Soviet cities and towns, concerns started to emerge.

¹³⁴ Ibid.
As early as 1958, press correspondents and local leaders were reporting that insufficient maintenance of tree and shrub plantations and the disrespect of many within towns was rendering their initial efforts moot. Disease, greedy townspeople, hooligans, and even goats showed little care for the long-term health and benefits of these natural features. And perhaps most problematic was the lack of dedication of many government officials to the sustainability of the projects. At the state level, calls for better training of city planning and landscape specialists who could design high-quality spaces that included the most beneficial species of trees and plants were made, with no indication of progress. Furthermore, reports from the 1970s and early-1980s began to make clear that local officials were often fulfilling the minimum requirements in order to report that plans had been carried out. While some developments in attitude did occur, such as the 1975 report stating that people no longer needed to be convinced of the benefits of these green spaces and belts, the article of 1980 about the minimal developments in this realm of city planning that had occurred in the previous three years contributes to the argument that the Soviet people’s interest in integrating the forest and natural landscape into their everyday environments was not a priority for the Soviet officials who held the power to make such desires a reality.
5. Conclusion

As the Brezhnev area drew to a close in 1982, global understanding of the environment, of the benefits that the forest and natural landscape could provide, and of the responsibilities that humans had to interact with their surroundings in a sustainable manner had changed significantly since Khrushchev’s rise in 1953. Greater awareness led to the formation of countless local and international environmental groups and conferences that were interested in not only the protection of the earth’s natural landscape, but also in ways that countries could sustainably utilize their natural resources in order to build strong national economies. In the second half of the twentieth century, the global community harnessed strong support for conservationist values. In some respects, these attitudes found their way into the Soviet press in ongoing conversations regarding the functioning of the forestry industry and the implementation of green spaces and forest belts into designs for Soviet cities. Concerns regarding the waste of raw materials appeared with great frequency in the articles that are utilized in this study; from woodchips, other wood byproducts, over-mature stands of trees, berries, and mushrooms in the forest to trees and

---

shrubs in city parks, medians, and residential areas, natural resources were not being managed sustainably.

As treatment of forest resources worsened, some Soviet citizens, particularly trained forestry specialists, scientists, and newspaper correspondents familiar with the field, increasingly infused their articles with points that would draw the reader’s attention to potential damages to the environment. And yet, the most persisting theme throughout the majority of the articles was the negative economic impact of wasteful practices. Waste in the forestry industry occurred during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras for a number of reasons, including the establishment of extraction and processing enterprises in unforested areas, the lack of integration of secondary forest products into the responsibilities of foresters, the disregard for wood byproducts and lower quality wood, and the absence of all-encompassing surveys of forests across the nation. Waste in cities and towns occurred due to locals who saw an opportunity to gain a profit, unrestrained animals, and irresponsible officials who designed infrastructure over and through green spaces. Newspaper correspondents, scientific and economic specialists, state and local officials, and anonymous citizens all took part in public conversations that expressed anxieties regarding the potential large-scale consequences of such instances of waste.

These persisting concerns regarding waste and the desire for the more sustainable use of natural resources, whether due to a desire to improve the economy or to protect the environment, were symptomatic of a deeper issue. Across the decades and topics under consideration, a general lack of interest by government officials, in investing significant resources in the modernization of the forestry industry and the sustainable implementation of green space plans largely inhibited the possibility of constructive responses to questions, requests, and demands that were posed in the Soviet press at the time. As the authors of a 1962 article about the illogical
plan to establish more enterprises in the Lower Volga region described those circumstance, the
decisions that influenced the forestry industry’s functioning and the establishment of green
spaces and forest belts were directed by an “old, erroneous tendency.”

Decisions to avoid investment in modernized technologies and specialist training, to allow parks and planted
medians to fall victim to human and natural elements, decisions not to establish permanent
extraction and processing enterprises, not to integrate the plethora of secondary forest products
into the forestry industry’s duties, not to demand an all-encompassing survey of the wealth of the
forests, not to notify workers when plans were altered, and not to designate stands for cutting
when their trees were passing maturity; these were all choices that were made that helped to
prove the devotion of industry leadership and state and local officials to the status quo with
regards to the treatment of the concerns expressed in this study. Although areas of improvement
were reported, such as the implementation of the three-level system of management, the
inventorying of secondary forest resources in the Volyn Oblast, and the successful
implementation of plans in Akademgorodok, these instances were limited and largely
overshadowed by the remaining deficiencies and failures to convert success to the national scale.

\[\text{Konoplev et al., “Urgent Question: On Problem of Transporting and Planning the Reprocessing of Lumber,” 21.}\]
Bibliography

Primary Sources


http://dlib.eastview.com.resources.library.brandeis.edu/browse/doc/13624941.

http://dlib.eastview.com.resources.library.brandeis.edu/browse/doc/14214003.


Secondary Sources


