



## Regional HCV Resource Network Event in North West Russia

The **High Conservation Value Resource Network**, in partnership with the Komi Regional Non-Profit Foundation **Silver Taiga**, was delighted to initiate a regional workshop in Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, Russia, from 1-3 April 2009. The occasion drew representatives from all of the major environmental NGOs active in the region, and following the workshop there was an opportunity to present a summary of the outcomes of discussions to the main forest stakeholders of Komi.



The one and a half day workshop provided an excellent opportunity for information exchange about the identification, management and monitoring of HCVs in the forest landscapes of North West Russia. While the event focused on the European North of Russia, additional regional perspectives were provided by speakers from Canada and Bulgaria where there has been considerable progress with national interpretations of the HCV framework. The agenda, participant list and presentations made at the meeting are all available for download at [www.hcvnetwork.org](http://www.hcvnetwork.org).

### Workshop Highlights

#### ***Introducing the HCV Resource Network & providing a global perspective on use of the HCV concept***

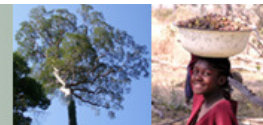
The Network was represented at the meeting through members of the Secretariat, Steering Group, and Technical Panel. Following a brief introduction to the aims and functions of the Resource Network, particularly in the context of the expanding use of the HCV framework, the **primary objectives** of this meeting were defined as:

- Information exchange and discussion of the current situation regarding the status and management of the pristine forests (HCV 2) of the European North of Russia
- Sharing experience of HCV identification and management in the rest of the world
- Seeking ways for the Network to support Russian stakeholders to achieve their goals with respect to the conservation of pristine forests



Peter Gardiner of Mondi, and co-chair of the Network Steering Group, highlighted the strength of the HCV approach - both as a globally accepted methodology, and one which allows for important regional differences - by comparing and contrasting the identification of HCV areas in Komi forests and in intensively managed plantations in South Africa conducted as part of the FSC certification process.

Members of the Network Technical Panel provided information on other national processes to compare with the situation in Russia: Zhivko Bogdanov (WWF DCPO) gave an update on the development and implementation of the HCVF process in Bulgaria (also touching on recent



developments in Romania); Marcelo Levy (Responsible Forestry Solutions) examined the process involved in FSC Canada's development of a National Framework for the assessment of HCVF.

### ***Presentations from Russia: an overview of the general situation & specific cases from the European North***

A number of presentations summarised the existing state of affairs in Russian forestry, and gave an overview of how the HCVF framework has been applied in practice:

Alexy Yaroshenko (Greenpeace) considered the recent changes in forest governance following the introduction of the new Russian Forest code (RFC) which came into force in 2007, in particular highlighting the current concerns of the environmental NGO community regarding the protection of large intact pristine forests.

Mikhail Karpechivskiy (Biodiversity Conservation Centre and FSC National Initiative) and Andrei Ptichnikov (FSC Russia National Office) provided an overview of HCVF and biodiversity protection from the specific perspective of the FSC, emphasising the fact that it is exclusively within this context that the HCV framework is applied in Russia.



Dmitry Askenov (Transparent World) gave a comprehensive review of the wide variety of remote sensing and GIS mapping activities his organisation has been involved with. These technologies have been used primarily as a means of identifying and monitoring HCVs 1-3, and to a lesser extent HCV4; the powerful value of maps as a communication tool, providing a

universal and easy to understand language for different stakeholders, was emphasised.

Tatyana Yanitskaya (WWF Russia) summarised achievements, especially with respect to mapping projects (see above), and some of the remaining challenges, especially those related to the relatively few areas involved, with the use of the HCVF concept in Russia. An examination of a number of key issues led her to conclude by asking how forestry businesses and the Russian federal authorities could be persuaded to engage with the HCV concept; encouraging such involvement might be a potentially important role for the HCV Network in Russia (also see later).

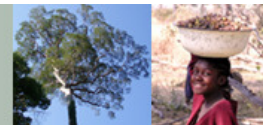
Three presentations looked at case studies from the European North of Russia:

Przemyslaw Majewski (Silver Taiga Foundation) described the pristine forest massifs of Komi (> 50, 000 ha); as part of the Komi Model Forest project (originally started by WWF in 1996, and implemented by Silver Taiga since 2002), an inventory of pristine forests in 22 forest units (leskhozoes) – covering an area of 19.5 million ha in the Republic - has been made. Additionally, methodological recommendations have been drawn up for determining the ecological, social and economic value of large pristine forests in Komi, and this has informed the development of biodiversity conservation planning in forestry operations in certain locations. However, significant challenges remain, most notably that many of these areas have no formal legislation and as such may be jeopardised by the RFC.

Alexandr Markovsky (SPOK) discussed the three levels at which biodiversity conservation has been approached in Karelia, by focusing on:

- Large valuable forest areas of international concern
- Valuable forest areas of regional and local concern
- Key biotopes – local patches of special value

This Karelian Nature-Protection NGO has worked with forest companies (e.g. Swedwood-Karelia, Investlesprom) to promote the exclusion of the most valuable areas from exploitation and to persuade them to adopt forestry practices that



are sympathetic to forest dynamics and biodiversity conservation, and a number of such successful examples were described.

A presentation from Denis Dobrynin & Andrey Shegolev (WWF-Russia) showed the extent and distribution of intact forest massifs in the Arkhangelsk region: 14 separate areas covering some 9.5 million ha which are not currently adequately protected by the existing PA system. Two conservation priorities were highlighted: Dvina-Pinega intact forest massif and the Onezhskij peninsula, and a number of potential solutions, including further development of PAs were discussed.

A list of all of the presentations made during the meeting is provided in Box 1, and they are available for download from the [Network Meetings and Briefings](#) section of the Resource Centre on the website (relevant reports and tools produced by some of these projects are available from country and/or project pages); an agenda for the meeting and participant list are also available for download.

## **Workshop conclusions presented to Komi forest stakeholders**

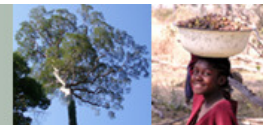
Immediately following the main workshop, a summary of main outcomes of the discussion was presented to forest stakeholders of Komi, including forest managers (e.g. Niokr, Leskom & Mondi Syktyvkar) and State Government and forest industry union officials.

The presentations made on Day 1 - about various achievements and obstacles faced with respect to identifying and managing HCVFs, both in Russia and all over the world - were briefly summarized; additionally an overview of the results of discussions on Day 2 was presented, with a focus on:

- Different HCVF management methods, using the example of the large pristine forest areas of Komi
- Future potential for collaboration with the HCV Resource Network
- Potential cooperation with forest industry businesses

### **Box 1: Meeting Presentations**

- **High Conservation Values - a powerful tool for promoting conservation within productive landscapes** : Christopher Stewart, *HCV Network Manager*
- **The HCV Resource Network**: Nilofer Ghaffar, *HCV Network Coordinator*
- **High Conservation Value Forests Implementation in Canada**: Marcelo Levy, *Responsible Forestry Solutions & HCV Network Technical Panel*
- **HCVF process in Bulgaria**: Zhivko Bogdanov, *WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme & HCV Network Technical Panel*
- **Mondi and the HCV Resource Network**: Peter Gardiner, *Mondi & HCV Network Steering Group Co-chair*
- **Current Situation in Russian forestry**: Alexey Yaroshenko, *Greenpeace Russia*
- **FSC in Russia, achievements and issues, generally and according to HCVF and biodiversity protection**: Andrei Ptichnikov, *FSC Russian NO director*
- **HCVF and Biodiversity Conservation in Russian FSC Certification Standards**: Mikhail Karpachevskiy, *Biodiversity Conservation Center, Chair of the FSC Russian National Initiative*
- **Remote sensing and GIS for HCVF and monitoring**, Dmitry Aksenov, *NGO "Transparent World"*
- **HCVF in Russia, Achievements & issues**: Tatiana Yanitskaya, *WWF Russia / Forest Program & HCV Network Technical Panel*
- **HCVF – situation in Komi: Silver Taiga activities, achievements and issues**: Przemyslaw Majewski & Dmitry Kutepov, *Silver Taiga Foundation*
- **Current Situation with HCVF Protection in Republic Of Karelia**, Alexander Markovsky, *NGO SPOK*
- **HCVF II in Arkhangelsk region**: Denis Dobrynin & Andrey Shegolev, *WWF Arkhangelsk (delivered by Tatayana Yanitskaya)*



## HCVF conservation & management

It was suggested that landscape biodiversity, existing protected areas, and other environmental values should all be considered when attempting to preserve the integrity of large intact forest landscapes; a variety of protection and sustainable use mechanisms were identified, including:

- Voluntary certification and preservation
- Creation of new protected areas in the most valuable massifs
- Development of long-term strategies for use of forest resources
- Development of long-term economic alternatives (including secondary forest use; tourism and recreation; harvesting non-timber forest products)
- Uptake of forest management practices compatible with biodiversity conservation
- Increasing awareness of the low economic prospects of using large HCVF massifs
- Participation in various international initiatives (e.g. UNDP projects, carbon programmes, HCV Resource Network)

## Collaboration with the Resource Network

A number of ways of strengthening future interaction were suggested, including:

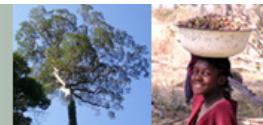
- Translation of key documents from/into Russian and forming a partnership to share information and exchange resources between the Resource Network website and the [Russian High Conservation Value Forests](http://www.hcvf.net) site (www.hcvf.net)
- Creation of a Russian group to provide regional representation of the Network
- Visits aimed at experience exchange between different countries and learning for forest stakeholders (managers, conservationists etc.)

- Identification of opportunities for joint projects aimed at global harmonization of HCV identification and management

## Cooperation with industry

The following significant points were noted in the context of increasing NGO and forest industry partnerships, seen as vital to the successful conservation of pristine forests:

- Industry and NGOs often have similar points of view, and should come together to convey these to government
- NGOs need to work with industry to raise awareness of the high conservation value of forests, and assist in the development and implementation of a new approach to logging practices
- Industry staff responsible for ecological issues are often not in influential positions so more senior management need to be involved
- Businesses should be encouraged to join the [Association of Environmentally Responsible Producers of Forest Products](#) (Russian WWF Forest and Trade Network), which aims to create an “environmentally responsible forest industry and positive image of ecologically responsible timber producers, government agencies, and NGOs in Russia and abroad”
- Large international companies (e.g. Mondi) could provide an example of new approaches in implementation, and assist small and medium-sized enterprises to solve ecological issues
- NGOs need to work closely with the financial sector to increase its social and ecological commitments and responsibilities



## Field trip to Komi Villages

On day 3, members of the Silver Taiga Foundation accompanied participants from the HCV Resource Network (Secretariat and Technical Panel) on a field trip to Komi Villages and the Komi Model Forest project area.

More information on both of these projects may be found on the Silver Taiga website at: <http://www.silvertaiga.ru/en/main/>



The HCV Resource Network would like to thank all of the staff at the Silver Taiga Foundation for their hard work and hospitality in organising and hosting this meeting and organising the field excursion; the Network also gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution to the workshop made by Mondi.

The Network looks forward to future collaboration with the various NGOs involved in this event, and hopes that its international reach will help raise the profile of some of the issues of concern in Russia.

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### **The High Conservation Value Resource Network**

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