

# Sustainable Forestry in Tomsk Taiga

by Wayne Talbot,  
WTA Education Services on behalf  
of the Tree Council

# Purpose

- To help conserve the biodiversity of the taiga forest
- To raise awareness of its social, economic and environmental value,
- Create a model of sustainable forestry use involving local communities

# Key Areas of work

- Establishing a framework leading to FSC certification with Oblast authorities, IIES networks, TRN partners
- Increasing ecological monitoring of proposed FSC forests and other forest areas of value with two Russian universities, CUEX and BTO
- Developing a market in Western Europe for high value forest products with market research by Traidcraft

# Tomsk Oblast

- Almost in the centre of Russia, at the southern edge of the Siberian taiga forest
- 62% of the territory consists of taiga forest
- 6% of this is undisturbed primary forest

The major threats to this forest habitat are:

- Increased logging, both legal and illegal
- Uncontrolled fires
- Lack of infrastructure for sustainable forestry
- Lack of detailed knowledge of species distribution
- Lack of awareness of forest resources and their relevance to global community

# Context

- The new Russian Forest Law has resulted in the loss of the Federal Forest Agency
- The new structure requires forests to be managed by the Tomsk Oblast Administration
- The Oblast authorities are able to define what structures and criteria can be used to manage the forests.

# Elements of legacy/ exit strategy

Since changes in Russian Forest Law we have:

- been invited to work as a bridge between ecological and economic development departments in the oblast
- the opportunity to present the model being developed for Siberia region
- been asked to work with local foresters and their training/ museum centre
- developed contacts with nut importers
- developed possible connections with designers for Birch Bark products

# Challenges

- Cultural – different attitudes to invoices and information sharing
- Political – need for official recognition
- Scientific – initial discussion about different methods adopted by scientific partners
- Economic – understanding of standards and customer care as defined by Western markets
- Time factors – being unable to develop a market instantly

# Changes

- Cultural – new project planning tools and telephone conferencing
- Political – recognition due to negotiation by Russian partners and letting them guide us
- Scientific - discussion of expedition results and alteration of method by Russian partners to suit their requirements
- Economic – through practical experience of expeditions and training in the UK
- Research – initiating sociological research to understand local community context



# Actions

- Adoption of FSC model linking partners through a bridging organisation
- Use of project reports by both universities and regional / local authorities - already helped with protecting an area of forest
- Expeditions as a form of tourism to help local people with income generation and continue research
- Foundation for trade in non-timber forest products