

Finnish Forestry Fables: Committed to talking but in reality still logging



Stora Enso visited this mapped area of old-growth forest on the 17th September. One week after that visit Metsähallitus logged the area. Most of the timber taken from the forest will be converted into pulp for paper products. Stora Enso is the likely buyer of old-growth timber from this area. Otsamo, Inari, 2003. ©Liimatainen/Greenpeace

“Living forests form a central part of Sami culture. Old-growth forests are of crucial importance for reindeer herding and should not be logged for pulp mills under any circumstances. In the Sami culture we have been taught to respect forests ever since our childhood.”

Pekka Aikio, President of the Sami Parliament, 2001 Finland.

Reindeer herdsman Kalevi Paadar views logs cut from a grazing area for his reindeer in Inari in the Sami area. The trees in this pile are 200 to 300 years old. Metsähallitus logged this area in September 2003 without consensus from the dialogue process and the local reindeer herders. 2003 ©Liimatainen/Greenpeace



Stora Enso's vice president of Environmental affairs, Ms. Tuja Suur-Hamari (left) and their Environmental Communications representative, Ms. Päivi Sihvola, travelled to the Sami area to see logging in old-growth forests for themselves. Juoksemavaara, Inari, 2003. ©Liimatainen/Greenpeace

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Throughout the world, ancient forests¹ are in crisis. Some 80% of the original ancient forest cover has already been degraded or destroyed. As part of our campaign to protect the world's remaining ancient forests, Greenpeace investigates companies involved in illegal, destructive or abusive forestry activities. We then call upon their customers, consumers and governments to stop their role in driving this unscrupulous industry.

Even in a wealthy, forest-rich nation like Finland, industrial logging is jeopardising the survival of the country's last ancient – or old-growth – forests. These forests are crucial for maintaining biodiversity and the traditional livelihoods of the indigenous Sami communities.

This briefing is designed to update customers and interested parties on developments in relation to protection of Finland's old-growth forests during 2003. It compliments the Greenpeace briefing from May 2003 'Finnish Forestry: Destroying forests, destroying livelihoods'.

¹ Ancient forests are defined here as the world's remaining forests that are shaped largely by natural events and are little impacted by human activities. Finland's remaining fragments of ancient forest are generally referred to as 'old-growth' forests.

Key players in the scandal: the government, the paper manufacturers and the European markets.

Metsähallitus: Logging old-growth forest

While much of Finland's productive forest (around 62 percent) is controlled by private landowners, the vast majority of its valuable old-growth is owned and logged by the state logging company Metsähallitus. Metsähallitus is well known for its deleterious logging practices. These include clearcutting, logging in habitats of threatened and vulnerable species and logging in areas of special scenic or cultural value – including areas that are vital to the livelihood of many indigenous Sami reindeer herding people.

Greenpeace investigations have identified a number of companies buying old-growth timber from Metsähallitus. However, the vast majority goes to Finland's three international paper producing companies via the following mills:

- Kemijärvi, Veitsiluoto and Oulu: **Stora Enso**
- Kajaani and Metsä-Botnia: **UPM-Kymmene**
- Kemi and Metsä-Botnia: **M-Real**

Notably, the Finnish government not only sells old-growth timber to Stora Enso but is also their largest single shareholder, holding nearly a quarter of the company's voting power.

The export market: fuelling destruction

Over 90% of all paper produced in Finland is shipped to export markets.² Together, Stora Enso, UPM-Kymmene and M-Real supply products to the majority of Europe's large paper users. Their customers include publishers, printing houses, packaging producers and paper retailers.

Recent figures show that the largest importers of Finnish pulp and paper products are Germany (20.5%) and the UK (14.7%), followed by Asia (7.6%), North America (7.3%), France (6.9%), Spain (5.9%), Belgium-Luxembourg (4.9%), Netherlands (4.0%), Italy (3.6%) and Sweden (2.9%).³

Any company buying from Stora Enso, UPM-Kymmene and M-Real should be aware that they may be contributing to the destruction of Finland's unprotected old-growth forests and the biological and cultural diversity they support.

Finland Resumes its destruction of Old-growth forests

2003 has seen a number of significant developments in the campaign to gain greater protection for Finland's old-growth forests. A 'dialogue' process was started early in the year between Metsähallitus and two environmental organisations, WWF and the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC). The aim of these negotiations is to try to reach agreement regarding additional protection for old-growth forests, mostly in the North and East of the country.

In June, Greenpeace and FANC presented a set of comprehensive maps that indicate areas of old-growth and high conservation value forest (474 in total) that should be subject to a moratorium, until the negotiation process has reached its conclusion. Metsähallitus then announced a halt in all new logging operations in the mapped areas.



A recent field investigation in old-growth forests of Ruoskelkä-Pauttisselkä in September 2003 verified the presence of numerous red-listed fungi species. These species depend on the natural decay cycle for their survival. Decaying wood provides habitat for numerous vertebrates, fungi, invertebrates, lichens, plants and micro-organisms. This area is one of the approximately 50 sites where Metsähallitus has logging plans for year 2003. Ruoskelkä, Eastern Lapland, 2003 © Liimatainen/Greenpeace



Arboreal lichen found in old-growth forests in Finland provides a critical food source for reindeer, especially in winter. Kemini-Sompio, Finland. 2002 © Liimatainen/Greenpeace

² Finnish Forest Industries Federation website (17.03.03 c).

³ These figures from 2000 are in terms of value. Finnish Forest Research Institute (2001b); Finnish Forest Industries Federation (2001).

Unfortunately, this assurance was short lived. In August, Metsähallitus announced that it planned to log in at least 50 of the mapped areas over the autumn and winter, even if no agreement has been reached through the dialogue process regarding additional protection.

Greenpeace believes that the process, as currently organised, is inadequate and flawed in a number of respects.

Firstly, the negotiations only include 401 of the 474 areas mapped by Greenpeace and FANC. Whilst these talks have continued so has logging in areas that should have been subject to negotiation.

Secondly, whilst agreement has been reached regarding additional protection in some forest areas, the process has not been formalised and the status of additionally protected areas remains unclear under Finnish law.

To date the dialogue process has not produced any maps detailing decisions concerning new protected areas. Metsähallitus has given no information regarding how many hectares of forest have been protected so far. In addition, there are no guarantees or mechanisms in place for external stakeholders to verify where the new protected areas are located, and whether additional protection is permanent or temporary.

Greenpeace believes that this uncertainty and lack of clarity, combined with continued old-growth logging, could threaten the credibility of the whole dialogue process.

Metsähallitus and the paper companies claim that forestry issues in the Sami homeland of Upper Lapland are being dealt with separately from the FANC/WWF negotiations through the Saarela process. Under the guise of this process, the majority of mapped old-growth forest areas in Upper Lapland have been left open for logging.

Greenpeace can confirm that between August and October at least six mapped areas in Upper Lapland have been logged. These areas are vital for reindeer herding and in at least one case provided habitat for a number of red listed species.

Logging in these areas has been undertaken without consensus from the dialogue process and without proper consultation with reindeer herders.

On November 8, Metsähallitus announced plans to log in two further mapped areas in Upper Lapland in the coming months. One of these areas is particularly important to the Sami reindeer herders of the Angeli village. They oppose Metsähallitus's destructive logging practices in their reindeer grazing forests. In an attempt to prevent logging from taking place they filed a complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. As a result, the Commission has asked the Finnish government to refrain from logging in the area of Angeli until the matter has been resolved. It appears from logging plans that this request will be disregarded.

Metsähallitus has also given no guarantees concerning mapped areas outside the Sami areas. According to Metsähallitus, these mapped areas can be logged if no other logging sites are available to meet customer demands for wood.⁵ In October, Metsähallitus cut old-growth forest stands in the mapped area of Salmivaara, Taivalkoski in northeastern Finland. It was then claimed this area was logged "by accident".

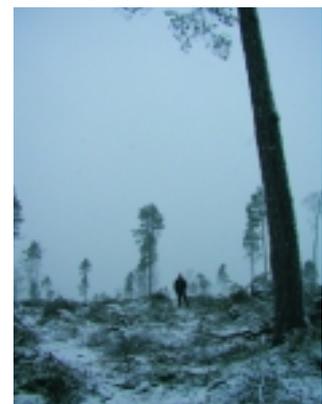
It is clear that without a moratorium in place all these disputed areas are vulnerable to being logged.



Hawk owl (*Surnia ulula*) nests in an old-growth tree. These large diameter snags provide important habitat for many of the cavity-nesting bird species found in Finland. Kajaani, Finland. 1998 ©Antti Leinonen/Greenpeace

Unless all near natural, old-growth forests are protected from industrial logging, then mass extinction of species is likely⁴

Ilkka Hanski, Professor, Department of Ecology and Systematics, University of Helsinki.



This used to be an important Inari Sami reindeer grazing area. In August 2003, Metsähallitus logged this area with a harvester. Metsähallitus did not negotiate the logging plans beforehand with the local reindeer herders, even though it is obliged to do so according to section 53 of the Reindeer Herding Act. Livikköjärvi, Nellim, Inari 2003 © Liimatainen/Greenpeace

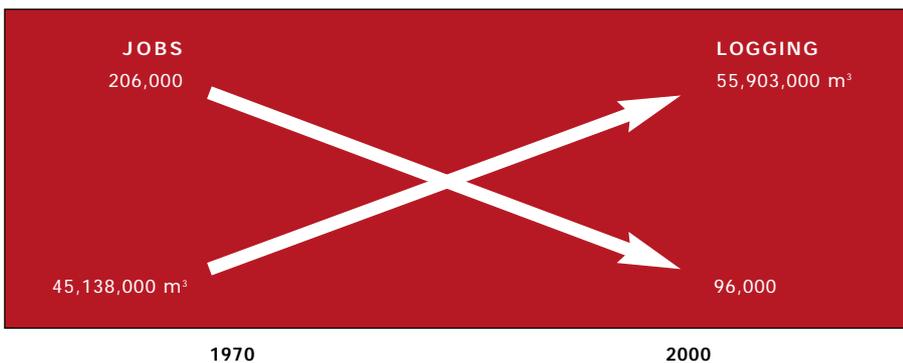
⁴ Hanski I (1999) Article in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 09.01.99

⁵ Metsähallitus, Director of forestry in Western Lapland, ms. Kirsi-Marja Korhonen, in newspaper *Lapin Kansa* 7.11.03

Logging and livelihoods - who profits?

In its justification for logging in old-growth forest areas, Metsähallitus has raised the issue of employment needs. Today, the output of the Finnish timber industry is greater than at any other time in its history, yet the employment opportunities offered by the industry have decreased dramatically.⁶

More Logging = Less Jobs in Finland Forestry



The logging machine or harvester, that can easily do the work of 10 to 20 loggers, is now being used in ten percent of logging operations in Upper Lapland. Representatives of Metsähallitus's Lumberjacks Union in Inari and a FANC local group in a recent joint press release stated that, 'The ongoing usage of the harvester in the easily-workable summer logging areas shows bad judgement of the situation by the management of the Upper Lapland Nature Resource Area of Metsähallitus and is unbearable in respect of dealing with the employment'.

Metsähallitus has also been reluctant to increase thinning work in young forests in Upper Lapland despite the employment opportunities it would create.

Greenpeace believes that Metsähallitus is being disingenuous by using employment arguments as a justification for ongoing logging.

Greenpeace call for action

Greenpeace believes that all logging in mapped areas should be halted until consensus agreement has been reached regarding additional protection measures. We are calling on customers to:

- Ask for written guarantees that no material from any of the recently mapped old-growth areas is entering or will enter their supply chain, pending comprehensive agreement on additional protection for these areas.
- To begin to switch all virgin fibre in their supply chain to sources that have been independently certified, at least to the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Through switching to FSC supplies you can be sure that all paper you are buying comes from well managed forests.



Sami reindeer herders of the Angeli village oppose Metsähallitus's new logging plans for areas located in the Paadarskaidi forest. They have filed a complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in an attempt to prevent the logging in their reindeer grazing forests. Metsähallitus still intends to log these areas despite the Commission's request to its halt logging plans until the dispute has been resolved. 2003 © Liimatainen/Greenpeace



Logging of this old-growth forest area in Inari began in September 2003. Metsähallitus refused to negotiate with the local reindeer herders. Kantojärvi, Paatsjoki, Inari 2003. ©Liimatainen/Greenpeace

⁶ Finnish Statistical Yearbook of Forestry, Finnish Forest Research Institute 2002.