The Amur Ecoregion forests are considered to be the most productive in the temperate zone of Asia. Here, the typical northern species like elk, birch get along with southern yellow-throated marten, wild vine, tigers and leopards.

Since 1998, the Forest Program run by WWF in the Russian Far East is focused on saving the most valuable forests of the Amur Ecoregion. The forests play a significant role in preserving biological diversity, they mitigate climate change, clean air, reduce greenhouse gases concentration in the atmosphere, protect against floods and soil erosion, safeguard rivers’ sources and lakes.
WWF conducts and supports research to understand more on the conservation value of the region and elaborate recommendations to conserve its richness. As part of the voluntary forest certification in partnership with scientists and logging companies, WWF delineates and conserve the high conservation value forests (HCVF). By 2019, the total area of these forests has reached **447,000 hectares**.

In the middle reaches of the Bikin River thanks to the efforts of WWF and a huge public support, the largest in the Northern Hemisphere intact block of mixed forests have been saved from logging. In 2015, this area became part of the Bikin National Park and in 2018 it was included into the UNESCO List of Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites.

In Evreiskaya, Primorsky and Khabarovsky provinces the requirements to conserve biodiversity have been approved. Thanks to this, the loggers will conserve key biotopes when cutting timber.

### Protection of key tree species

WWF launched a large-scale campaign called Korean Pine is the Tree of Life for the Russian Government to ban all cuts of the valuable tree. In 2010, the Government imposed such a ban which saves up to **500,000** Korean pines annually.

At WWF’s initiative, in 2011 the first Korean Pine Day was celebrated in Primorye aimed at the forests restoration. Within two years, **1 million** Korean pine seedlings were planted.

In March 2014, at the initiative of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Mongolian oak and Manchurian ash were enlisted in the Appendix III of CITES. This enables the responsible governmental agencies to halt illegally cut timber turnover before it crosses the Russian border.

### Combating illegal logging

WWF actively supports the efforts against illegal logging: forms specialized groups, equips them with needed field outfit, tablets, GPS, and vehicles.

Since 1998, staff of WWF and specialized groups have revealed over **950** illegal logging sites totaling **55,000 m³** of timber volume and the damage of **38.6 billion euros**. **324** units of equipment (tractors and vehicles) and **156** chain saws were confiscated from the «black» lumbermen.

In 2017, the satellite monitoring system «KEDR» developed with WWF’s support was put into test operation. In the automatic mode the system reveals potential illegal logging sites and delivers this information to the agencies in charge. Over two years, in four test forestry units KEDR helped reveal **73** illicit logging sites with a total timber volume of **5,814.2 m³** and the damage of **10.5 million euros**.
DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF CONSERVATION CONCESSIONS

In cooperation with its partners, WWF demonstrates that instead of logging operations there are options to use non-timber forest products. To achieve this since 2017, with the support of WWF its partners have leased around 1 million hectares of valuable Korean pine forests as conservation concessions to harvest edible plants and herbs. Here instead of logging the leasers sustainably use of the rapidly renewable taiga resources. Later, 578,000 hectares of these forests got the protected area status.

CONTROL OVER TIMBER ORIGIN

WWF collects analytics to improve the system of forest management and revealing the sources of illegally cut timber. Since 2013, three analytical reports focused on the illegal logging were published.

- **Report «Global Demand and Taiga Destruction»** (published in 2013) showed that the volume of some valuable tree species exporting from the Russian Far East to China exceeds the authorized logging volumes by 2–4 times. 
  
  **Result:** in 2014, Mongolian oak and Manchurian ash were enlisted into the Appendix III of CITES and the share of illegally cut timber in the total export volume decreased from 200% to 25% from the authorized logging volumes.

  
  **Result:** in 2017, new rules for tending cutting were adopted prohibiting all cuts in Korean pine stands and Korean pine nuts harvesting zones which logging companies used as a cover to conduct commercial timber harvesting. In 2019, the State Duma adopted in the third reading a draft law introducing the administrative responsibility over withholding or falsification of data when prescribing tending cutting.

- **Report «Depletion of Mongolian Oak and Manchurian Ash Resources in Primorye»** (published in 2018) showed, that the illegally cut timber comes to the market mainly from the legal forest users and not from the «black» lumbermen. Forest leasers use the declarative character of the forestry to legalize illicitly cut timber. 
  
  **Result:** in 2019, Valentina Matvienko, the spokesperson of the Council of Federation, proposed to the Russian Government to introduce a moratorium on export of round wood before the issue with «grey» turnover is solved and to initiate elaboration of a new edition of the Forest Code.
73 illicit logging sites were revealed with satellite monitoring system KEDR over two years in four forestry units of Primorye with estimated damage of 10.5 mln euros annually up to 500 000 Korean pines are being saved from logging thanks to the ban imposed by the Russian Government in 2010.

around 1 mln ha of the valuable Korean pine forests WWF’s partners have leased as a conservation concession. They converted into harvesting non-timber forest products instead of logging.

3 mln ha of the Amur Ecoregion forests have been FSC-certified in 2014.

Mongolian oak and ash were included into Appendix III of CITES.

emission of over 3,2 mln tons CO₂-eq has been prevented thanks to the climate projects run by WWF in Primorye.

from 200% to 25% of the annual allowable cut the share of illegally harvested oak and ash trees has been reduced in the overall volume of export.

Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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