

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE
ENVIRONMENT OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA

HELSINKI COMMISSION - Baltic Marine
Environment Protection Commission

20th Meeting
Helsinki, 22-24 March 1999

HELCOM 20/99
14/1
Annex 6

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 20/3

Adopted 23 March 1999
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention 1974

REDUCTION OF NUTRIENTS AND OTHER POLLUTANTS LEACHING FROM FORESTRY LAND

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to take all appropriate measures to control and minimize land-based pollution of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area,

HAVING REGARD also to Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention, in which the Contracting Parties shall individually or jointly take all appropriate legislative, administrative or other relevant measures to prevent and abate pollution,

RECALLING ALSO HELCOM Recommendations dealing with the possible environmental impacts of intensive forestry and of drainage of wetlands in particular that

- * HELCOM Recommendation 18/4 ("Managing wetlands and fresh water ecosystems for retention of nutrients") recommends that increased nutrient retention in wetland and fresh water systems should be considered through e.g. large-scale restoration of natural water regimes in drained fens and bogs;
- * HELCOM Recommendation 15/1 ("Protection of the coastal strip") recommends that in the protected coastal strip intensive forestry and intensive farming including drainage be restricted;
- * HELCOM Recommendation 15/5 ("System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA)") recommends that management plans be established for each BSPA to ensure nature protection and sustainable use of natural resources and that these management plans shall consider all possible negatively affecting activities, such as e.g. intensive forestry.

RECALLING FURTHER the Ministerial Declaration of 1988 and the Baltic Sea Declaration of 1990, calling, inter alia, for a substantive reduction of the inputs caused by diffuse sources,

RECOGNIZING the fact that a substantial part of the eutrophication problems observed in the Baltic Sea Area is caused by nutrient inputs from diffuse sources,

RECOGNIZING ALSO the general principles of sustainable forestry confirmed by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Helsinki 1993) as "stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regenerative capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems."

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that this concept of sustainable forest management should be understood to include maintaining the quality and protection of surface water and groundwater systems.

KEEPING IN MIND that a further reduction of deposition of air borne pollutants (especially nitrogen, acidic sulphur compounds and toxic heavy metals) into forest ecosystems and forest soils is a necessary precondition for the long term efficiency of measures in the forestry sector.

DESIRING to limit pollution from forest management and other anthropogenic load leaching from forestry land.

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties that the following practices should be promoted in forest management, taking into account the best environmental practice (BEP) and the best available technology (BAT):

- a) Sufficient buffer strips (zones), to minimize leaching of nutrients and other pollutants, should be determined according to the latest available scientific knowledge, taking into account the characteristic of the soils, the shape of the landscape, the hydrological conditions, etc. These should be left between the shoreline of sea, lakes, streams and brooks and sites of forestry operations such as clear felling, scarification and prescribed burning (site preparation), fertilizing and spreading of pesticides;
- b) Large clear felling areas should be avoided. The size and the shape of clear felling areas should be planned with great care and consideration to site conditions and local conditions in order to reduce the release of nutrients into water; this includes the obligation of the Contracting Parties to specify the selected size(s) of clear felling areas by reporting on the underlying national regulations and measures;
- c) In maintenance of drainage systems water protection should be taken into account;
- d) The first-time drainage of wetlands in natural state should only take place where the leaching of nutrients is expected to be minimized and if it is supported by an environmental impact assessment, except for drainage projects of limited size, time and impact;
- e) The deep ploughing of restocking sites on mineral soils should be restricted to minor areas where alternative methods would be excessively expensive and ineffective or environmentally undesirable;
- f) The use of pesticides in forestry - for example the control of woody weeds by foliar application in the afforestation of former farmlands - should be restricted only to exceptional conditions and unavoidable minimum;
- g) Readily soluble fertilizers should be applied as little as possible and should be used according to the needs of plants and not during weather conditions favourable to ground water or surface water pollution (e.g. frozen or water saturated soils, snow etc.);

- h) The fertilizing of naturally nutrient rich forest sites as well as nitrogen fertilization in areas saturated with air borne nitrogen (exceedance of critical loads and/or levels) should be stopped. This does not apply to measures for the purpose of soil protection or to safeguard forests endangered by soil acidification where alternative methods would be excessively expensive and ineffective;
- i) The time between harvest and regeneration should be minimized and management of forests should be encouraged to keep the forests vigorous and well growing in order to reduce the release of nutrients,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that the actions in a) - i) should be implemented by the Contracting Parties not later than in the year 2002,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the actions taken by the Contracting Parties, e.g. economic incentives, recommendations, regulations and forestry advice, should be reported to the Commission in 2000 and thereafter every six years. Reports should as far as possible include the best possible estimates of the amount of leaching of nutrients and pollutants caused by forest management. Additionally, national regulations concerning the application of paragraph b) should be reported to the Commission one year after adoption of the Recommendation at the latest.

**REPORTING FORMAT FOR HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 20/3 CONCERNING
REDUCTION OF NUTRIENT AND OTHER POLLUTANT LEACHING FROM FORESTRY LAND
FOR THE YEAR 2000**

Lead Country: Finland

Country:Year:

Sub-area*)

1. Total volume and annual increment of growing stock of timber.
2. Total area of the regeneration cuttings (includes clear cutting, seed tree and shelter-wood cutting)
3. Total area of the scarification (tilling, ploughing, etc.) of regeneration cutting sites.
4. Total area of the new drainage of wetlands in natural state.
5. Total number and area (estimation when accepted by the national legislation) of drainage for forestry (both new and remedial ditching areas).
6. Total number and area of drainage with buffer zones and/or silt traps.
7. Total use of phosphorus and nitrogen in forest fertilization.
8. Total use of herbicides and pesticides in forestry.
9. Total length (km) of the new (annual) shoreline buffer strips which have been left untouched between the shores of the sea, lakes, streams or brooks, and forestry practice sites. This obligation has to be fulfilled on the basis of the national legal system.
10. National regulations and measures concerning the specification of the selected size(s) of clear felling areas.

*) Bothnian Bay, Bothnian Sea, Archipelago and Åland Sea, Gulf of Finland, Northern Baltic Proper, Western Gotland Basin, Gulf of Riga, Eastern Gotland Basin, Gdansk Basin, Bornholm Basin, Arkona Basin, Belt Sea, The Sound, Kattegat