



Peatland Forestry: Ecology and Principles (Ecological Studies)

Eero Paavilainen, Juhani Päivänen

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Peatlands (or mires) cover at least 550 million ha globally, of which the greater part is situated between 50° and 70° N. Although the majority of peatlands are not used for human needs, there are large areas where agriculture, peat or wood production has been practiced. The suitability of peatlands for forestry differs from country to country depending on climatic conditions, raw wood demand, silvicultural management practice and

tradition, as well as the infrastructure in the remote areas considered. Peatland utilization for forestry may be divided into three efficiency categories: (1) exploitation (harvesting of trees with inadequate attention to regeneration) leading to reduction in the renewable resource; (2) silvicultural management (harvesting of trees with natural or artificial regeneration) aimed at maintaining the renewable resource in a sustainable way;

and (3) progressive forest management (drainage, fertilization, afforestation, thinning, ditch maintenance, final harvest and regeneration) aimed at increasing the renewable resource. In North America, forestry utilization is

changing from exploitation towards a kind of silvicultural management whereas progressive forest amelioration activities on forested peatlands and waterlogged mineral soils are part of the normal forestry practices in

Fennoscandia, the Baltic countries and Russia. In the British Isles afforestation of open peatlands is associated with drainage. This monograph is a review and synthesis of peatland forestry on northern peatland (mire)

ecosystems. It covers peat soil properties, mire hydrology, carbon and nutrient cycling, and classification of mire sites.

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