

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIAL OF THE FOREST AS A CATEGORY OF NATURAL RESOURCES ECONOMY

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The article deals with the definition of essence and contents of the concept “ecological forest potential” and “social forest potential”. Active exploitation of environment results in social understanding of ecological demands. Forestry as an important part of the environment has considerable resources for meeting the society’s requirements for maintaining natural balance, creating favourable conditions for recreation, health care and intellectual development of people. Forest resources in regards to meeting ecological requirements of people have non-material character and find reflection in social and ecological functions of the forest. Starting point in solving the issue of capitalization of social and ecological functions of the forest (non-material forest utility) by means of creating a market of social and ecological forest services is comprehension of such concepts as “ecological potential of forest” and “social potential of forest”, that define potential capacities of forests to provide social and ecological services on conditions of the concept of balanced management of natural resources.

Ecological potential of forest resources can be defined as the possibility to maintain general natural balance of the territories that centers around historically formed intercpe-cific correlation of natural componets of certain territories, namely: terrain, land, water, mineral, biological and other resources. With this approach the essence of forestry can be defined in this context as ecological potential of the forest, that is an element of its natural recourse potential, that is reflected in the

ability of forest to create and maintain conditions of preserving histoically formed general natural balance of territories. The contents of ecological potential can be defined as demonstration of capabilities (functions) that allows to create favourable conditions for existence and development of natural complex of territories.

Ecological potential of forest is closely connected with its social potential that is defined as the capability of the forest to create favourable conditions for life and activity of people, since negative aspects in natural environment development definitely influence people as a part of nature and, on the contrary, social functions can negatively influence the natural balance of the forest territories.

At the same time, the field of social potential of the forest usage, that is activity and well-being of people and, hence, the contents of it – effectiveness (functions), that are used by people, are considered as a specific element of the nature, give grounds to define social potential of forest as a category, that is independent and different from ecological potential.

Using such an approach the essence of social potential as a specific category can be defined as social potential of the forest, that is an element of its natural resource potential that is revealed in the capability of the forest to use social ordering of certain ethnic natural territories in regards to the human requirements in favourable conditions for life-sustaining activity.

In the meaning of contents social potential can be defined as a complex of capabil-

ities (functions) that allows to create favourable conditions for social procurement of certain ethnic natural territories in regards to life-sustaining activity.

The wide range of ecological and social functions of the forest, different levels of the development of every function on the certain natural and ethnic territories lead

to serious difficulties in complex economic evaluation of social and natural potential of natural zones of Ukraine. To a significant extent this situation can be changed by means of clear comprehension of the essence and contents of social and ecological potential of the forest and their mutual interdependence.