
Costa Rica: NGO questions “green label” logging in protected area

The certification granted by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or what is now known as the “green label” guarantees that a company’s wood with this qualification, has been obtained on the basis of sustainable forest management practices.

That was the purpose inspiring the idea. But perhaps it is hard to believe that on this world scenario of “mercantilisation” of nature and life, of opening up markets at any price, of exploitation of resources in function of the interests of rapid and short-term profit, that this “green label” will not be swallowed up and become just another marketing device.

Such is the fear of the members of the Costa Rican Ecologist Association of Limon, Ser y Conservar, who have denounced that the Tecnoforest del Norte company exploits a zone in a Protected Wildlife Area of great ecological importance. This area covers the Protected Zone of the Banano River and the Aquifer Recharge Area of the Bananito River, both sources of water for human consumption in the zone. The Tecnoforest del Norte company purchased over 2,000 hectares of land there with no deeds, which they are now trying to obtain through the Law of Information on Possessions. However, the Ministry of Environment and Energy has authorised it to carry out logging activities in the zone.

What makes the situation worse is that being a “green label” company and having a Forest Management Plan, it is exempt, by various executive decrees approved since 2000, from carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment, previously approved by the relevant authorities. The certified companies also have priority in major works contracts and provision of services to the State.

There are many interests at stake, nearly all the stakeholders are companies and finally everything has a trade destination. Therefore this concern is valid. The Ecologist Association of Limon, Ser y Conservar supports the Appeal lodged against the Ministry of the Environment and the officials involved and invites this concern and disapproval to be transmitted to the President of Costa Rica and to his Minister of the Environment and to request support from public opinion and the legislative sector in order to curb this advance which implies the destruction of vital areas.

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