

INFLUENCE OF THE PERM SALT PRODUCTION IN THE 15th – 19th CENTURIES ON FOREST TRANSFORMATION: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Abstract. Modern forests have been substantially transformed anthropogenically. The extent and the duration of forest exploitation varied in different regions. They also directly depended on the existing industries that consumed the forests. In the Upper Kama region, such activity includes salt production. The autochthonous population was engaged in salt production already in the 10th century. Complex of salt plants was formed at the beginning of the 17th century and required the harvesting of unprecedented volumes of wood. An analysis of the history of salt production development in the Upper Kama region made it possible to date the start of active anthropogenic changes of forests landscapes and presumably to determine its spatial scales. The consumption of firewood to produce one ton of salt decreased from 28.0 to 5.5 m³. In the second half of the 19th century, 700–800 thousand m³ were annually harvested, cutting firewood in the quantity ranging from 4 to 6 hectares along the floating rivers: along the Kama River and its main tributaries.

Key words: The Upper Kama region, Northern Urals, boreal forests, salt production, salt production technology, the 15th – the beginning of 19th century, forest resources, history of nature management, logging of saltwood.