



## MEDIA RELEASE

December 13, 2009

### **Baring it all for Polar Bears**

2<sup>nd</sup> annual Polar Swim to help save Ontario's Polar Bears

TORONTO – Today students, moms, dads, sons and daughters joined CPAWS Wildlands League and Celebrity Swim Marshall George Smitherman for a polar bear swim in Lake Ontario.

Smitherman got participants all fired up with tales from his past summer trip where he actually saw Polar Bears, “I paddled the Sutton River in northern Ontario with Wildlands League and saw a young male Polar Bear on a ridge. His coat was a magnificent creamy colour and he blew me away.”

“My doctor has no objections to me doing this,” said Dave Pearce, Campaign Coordinator for Wildlands League. “This is a fun way for all of us to learn more about Polar Bears and to raise money to fight global warming,” Pearce said.

Not many Ontarians know that Ontario has Polar Bears--the world's most southern population. Even fewer are aware of how important our Boreal Forest ecosystem is in storing huge amounts of carbon to help us stave off the worst impacts of climate change, the group said.

Since the launch of the campaign in 2008, *On Thin Ice* has engaged thousands of people. Today students from George Brown and Humber Colleges, Guelph Humber University and Newtonbrook Secondary and Riverdale High Schools were among the swimmers. CPAWS Wildlands League thanks them all for their spirit and support.

This year a new intern from George Brown's Community Worker Program, Deegan Patterson, helped organize and run the event, “We can't all be in Copenhagen, but this is one thing that we can do right here, right now to support a call for strong, timely action on climate change,” Patterson said. “I froze my buns off for an important cause today,” he added.

CPAWS Wildlands League is also grateful to the support of a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for making this project possible. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For over 25 years, the Foundation has supported the growth and vitality of communities across the province. It continues to strengthen the capacity of the volunteer sector through investments in community-based initiatives. For more information, please visit [www.trilliumfoundation.org](http://www.trilliumfoundation.org).

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High res photos of polar bears are available. Please contact Jennifer Berney at 416-988-4147 or [jennifer@wildlandsleague.org](mailto:jennifer@wildlandsleague.org).

Visit [www.wildlandsleague.org](http://www.wildlandsleague.org) for more information.