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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Ontarians want forest protection in climate plan**

New poll highlights need for Boreal planning, protection of endangered species habitat

TORONTO –New polling released today by two leading conservation groups shows that 90% of Ontarians want the provincial government to protect more forests as a defence against global warming. “This polling shows that the public is leading on this issue,” says Janet Sumner, Executive Director of CPAWS Wildlands League one of the groups releasing the polling. “The McGuinty government must keep its promise and implement land use planning before development in the Boreal Forest,” Sumner adds.

The polling comes on the heels of a letter signed by 1,500 scientists released yesterday in Ottawa urging all governments to act to protect the Boreal Forest. The scientists warned that the Boreal Forest – a garland of green in Canada that shields us against global warming – is clearly under serious threat from industrial logging and mining activities. It shields us from global warming by storing more carbon in its soils, forests and wetlands than any other ecosystem on the planet.

“Scientists, a chorus of celebrities, conservation groups and now the public all support setting aside large portions of Ontario’s intact Boreal Forest in the face of global warming while safeguarding threatened species,” says Wendy Francis, Director of Conservation and Science for Ontario Nature. “We know it can be done without closing mills. When will this government act?” Francis adds.

Other findings from the poll include:

- **92% of Ontarians agree that Ontario needs proper land-use planning for our remaining wilderness in the North;** and,
- **88% agree that Ontario should BAN all logging in key habitat of endangered species such as Woodland Caribou.**

In 2003, Mr. McGuinty promised to implement a land-use planning regime for the northern third of the province, an area that until now has been off limits to logging. So far he has failed to deliver on this promise, instead approving the massive DeBeers Victor Diamond Mine. The groups are also asking the government to protect significant areas of intact caribou habitat in the commercial forestry zone; a move that also would store large quantities of carbon that otherwise would contribute to global warming.

The polling was conducted by McAllister Opinion Research and is based on a random digit dial telephone survey of 500 Ontarians aged 18 and over. The survey was fielded from the 30th March 2007 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007 inclusive. A random sample of 500 Ontarians would yield a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

**For more information, please contact:**

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