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## *International Boreal Conservation Campaign*

### **New Advisory Panel of Top Canadian and International Scientists**

*Join Pew Environment Group to protect Canada's Boreal Forest*

**(Toronto, Canada)** – On the heels of disturbing reports regarding global ecosystem and species losses, an interdisciplinary team of top North American scientists today announced the formation of an advisory body. The new 14-member group includes renowned conservation ecologists Stuart Pimm and Peter Raven, International Panel on Climate Change global warming experts Terry Root and Andrew Weaver, Canada's top aquatic ecologist David Schindler and award-winning ethnobotanist Nancy Turner. Volunteer membership is balanced between Canadian and international experts.

“As the world looks to strike the right balance between jobs and nature, between the short and long view, and we focus on the incredible opportunity presented in Canada's Boreal Forest, we need the advice and counsel of experts like these to guide us,” said Steve Kallick, Director of the Pew Environment Group's International Boreal Conservation Campaign. “Thanks to these distinguished scholars, we will be informed by the best available science as we seek the balance between conservation and development of Canada's Boreal Forest.”

Eight years ago the Pew Environment Group launched a broad-based, large-scale initiative to protect Canada's Boreal Forest because scientists viewed it as one of the world's top conservation priorities. Working with Canadian governments, First Nations (aboriginal governments in Canada), resource industries and conservation groups, Pew's International Boreal Conservation Campaign has been promoting a comprehensive conservation and development plan, called the Canadian Boreal Conservation Framework (Boreal Framework). Since 2001, the campaign has been instrumental in securing the strict protection (no industrial development) of over 110 million acres of boreal wilderness. In July 2008 the Government of Ontario agreed to protect at least 55 million more acres as part of a land use planning process that follows the guidance of the Boreal Framework, and last week Quebec Premier Jean Charest committed to permanently protect 50 percent of Quebec's undeveloped forest from industrial development.

The new science panel is an outgrowth of an effort by 1500 scientists worldwide in 2007 to support the Boreal Framework. The 14 scientists will conduct new interdisciplinary studies linking disparate sources of information into a larger whole. They also hope to counsel

governments, aboriginal communities, industries, environmental groups and other stakeholders as critical planning and development decisions are made in coming years.

Many conservation initiatives focus on small tropical “hotspots” of species diversity or heavily impacted habitats where endangered species cling to existence, overlooking the equally important need to preserve the healthiest remaining strongholds of nature, like Canada’s Boreal Forest. Panelists believe the comprehensive approach to conserving the whole ecosystem, outlined in the Boreal Framework, is more appropriate to Canada’s Boreal Forest. “We must act as soon as possible to protect the places like Canada’s Boreal, where nature still thrives. Canada has a unique opportunity to safeguard this forest before it’s too late,” said Dr. Stuart Pimm, Doris Duke Professor of Conservation Ecology, Nicholas School of Environmental Sciences and Policy, Duke University.

“Time is of the essence. As development and climate change impacts grow, we must think bigger,” said Dr. Root, a lead author for the United Nations’ International Panel on Climate Change, which was awarded last year’s Nobel Peace Prize. “We must change how we view the world’s last remaining intact forest ecosystems, like Canada’s Boreal Forest, especially if we consider the impact climate change will have on smaller, less resilient parks and protected areas.”

To learn more about the International Boreal Science Panel and its projects, visit (<http://www.interboreal.org/>).

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#### **Additional Background:**

*General Information on Canada’s Boreal Forest*

<http://www.interboreal.org>

<http://www.borealcanada.ca>

<http://www.borealbirds.org>

*Recent Reports on Ecosystems and Species*

<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/article.aspx?id=58>

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