

Polar Bears International and World-leading Experts Broadcast Messages of Conservation LIVE from the Tundra of Western Hudson Bay

October 13, 2010 (Churchill, MB): Thousands of viewers from around the world are expected to log on to “Tundra Connections” this fall, to participate in free, live webcasts from the tundra of Western Hudson Bay, featuring world-leading experts on polar bears and conservation. Tundra Connections is just one of many programs coordinated by Polar Bears International (PBI) from Churchill, Manitoba in October and November, during polar bear migration season.

“This is the time of year that the population of polar bears of Western Hudson Bay move from their summer home on land near Churchill, over to the shores of Hudson Bay where they anxiously wait for the winter sea ice to form,” said Julene Reed, an Apple Distinguished Educator responsible for directing PBI Tundra Connections. “This is a crucial time for the bears. They’ve been fasting for the summer months and they need to return to the sea ice to hunt seals, their primary food source. So there couldn’t be a more appropriate time for Polar Bears International to reach out to the community, schools, zoology professionals, government and the entire world to educate and inspire people about how to conserve polar bears and their arctic habitat.”

The 2010 broadcasts will feature some of the world’s most respected experts in the fields of polar bears, conservation and climatology:

- Dr. Steven Amstrup, PBI, Senior Scientist
- Dr. Andrew Derocher, University of Alberta , Professor; PBI, Scientific Advisory Council
- Dr. Tom Smith, Brigham Young University, Professor; PBI, Scientific Advisory Council
- Dr. Ian Stirling, Environment Canada, Research Scientist Emeritus; PBI, Scientific Advisory Council
- Geoff York, World Wildlife Fund, Arctic Program; PBI, Scientific Advisory Council
- Dr. Marty Obbard, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Polar Bear Biologist
- Kassie Siegel, Center of Biological Diversity, Climate Law Institute Director
- Dr. Michael Mann, Penn State, Director of Earth System Science Center
- Julene Reed, St. George’s Independent School , Director of Academic Technology; PBI, Education Advisory Council
- Lance Rougeux, Discovery Education Network, Director

Tundra Connections, in collaboration with Apple Education, Dr. Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots and Discovery Education, will broadcast over 30 segments onboard “Buggy One,” a Tundra Buggy® which has been specially-equipped with high-speed internet, cameras and stabilizers to become an educational outlet through live webcasts and video conferencing from the tundra. Participants can ask the experts questions in real time, teachers are offered curriculum to structure lessons to include Tundra Connections ... and of course there are opportunities to watch live clips of polar bears in the wild. As Buggy One roams a network of established trails within the Manitoba Conservation - Churchill Wildlife Management Area, cameras mounted on the outside of the Buggy broadcast any bears nearby, and the experts break from their themed talks to comment on what the viewers are seeing. The audience is often treated to polar bears sparring, mothers with cubs and curious bears who may nuzzle up to a camera.

“Buggy One is the result of a long-time partnership between Frontiers North and PBI and we’re so excited by the growing enthusiasm for this mobile classroom. Through our Tundra Buggy® adventures, we share the beauty of polar bears and the importance of conserving their habitat with guests in Churchill. What’s cool about sponsoring Tundra Connections is that Buggy One now allows us to take this message and inspiration anywhere there’s an internet connection,” said John Gunter, general manager of Frontiers North’s Tundra Buggy® Adventure.

“This is one of the most innovative programs bringing science and education right into living rooms and classrooms around the world,” said Dr. Andrew Derocher, University of Alberta professor and scientific advisor for Polar Bears

International. “The ability to show people what’s happening live in the wild habitat of polar bears is very rare, and especially important for the population of bears near Western Hudson Bay.”

Studies released this year by research teams from the University of Alberta show that the Western Hudson Bay polar bears may face rapidly declining numbers in the next few decades due to climate change and shrinking sea ice. During the summer and autumn, polar bears lose up to 30 percent of their body mass because they burn up to one kilogram of stored body fat every day while they are waiting for the ice to freeze. The average body condition and reproduction rates of the Western Hudson Bay polar bears has been declining for almost 30 years, and projected sea ice models forecast this population could reach a point within the next three decades where there are too few animals to sustain a breeding population.

“We’ll be watching closely for the dates these bears are able to return to the sea ice,” added Dr. Derocher. “Twenty years ago, the average date the bears returned to the ice was November 8. A decade ago that date stretched to November 20. And in 2009, the bears were forced to wait until the first week of December before the sea ice formed.”

“The most important thing that we as experts need to communicate is that there is hope. We can help stop the effects climate change is having on the arctic and polar bears. It starts with programs like Tundra Connections which can educate individuals, companies and government about how to make positive changes to help lower their carbon footprint.”

In addition to Tundra Connections, PBI executes educational programs in Churchill each fall, including:

- Leadership camps for teens, zoologists and conservation communicators
- Nightly seminars for Churchill residents and visitors
- PBI Ambassadors ride on board Frontiers North’s Tundra Buggy® Tours to help educate tourists
- PBI scientists facilitate interviews for international media

To log on to Tundra Connections or for more information about PBI’s programs, visit www.polarbearsinternational.org. High resolution photos and video of Buggy One are available on request.

Polar Bears International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of polar bears and their arctic habitat through research, education and stewardship.

Frontiers North Adventures (FNA) is a PBI Platinum partner that has sponsored Tundra Connections since inception. FNA provides authentic adventures in Canada’s north and boasts the best access in the world to wild polar bears. Since 1987, FNA has created programs geared to accommodate small groups of travelers with specific interests in experiential travel, photography, culture and adventure. Visit their web site at www.frontiersnorth.com.

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