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Earth Day 2014: A Partnership is Born to Battle Climate Change at Polar Opposite Regions

March 18, 2014 - As humanity gathers in support for Earth Day, April 22, two organizations - Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) and Polar Bears International (PBI) – aim to lead a new dialogue on the global impact of climate change and unite humanity towards common action.

The first Earth Day in 1970 marked a commitment to environmental protection. Millions of voices calling for change made possible the passage of the Endangered Species Act and creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. While we have made progress, the threat of climate warming now more than ever, requires that we unite to fight for sustainability of all systems—including our own.

Over the past century, Earth's average temperature has risen by 1.4 degrees F and is projected to rise another 2 to 11.5 degrees F over the next 100 years.¹ This increase in temperature already is impacting the entire globe by increasing extreme weather patterns making us more vulnerable to natural disasters.² Higher temperatures strain the productivity of our food system, escalate the risk of tropical-borne diseases like malaria, and threaten the health of every community.

We are not alone - these changes threaten all species on the planet at an unprecedented rate, as extinction for some of the world's most iconic animals becomes an increased possibility. These species serve as an example of the fragility of our planet and forecast the threat to our own species.

In combating these immense challenges, two leaders in animal conservation are uniting to begin a new worldwide movement. CCF and PBI work in polar opposite regions: African Savannah and Arctic Sea Ice - heating and melting. Each has created innovative programs in their specific communities bringing together stakeholders working to protect these iconic species. Protecting the cheetah and the polar bear; however, is only one part of the equation. Climate change threatens all species as habitat and biodiversity loss leads to larger systemic problems.

Earth Day unifies the world under the purpose of environmental protection. By joining CCF and PBI's vision of partnering for change in 2014, we can identify a new agenda where the health of all communities' ecosystems is core to the global sustainability necessary to assure future success of humanity.

¹ "Basics." EPA. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

² "Global Warming and Hurricanes." *National Wildlife Federation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2014.

Editor's Notes

Founded in Namibia in 1990, Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is the global leader in research and conservation of cheetahs. CCF is dedicated to saving the cheetah in the wild. CCF's Founder and Executive Director, Dr. Laurie Marker, an American biologist, is considered one of the world's foremost experts on cheetah biology, ecology and conservation and has developed CCF's conservation strategy, which has contributed to increasing the wild cheetah population in Namibia by 50%. CCF's long-term studies analyze and monitor the factors affecting the cheetah's survival in the wild and the results are used to develop conservation policies and education programmes that have reached over 300,000 people. CCF is a registered non-profit in Namibia, the UK, Canada and the US. Dr. Marker has received numerous awards for her conservation work, including the 2008 Intel Environmental Prize of the 2008 Tech Awards and 2010 Tyler Prize for the Environment – the premier award for environmental science, environmental health and energy conferring great benefit upon mankind. People can learn more about CCF or make a donation to the organization by visiting www.cheetah.org

Polar Bears International is the world's leading polar bear conservation group, dedicated saving polar bears by saving their sea ice habitat. PBI's goal is to keep polar bears in the Arctic, *always*—and this means greatly reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing the planet to warm and the sea ice to melt. PBI focuses its efforts on three main areas: research, education, and action. Dr. Steven Amstrup, PBI's chief scientist, is world-renowned for his work with polar bears. Prior to joining PBI, he led polar bear ecology research in Alaska for 30 years. In 2007, he led the U.S.G.S. research team whose reports became the basis for the 2008 U.S. decision to list polar bears as a threatened species. After retiring from his government position in 2010, Amstrup joined PBI to speak up about the need to save polar bears. He has been tireless and passionate in his outreach. In 2012, Amstrup was selected as the recipient of the Indianapolis Prize, considered the Nobel Prize for animal conservation. To learn more about PBI or make donation to support PBI's work, visit www.polarbearsinternational.org.

Photos and B-roll are available from both organizations.