

Canadians believe the Arctic should be the priority region of protection in Canada says survey

Canadians want to lead the international community in Arctic protection

Churchill, MB and Toronto, ON – April 14, 2011 – Eight-in-ten (84 per cent) of Canadians believe the Arctic environment is unspoiled and fragile and should be the priority region for protection in Canada, according to survey results released by the [Churchill Northern Studies Centre](#) (CNSC) in advance of [Earth Day](#), this April 22.

The survey finds that 90 per cent of Canadians believe Canada has a special role to play at the international level as the protector of the Arctic. The national survey was sponsored by [The W. Garfield Weston Foundation](#), a family foundation, and conducted by [Leger Marketing](#).

“The Arctic is one of the few remaining ecological frontiers left in the world and Canadians are fiercely protective of it,” says Michael Goodyear, Executive Director, Churchill Northern Studies Centre. “At the Centre, our mission is to preserve and protect the Arctic by gaining an understanding of the physical environment and social issues.”

Canadians want Canada to have a lead role on the world stage

- Three quarters (75 per cent) of Canadians believe Canada should be the global leader in Arctic research, well ahead of other nations including Russia (5 per cent), Sweden (4 per cent) and the United States (2 per cent)
- 77 per cent think Canada should invest in development of natural resources in the Arctic to demonstrate leadership

Strategic priorities

- 40 per cent of Canadians believe expertise in Arctic resource development should be a strategic priority for Canada, followed by expertise in Arctic science (22 per cent) and Arctic security (16 per cent)

Describing Canada’s Great White North

- 70 per cent of Canadians think of Canada’s territories (Yukon, Nunavut or Northwest Territories) when describing the Canadian North
- 86 per cent of Canadians have not visited Canada’s Northern territories, yet 7 out of 10 (68 per cent) have indicated they are interested in visiting one day

“Earth Day reminds us to reflect on the impact we have on the world, both as individuals and as a nation,” says Geordie Dalglish, Chairman of The W. Garfield Weston

Foundation. “The Foundation supports the role Canadian scientists have had in Northern research and are excited to honour one of these scientists later this year.”

In 2010, [The Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research](#) was initiated to recognize significant contributions and the broad impact of a career devoted to natural science research in the Canadian north. The deadline for nominations was February 28, 2011. The inaugural \$50,000 Prize will be presented as part of the new [Churchill Northern Studies Centre](#) opening events in the fall of 2011.

About the Survey

The survey was completed online from February 7-10, 2011 using Leger Marketing’s online panel, *LegerWeb*, with a sample of 1,532 Canadians. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Northern Research

International Polar Year in 2007 was a response to a widespread concern about the decline of research in the North. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation acknowledged this concern by adding northern science and research to its philanthropic mandate.

In addition to The Weston Family Prize, the Foundation offers research scholarships at the graduate level to encourage and cultivate Canada’s next generation of northern scientists.

Through a challenge grant, the Foundation has also enabled the Churchill Northern Studies Centre to leverage matching funds needed for the renewal of the Centre, a key hub for northern research.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation, established in the 1950’s by Willard Garfield Weston and his wife Reta. In 1924 Garfield inherited his father’s company and during his life established bakeries and other successful enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. Today, these businesses include George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited, companies in food retailing, processing and distribution. The founders believed that as the funds are generated through the hard work and success of these Canadian companies, grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of supporting charitable organizations across Canada. Today the Foundation directs the majority of its funds to projects in the fields of land conservation, education, and science in Canada’s North.

About Churchill Northern Studies Centre

Founded in 1976, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre is an independent, non-profit research and education facility located 23 km east of the town of Churchill, Manitoba. In addition to research, the Centre facilitates a wide range of educational programming ranging from general interest courses for the visiting public to university credit courses for students.

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