



## News Release

### NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Spilling the BEANs on Biodiversity Education

Monday, October 25, 2010 – Biodiversity education in Ontario got a big boost this weekend with the **Earth in Mind: Education for Biodiversity Symposium**, organized by the Biodiversity Education Awareness Network (BEAN). Some of Ontario's top educators became students as they learned about improving biodiversity education in their classrooms and across the province.

"Biodiversity is not only life in all its variety, but is nature's life support system," says Barrie Martin, Chair of BEAN. "Recognizing the crucial role of education in developing a first-hand understanding and appreciation of biodiversity issues is essential."

The United Nations declared 2010 as the Year of Biodiversity. Biodiversity refers to the variety of plant and animal species in an environment; it forms the web of life we are all a part of. Without biodiversity, our planet would not be able to support any life, including human. An estimated 34,000 plant and 5,200 animal species now face extinction.

The symposium also resulted in a "**Call to Action**", with teachers commenting on Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, being renewed this year.

The two day symposium took place at three locations in the Greater Toronto Area: the Toronto Zoo, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Royal Botanical Gardens. Participants enjoyed a live presentation by internationally-renowned wildlife artist, environmentalist and teacher, **Robert Bateman**. Joining the proceedings via video link were **Professor Tim Flannery**, author of *The Weathermakers* and Australian of the Year 2007 and **Dr. Edward O. Wilson**, world-renowned biologist and father of modern biodiversity. This video conferencing technology allowed a low carbon footprint to the symposium; ensuring presenters were not required to travel via planes to participate..

As a result of this symposium Ontario educators are now armed with a variety of innovative and engaging ideas to take back into the classroom to unite Ontario students in helping to protect the planet's biodiversity!

Please get in touch to find out more details on the exciting progress made, and what this means for biodiversity education in Ontario.

