

## **Natural Resource Defense Council and Greenpeace Urge Quebec to Reject Logging Roads in the Boreal Forest's Broadback Valley**

**WASHINGTON & MONTREAL (March 30, 2016)** – The Natural Resources Defense Council and Greenpeace Canada today called on the Quebec government to reject a bid by logging companies to build nearly 50 miles of access roads into the heart of Canada's Broadback Valley forest that would enable the clearcutting of an area covering the equivalent of 210,000 football fields. The logging plans threaten the last intact forests of the Waswanipi Cree First Nation.

More than 30,000 comments by American and Canadian supporters of NRDC and Greenpeace Canada have been sent to the Quebec government since hearings on the proposal began in January 2016.

"The Waswanipi have expressed clearly and unequivocally that they don't want these roads and they want to see their lands protected," said Anthony Swift, director of NRDC's Canada project. "We stand with them and ask the Quebec government to respect this community's wishes."

"Rejecting new expansion of the already extensive network of forest access roads would also demonstrate Canada's and Quebec's intention to make good on their promises -- made at the international climate summit in Paris last December -- to play a leadership role in taking climate action by preserving its forests," Swift added. "Actions that increase forest degradation and release carbon pollution move the country in the opposite direction."

The Canadian boreal forest is among our planet's last large areas of primeval forest -- home to more than a billion songbirds and waterfowl that migrate across North America every year. It stores more than 200 billion tons of carbon-- over six times more of the climate change driver than is emitted globally each year.

If approved, the network of roads would provide logging companies their first access into the remaining intact ancestral lands of the Waswanipi Cree. However, the administration of Quebec Premier Phillippe Couillard has continued to face unified and loud opposition from the indigenous and environmental communities.

“Rather than considering roads that threaten the integrity of Waswanipi lands, the Quebec government should be looking at implementing the solution that the community wants – completing the protection of the Broadback Valley Forest,” said Nicholas Mainville, Forest Campaigner for Greenpeace Canada. “The community has been waiting for over a decade – the time to act is now.”

As the buyer of over 80% of Quebec’s forest product exports, the American public has a responsibility to act to preserve the Broadback Valley forest and other remaining intact areas of the boreal forest. This area is among the last remaining pristine stands of Canada’s boreal forest open to logging and represents the last intact remnant of the traditional territory of the Waswanipi Cree First Nation. It is part of a larger area – the Broadback watershed—that the Cree Indigenous governments have been working to protect for more than a decade. Many Indigenous communities across Quebec’s boreal forest have experienced an explosion of road building to enable logging, mining and other extractive activities.

For more than three decades, NRDC has worked with Indigenous Peoples and activists in Canada to promote forest conservation, with a primary focus on the boreal and coastal rainforest, and to implement socially just solutions. NRDC was the first U.S. environmental advocacy organization to oppose the proposed Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline, which was rejected by the Obama Administration last November. Both NRDC and Greenpeace are working to protect the Broadback Valley forest in support of the Waswanipi Cree Nation as part of a larger effort aimed at conserving the last intact landscapes in Canada’s boreal forest.

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