

**EMBARGOED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15, 2009**

## **15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HEINZ AWARDS**

### **RECIPIENT BACKGROUNDER**

**Christopher Field, Ph.D., 56, Stanford, California**

Chris Field is honored for developing experiments and models that explore the complexity of natural ecosystems in a changing climate, providing important frameworks for sound climate-change policy. Trained as an ecologist, Dr. Field has spent the last two decades studying the impacts of climate change on agriculture, forests, and other ecosystems, plus feedbacks of these changes on climate and crucial ecosystem services.

For nearly 30 years, he has been a leader in the development of global ecology as a unique discipline. With research in habitats ranging from deserts to tropical rainforests, Dr. Field uses a wide range of approaches to understand ecosystem processes from the molecular to the global scale. Combining ground-based measurements with data from satellites and atmospheric sampling, he and colleagues have developed methods to estimate plant growth and other ecosystem processes at the global scale, and to quantify the sensitivity of these processes to climate change, deforestation, and other environmental changes. His experimental studies of the responses of California grasslands to simulated climate changes have provided unique insight into the structure and function of ecosystems of the future, including responses of biological diversity and climate change. He also showed that global warming already has had a negative impact on agricultural productivity, and he has led the effort to find approaches to biomass energy that maintain or increase existing carbon stocks, support diverse ecosystems, and protect and enhance global food security.

Dr. Field is considered one of the premier scientists in his field. He is the founding director of the Department of Global Ecology at the Carnegie Institution for Science and a professor of biology and environmental earth systems science at Stanford University. He is also faculty director of Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. Because of his rigorous research, collegial approach, and his commitment to making science accessible to the policy process, he has earned the respect of scientists around the world. Dr. Field plays a major role in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), where he currently co-leads the international effort on assessing climate-change impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability.

**Said Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation:**

*"Dr. Field set the standard. It is because of his groundbreaking research that we know that time is not on our side when it comes to global climate change. His attention to detail gave us our sense of urgency. Through his brilliant efforts, he is making a vivid case for policies that improve our sustainability. For his considerable achievements, I am proud to honor him with one of this year's Heinz Awards."*

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