



£25k sponsorship package boosts bid for Loch Ness World Heritage Status

A major new private sponsorship package worth £25,000 is set to boost the bid for World Heritage Site status (WHS) for Loch Ness and the Great Glen it was announced yesterday [Wednesday 12 November].

The sponsorship deal secured by independent tourism group Destination Loch Ness, is a commitment from tourism marketing consultancy, View Marketing, in partnership with Professor Terry Stevens of Stevens and Associates who will provide strategic advice and consultancy as well as garnering support from the community and further afield, securing funding and sponsorship, and marketing.

The news was unveiled at a special media briefing hosted by Caley Cruisers in Inverness on behalf of DLN and was one of four key announcements made by the destination management organisation and invited industry speakers.

Chris Pound, a specialist in World Heritage Site appraisals and a UNESCO adviser highlighted four key themes identified in a recent scoping study of Loch Ness and the Great Glen. He and fellow UNESCO adviser, Jane McDermott, found that a number of intrinsic factors make a strong case with the potential to meet several of UNESCO's ten criteria, of which only one is required to substantiate the bid. These are:

- the geology and remarkable topography of the area;
- the unique qualities of the very deep water of Loch Ness in terms of its distinctive and rare habitat;
- the exceptional contribution of Loch Ness and the Great Glen in the context of 18th century Enlightenment in Scotland, namely its impact on the desire for progress in improvement and governance leading to some remarkable feats of engineering; and
- the fact that the spectacular beauty of the landscape of Loch Ness contributed significantly to the reinvention of a national identity for Scotland in the 19th century.

Meanwhile, leading international tourism consultant Professor Terry Stevens, who has experience of managing three World Heritage Sites, summarised the economic impact of achieving WHS status. A key issue of his speech described the bid as an integral part of repositioning Loch Ness as a leading international tourism destination.

Independent research commissioned by DLN earlier this year found that if successful, the bid for World Heritage Site status will result in an estimated economic uplift of £25m over the first three years or £7.8m per annum and create some 250 to 300 full time jobs in the area.

Another speaker, John Rodger, project director of World Heritage Site Blaenavon in Wales, echoed the sentiment when he highlighted the key role that WHS designation is playing in increasing cultural tourism and assisting in the economic regeneration of the Blaenavon area.

Launched in May 2007, the bid for WHS status for Loch Ness has secured significant support from both local and national political bodies as well as attracting celebrity endorsement. The latest advocates of the bid were announced at yesterday's briefing.

In Spring 2008, Minister for Tourism, Energy and Enterprise Jim Mather said: "Destination Loch Ness will get fulsome support in its bid for the status it requires."

Liberal Democrat MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey, Danny Alexander said: "Loch Ness and the Great Glen is without doubt an area of outstanding cultural and economic importance and an iconic visitor attraction for Scotland. I wholeheartedly back the bid for World Heritage Site status."

All four celebrity contestants who took part in the First Monster Challenge 2008, Nell McAndrew, Ben Fogle, Gavin Hastings and Liz McColgan, pledged their unqualified support for the campaign after completing the duathlon in September. Liz McColgan, said: "Having travelled the world as an athlete proudly representing Scotland, I know just how much recognition there is of Loch Ness. It is great to see the ambition of the local community to have this place and its rich cultural heritage designated as a "World Heritage site."

Ambassadors pledging their support for the bid include Willie Cameron of Loch Ness Marketing and Adrian Shine, long time Loch Ness expert and researcher. Adrian Shine said: "Loch Ness and the Great Glen Fault represent one of Britain's most significant geographical features; the area deserves to be recognised and protected through World Heritage Status designation."

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or ambassador for this high profile bid, please contact Laura Barron at View Marketing on 01808 511489 or email laura@viewmarketing.co.uk