

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Pedalling for Scotland – George Russell starts epic 3,000 mile cycle across the US**

A National Trust for Scotland supporter, whose family has links to when the charity was founded, has today (26 August) embarked on a 3,000 mile cycle across the US to raise funds for the conservation charity.

Ahead of setting off, George Russel (73) has already raised more than £30,000 for the charity and aims to reach his target of £100,000 by the end of his journey. Today, he sets off from San Diego in California and will be pedalling from coast-to-coast finishing in St Augustine in Florida.

George's 50 day route will take him from the Pacific coast through California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to St Augustine, on the Atlantic coast.

Originally from Edinburgh, George is now based in Colorado and his wife Mary will set off with him driving their car as a support vehicle for the first half of this epic trip.

With strong ties to Scotland and to the Trust, this is a very personal journey for the cyclist – his grandfather was the charity's first Secretary and Treasurer. His father also worked for the Trust for many years and was a Council Member Emeritus. George himself served on the Trust's Council.

George's support comes at a crucial time for the Trust which has lost almost £30 million, half its expected income, as a result of lockdown restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic. The charity that protects Scotland's national and natural treasures launched an emergency appeal - Save Our Scotland – to help it recover from this crisis.

George said: "I've put in a lot of preparation over the last five months for my coast-to-coast trip and I'm really excited to finally set off and pedal to protect Scotland's heritage. I've taken on this challenge not only for myself and for Scotland, but for my father and grandfather who worked hard to make sure Scotland's treasures are cared for and exist for people to enjoy for years to come. The Trust urgently needs donations to guarantee its survival. It is as serious as that.

"I've treated myself to a new bike that's strong, reliable and has gear ratios that are suitable for a septuagenarian like myself. I've been putting my new wheels and myself to the test, climbing 4,000ft on the Independence Pass road out of Aspen and doing mountain bike trails – the real thrill for me is the beauty of the landscape and I'll be thinking of Trust owned places like Glencoe and Ben Lawers when I'm in the mountains and seeing the wildflowers. "

For those in the UK who would like to put some power in George's pedals to help the National Trust for Scotland at this vital time, please donate here; <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/george-russellcycleacrossusafornts>.

If you reside in the USA, please visit <https://fundly.com/george-russell-cycles-across-america> to make a tax deductible gift.

Follow weekly updates from George's journey at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

**ENDS**

**Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame PR. For media enquiries contact:**

**Mamta Kakaiya, 07876 835 744, [Mamta.Kakaiya@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:Mamta.Kakaiya@framecreates.co.uk)**

**Katie Brunsmann, 07944 429 213, [Katie.Brunsmann@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:Katie.Brunsmann@framecreates.co.uk)**

**Editor's Notes:**

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

