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**Press Release**

**British couple launch epic bid to become first to run length of South America**

**27 June 2012**

**Expedition**: To run the length of South America, over 5000miles, unsupported, in a year.

**Aims:** Raise moneyfor BirdLife International and Conservacion Patagonica to buy and conserve threatened habitats in South America. Connect people from around the world toSouth America’s wildlife and wildlands and inspire environmental action to conserve them.

**Start date: 27th July 2012- End date: 27th July 2013**

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On 27 July 2012, the day the London Olympics opens, British ecologist adventurer couple, Katharine and David Lowrie, will begin running the length of South America. The distance, over 5000 miles, will be the equivalent of over 200 marathons in a year. They will run through a freezing Patagonian winter, battle gale force winds in the Argentine pampas and endure months of steaming heat in the Amazon rainforest. The epic journey will be ‘unsupported’ – they will pull all their expedition gear themselves in a specially designed trailer made of recycled materials.

In completing the “5000mileproject”, they will become the first couple to run the continent and Katharine will become the first woman. Although a handful of incredible men have run the continent previously, no one has yet run the continent in this style.

Dean Karnazes, ultra marathon runner and Time magazine’s ‘100 most influential people in the world’ said of the expedition, *“I am awe inspired and deeply impressed by what you are undertaking. I am sure there will be untold difficulties, but also unexpected delights”.*

David and Katharine, both committed conservationists, want to use the run to draw attention to the threatened habitats of South America and inspire environmental action to conserve these unique ecosystems. Through online media - *5000mileproject.org -* they hope to connect people from around the world with the communities and wildlife they meet along the way.

Katharine says of the project, *“We hope that through sweat, tears and determination, we’ll open a portal into the last wilds of South America and rekindle people’s passion for running and our amazing natural world. It's not too late to protect the world's remaining unspoilt ecosystems, but time is running out.”*

The couple are also carrying out the world’s longest “Mega Transect”, surveying wildlife and habitats every day from the side of the road. School pupils will be able to follow their progress and get involved via their online “BigToe Classroom”, including extension materials, and blogs including, ‘Smelly Trainer Facts’ and ‘Advice for Millions of Feet’! ([*www.5000mileproject.org/bigtoe*](http://www.5000mileproject.org/bigtoe) *)*

David is building a specially designed recycled running trailer of bamboo, used inner tubes and mountain bike wheels to pull their gear (c.35kg) including: camping gear, food, water, satellite communications and science equipment. Their trailer will allow them maximum flexibility and independence for the miles of empty road and can be built and rebuilt anywhere on the route where mountain passes are navigated.

David elaborates, *“We scoured the marketplace for something suitable and in the end had to concede it simply doesn’t exist. I started to dream up elaborate plans for nights on end, but an engineering friend helped me to forget the complex high-tech, energy-hungry materials and re-focus on what we really needed, it was a “Eureka!” moment! The next day I mashed together a prototype trailer using some old timber, life-jacket harnesses and bungee clip. I’m pretty sure no one has ever contemplated running such a distance with this sort of low-tech kit! Simplicity is the key: we can’t use expensive fixtures or fittings since we won’t be able to find spare parts in the middle of the Amazon.”*

**ENDS**

* The expedition’s home is at [www.5000mileproject.org](http://www.5000mileproject.org) and [www.facebook.com/5000mileproject](http://www.facebook.com/5000mileproject).
* For the “Press Room” including high res photos; [www.5000mileproject.org/pressroom](http://www.5000mileproject.org/pressroom).
* To arrange an interview contact Katharine and David at [www.5000mileproject.org/contact](http://www.5000mileproject.org/contact) or email Katharine at [landy@listalight.co.uk](mailto:landy@listalight.co.uk) .
* For a 2 minute video about the 5000mileproject click: http://www.5000mileproject.org/2012/05/promovideo/
* Katharine (nee Land) formally worked as an ecologist for the RSPB.
* David formally worked as a management consultant for Accenture.
* The couple sailed to the Caribbean in 2008 and undertook the first complete breeding seabird census of the Eastern Caribbean and an extensive marine education programme.
* Their, “Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles” was published in 2012 and is available at Amazon.com and CreateSpace.com.
* They have sailed over 20,000m in their circumnavigation of South America, surveying seabirds and other wildlife. They are currently based in Uruguay, planning and training for the 5000mileproject expedition.
* David and Katharine have so-far secured grants from Sculpt The Future Foundation, Transglobe Expedition Trust and John Muir Trust; sponsorship from: Swarovski, Berghaus, Inov-8, Patagonia, Vivobarefoot etc. [www.5000mileproject.org/sponsors](http://www.5000mileproject.org/sponsors)
* The two men who have previously run the continent are the UK’s Robert Garside, in his extraordinary round-the-world feat and the Australian, Pat Farmer in his epic Pole-to-Pole Run.