

£4million project targets outdoor adventure sector in Snowdonia

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A £4 million(GBP) project to develop south Snowdonia in North Wales into a world-class outdoor adventure centre of excellence will attract more visitors, offer enhanced facilities and provide local business and community benefits.

Snowdonia – one big adventure (http://www.visitsnowdonia.info/eryri_centre_of_excellence-168.aspx) is developing facilities at four key centres in south Snowdonia, including new mountain bike trails and visitor facilities at Coed y Brenin near Dolgellau and Antur Stiniog at Blaenau Ffestiniog; new accommodation and facilities at Gwersyll yr Urdd, near Bala, and enhanced angling facilities at Llyn Trawsfynydd.

The EU funded project, backed by a range of partners, aims to get more local businesses to tap into the growing outdoor adventure market by working with each of the four centres to offer new and enhanced products and services.

“Snowdonia – one big adventure is all about building on the already valuable outdoor adventure activity sector that pumps millions of pounds into the local economy each year. By enhancing what we already have and offering greater opportunities to visitors, local businesses and communities can benefit,” said Councillor John Wynn Jones, Economy and Community Portfolio Leader for Gwynedd Council, one of the partners involved in the project.

“The new mountain bike trails, visitor centres, improved accommodation facilities and overall enhancements at the four key sites will act as a enabler for other local businesses to provide additional products and services – helping create economic and employment opportunities as a result.”

Businesses from throughout south Snowdonia are attending a series of events at each of the key centres this month to find out how they add value to their own businesses through the project.

Everyone from accommodation providers, retailers and suppliers can benefit from Snowdonia – one big adventure and in turn local communities can benefit from economic, employment and social opportunities.

The aims of the project are:

- To utilise south Snowdonia’s outstanding natural resources to establish a co-ordinated and integrated activity hub as a catalyst to further develop tourism;
- To facilitate community involvement in the development of outdoor activities in south Snowdonia to ensure tangible economic benefits for the local population;
- To provide high-quality, year-round experiences and opportunities for visitors and residents;
- To support the development of the outdoor sector to maintain and improve Snowdonia as a world-class destination of choice for outdoor activities;
- To place sustainability at the core of its activities with emphasis on the areas’ communities.

Partners behind the £4million project, which has received funding from the European Regional Development

Fund through the Welsh Government, are Gwynedd Council, Tourism Partnership Mid Wales, Forestry Commission Wales, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Prysor Angling Association, Antur Stiniog, Snowdonia National Park Authority and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

The project at the four centres involved in Snowdonia – one big adventure are Antur Stiniog, Blaenau Ffestiniog; Forestry Commission Wales Coed-y-Brenin, Dolgellau; Prysor Angling Association, Trawsfynydd; and Gwersyll yr Urdd Glan-Ilyn, Bala.

The enhancements at the four key sites being developed as part of Snowdonia – one big adventure, are:

Antur Stiniog, Blaenau Ffestiniog

Antur Stiniog is developing the first mountain bike trails in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

There will be four challenging downhill trails and jump site to attract experienced mountain bikers, coupled with the development of a dedicated visitor centre at Llechwedd with café, conference facilities, showers and bike workshop. There will also be a 8.5km cross-country trail making a circuit of Llyn Tanygrisiau

“The new trail and visitor centre is an important investment in Blaenau Ffestiniog, bringing new visitor and employment opportunities and transforming part of the former Llechwedd quarry,” said Ceri Cunnington of Antur Stiniog. “Snowdonia – one big adventure will bring together this new venture with existing outdoor adventure destinations in the area, offering a new range of exciting opportunities for visitors, businesses and the community.”

Forestry Commission Wales' Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park, Dolgellau

Forestry Commission Wales' Coed y Brenin Forest Park near Dolgellau is already well-known for its awesome mountain bike trails and visitor facilities. Snowdonia – one big adventure is enhancing the Park further with additional mountain biking (MTB) trails for a wider range of ages and abilities and a new skill area to help mountain bikers train and learn new skills in partnership with Forestry Commission Wales.

“Coed y Brenin is a recognised MTB centre nationally and used by thousands of mountain bikers each year, travelling from all parts of the UK,” said Andy Braund, Mountain Bike Ranger for Forestry Commission Wales.

“The new trails and enhancements to the existing visitor centre will provide an even greater experience and through Snowdonia – one big adventure we can work even more closely with businesses and the community to develop visitor opportunities.”

Prysor Angling, Trawsfynydd

Llyn Trawsfynydd already attracts a wide range of anglers locally and from further afield. The lake is considered to be one of the finest trout fisheries in the country, with international competitions being held regularly for the Stoccheck Rainbow and Wild Brown Trout.

Pike have recently become the choice of an increasing number of anglers at the lake and with a large number of fish over the magical 20lb being caught already, the lake is expected to gain a reputation for fine specimens of Pike. With the support of Snowdonia – one big adventure, the Prysor Angling Association is creating new facilities for anglers and improving activities at the lake. The aim is to have a fishing destination like no other.

“Angling has grown in popularity in recent years and people are willing to travel for the adventure of finding new locations to fish, as well as local anglers wanting a regular base,” said Mitch Atherton of Prysor Angling Association.

“The new facilities planned at Trawsfynydd will allow greater access and more opportunities to attract anglers into Snowdonia who will in turn use local facilities and accommodation. Working with local businesses and the community we will have an angling facility of national importance here in Snowdonia.”

Gwersyll Yr Urdd Glan-Ilyn, Bala

Glan-Ilyn is a great outdoor group and family destination, attracting families, schools and groups throughout the year. Operated by Urdd Gobaith Cymru, it already provides a range of climbing, walking and water activities on Llyn Tegid, Bala. You’d think it had it all!

But through Snowdonia – one big adventure, new accommodation facilities have been developed and a new cycle path linking to nearby Llanuwchllyn is being created.

“We have a great facility here for families, groups and school parties to have an adventurous time enjoying the Snowdonia countryside,” said Huw Antur of Glan-Ilyn. “More importantly, through Snowdonia – one big adventure, we’re able to broaden the opportunities to local businesses and communities to tap into the outdoor adventure and to broaden the appeal to visitors.”

During March businesses have been invited to meet representatives of each of the centres to learn about each project and how they can enhance their products or services to cater for the anticipated increase in visitors and business opportunities.

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Notes to the editor

Photography is available on request.

Journalists wishing to undertake a media visit to see what outdoor adventure activities are available in south Snowdonia can contact Owain Betts on 01686 688008 / 07787 437052 or e-mail: Owain.Betts@ombcommunications.co.uk.

Snowdonia – one big adventure Centre of Excellence is a £4million project to develop and improve four outdoor activity centre's in Meirionnydd, south Gwynedd which in turn help improve opportunities for local businesses and communities to prosper. It will build on the vision to increase the involvement of the community in what is an important sector in the area and to bring the industry closer to the heart of the community.

Full details of the project will be announced in March, prior to the first of the four events when local businesses will be able to learn more about each of the four centres and how they can enhance their own businesses by developing new and novel products and services as a result.

The £3.2bn Structural Funds programmes 2007-2013 in Wales include the Convergence programmes for West Wales and the Valleys (the successor to Objective 1), and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes for East Wales. The programmes are delivered through the Welsh Government and are aimed at creating employment opportunities and boosting economic growth.