£200k target for Rewilding Nation campaign backed by Leonardo DiCaprio gets over the line in just six days

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A campaign for Scotland to become the first Rewilding Nation in the world, backed by Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio, has smashed an ambitious fundraising bid to raise £200,000 in just six days – 24 hours ahead of its original one-week target.

The Scottish Rewilding Alliance, a coalition of more than 20 organisations, is calling on the Scottish Government to commit to nature recovery across 30% of the country to benefit nature, climate and people.

Alliance member Rewilding Britain set out to raise £200,000 for the Rewilding Nation campaign as part of this year's Big Give Green Match Fund, which runs until midday on 25 April, with all donations up to £100,000 matched by Big Give.

And the Alliance's Rewilding Nation Charter at www.rewild.scot/charter, calling on the Scottish Government to declare Scotland a rewilding nation, has already been signed by thousands of people, with signatures surging.

"The outpouring of support for our ground-breaking Rewilding Nation campaign – through donations and by signing the Rewilding Nation Charter – shows how much Scotland's rewilding journey is inspiring people from all walks of life,"said Kevin Cumming, Rewilding Britain's Rewilding Director and steering group member of the Scottish Rewilding Alliance.

"Huge thanks to the thousands of people who have donated and signed the Charter. Scotland has a real moment of choice and opportunity here – offering hope for tackling the nature and climate emergencies, while creating a cascade of benefits for people and local communities. That includes better health, new jobs, food security, and healthy rivers and seas."

In a message of support posted to his 62 million followers on Instagram earlier this month, which has been liked by 100,000 people, Leonardo DiCaprio said: "With this campaign, Scotland could be a world leader in rewilding its landscapes, ensuring clean air and water, storing carbon, reducing flooding, restoring wildlife, and improving the lives of locals."

The Scottish Rewilding Alliance aims to showcase how rewilding offers hope for tackling biodiversity loss and climate breakdown, while offering major social and economic benefits.

The funds raised will support outreach including community events, meetings with politicians and policy makers, a new community rewilding guide, and making the campaign widely accessible in Gaelic. There will be initiatives involving young people, many of whom say they are worried about the threats posed by the climate and nature emergencies.

Alliance member Trees for Life has invited Leonardo DiCaprio to visit the charity's Dundreggan Rewilding Centre near Loch Ness in the Highlands. The centre celebrates rewilding and Gaelic culture, and offers a gateway for visitors to explore Trees for Life's Dundreggan estate, part of Affric Highlands, the UK's biggest rewilding landscape.

Scotland is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Intensive agriculture and climate breakdown are having the biggest impacts on habitats and wildlife, with other threats including non-native forestry, pollution, and introduced species, research shows.

Rewilding 30% of Scotland can be achieved by restoring habitats including peatlands, native woodlands, wetlands, rivers and seas, with no loss of productive farmland, says the Alliance.

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