NEW DOCUMENTARY, VOICED BY SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH CALLS FOR ACTION TO PROTECT THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED MOUNTAIN GORILLAS IN RWANDA

Tuesday 8 April, 2014

• The survival of mountain gorillas relies on extreme conservation
• Film premiere at Google, London will feature live online hangout with special guests
• Exclusive behind the scenes look at the work of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
• 46 years on from the work of Dian Fossey and gorillas still face threat of extinction
• Premiere takes place during Rwanda Genocide Remembrance Week – marking 20 years since the conflict

A new documentary will be premiered this week highlighting the plight of the mountain gorillas in Rwanda, nearly 47 years after Dian Fossey began her work in the region. With exclusive access to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund's Karisoke Research Center, the film gives new meaning to the term conservation as it explores the extreme, intensive and sometimes-dangerous methods employed to protect the great apes.

Produced by outdoor clothing brand, Craghoppers and award-winning filmmaker Pete Mcbride, the documentary, named Hope, aims to send out a clear message to the world – we must support the people protecting the mountain gorillas – they are the gorillas' only hope of survival.

The 15-minute film, narrated by Sir David Attenborough, takes a historical look back to 1967 when Dian Fossey began her work. Less than 300 mountain gorillas remained at the time, their population ravaged by poachers who for years targeted the gorillas to make money – selling infant gorillas to zoos or the hands and heads of the adults as trophies to wealthy tourists.

Dian Fossey was murdered in 1985, her original research center destroyed, rebuilt and then destroyed again during the civil war in Rwanda in the 1990s. However, despite adversity the work never stopped. Today the Karisoke Research Center has a new home where 120 people continue Dian's work, as the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International.

The charity employs teams of trackers who follow the gorillas every single day. They monitor each gorilla ensuring its safety and health, risking their lives in a region that is still plagued by violence. The health and safety of the people living close to the gorillas' habitat is also protected by the Fossey Fund, whose community development and conservation education programs have provided clean water sources, conservation education programs in local schools, and facilitated health initiatives and improvements to healthcare facilities for the communities.

These extreme measures go far beyond the methods seen in most other national parks. As Clare Richardson, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, explains:

"Watching the film, people will see for the first time the extreme conservation measures that are needed to protect this population of mountain gorillas and help it grow when all other monitored great ape populations are in decline. Our research over the last 40 plus years has shown that simply having a protected area like a national park is not sufficient to save a species like the gorilla—which takes a long time to grow to adulthood and reproduces very slowly. Instead, extreme measures are needed.

"This translates to intensive monitoring of the gorillas but also maintaining the wellbeing of the communities who live close by. The Fossey Fund is all too aware that the survival of the mountain gorilla, and the safety of its habitat, is intertwined with the growth of a country in recovery since atrocities of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. The work we do is unique, challenging and costly but we are seeing results. The population has grown and while this is encouraging, the mountain gorilla is still critically endangered and without extreme conservation work could face extinction."

Hope will be available to view online at http://www.craghoppers.com and its makers, Craghoppers, are encouraging as many people as possible to view, share and comment on the documentary via social media to help raise awareness.

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The clothing company is a sponsor of the charity. In 2013 it donated £45,000 worth of kit from its NosiLife and Kiwi range (specialist high performing outdoor clothing featuring permanent insect repellent) to help the trackers and anti-poaching patrols as they go about their daily monitoring in difficult conditions.

As well as making the film, Craghoppers is selling a specially designed t-shirt with £5 from the sale of each top going directly to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International. It can be purchased online at http://www.craghoppers.com from the 9th April 2014.

Managing Director for Craghoppers, Jim McNamara, said: “I admire the extreme yet practical approach that the Fossey Fund has adopted in order to protect the mountain gorillas in Rwanda. I like to think that the technical spec of our clothing mirrors this ethos, providing practical support and protection to a team of people who face extreme challenges every day. I am immensely proud that we are able help the people who are helping the gorillas.

“Our motivation behind making the film, Hope, was to highlight these efforts and remind people about the plight of the gorillas. We hope that the film will inspire people to support the charity and donate to a very worthy cause.”

http://www.craghoppers.com
#gorillahope

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For more information, to set-up an interview or request images please contact Kate Pearson at Trumpet Public Relations E: kate@trumpetpublicrelations.com T: 07894 055959

Note to Editors
• Spokespeople available for interview
• Preview trailer of the film is available

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