



29/03/2021 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Kayaker takes on 'Top Down' challenge to highlight plastic threat to our oceans

## Marathon effort will take campaigner 900 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End for charity

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, kayaker Roy Beal will set off on a mission to raise awareness of the impact of plastic on our waterways and oceans and promote outdoor and water sports safety.

He will be supporting environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean – encouraging hundreds of thousands of people to take part in the country's biggest environmental action campaign and do a million miles of litter-picking between them, as well as Plan B Charity, who promote and advocate outdoor pursuit safety with Ocean Signal.

Setting off from John O'Groats, Roy Beal will have to kayak the east coast of Scotland to Inverness, braving whatever the North Sea will throw at him. Once at Inverness, he will then paddle along the Caledonian Canal, crossing the cold deep waters of Loch Ness, emerging on the west coast at Fort William.

From there it will be through the Crinan Canal, followed by the fast tidal flows of the Irish Sea to Liverpool, before entering the inland waterways on the River Dee. Following the canal networks and its many locks to Sharpness, Roy will then join the River Severn, Britain's longest river and largest tidal range, onto the Bristol Channel which is well known for its hazardous tide flows and currents.

The final leg will be the rugged north coast of South West England to Land's End and, after living in a tent for the majority of this 900 mile journey, a proper bed.

Why on earth would Roy want to put himself through this?

Commenting on his imminent adventure, Roy, 49, who lives in Seaton, East Devon and who kayaked as a child, said: "I've done a number of marathon sea kayaking trips since I took up the sport again in 2013. I decided I wanted to do something that brought together my love of the sport with my passion for cleaning beaches and removing the plastic pollution that is having such a huge effect on the condition of our oceans."

Roy works for Keep Britain Tidy's Ocean Recovery Project in the South-West, collecting hard plastics found in the marine environment and getting them recycled to give them a new life as things like picnic benches and fence posts. He is also the founder of Clean Jurassic Coast and works with volunteers to clear litter from the 96-mile stretch of coastline that runs from Exmouth in Devon to Studland in Dorset and is England's only natural UNESCO World Heritage.

"I have seen first-hand the damage that litter is doing to our natural environment so I wanted to do something to help get the message out to everyone. Education and inspiration is the only way to stop thoughtless littering. It doesn't matter if someone drops a cigarette end, leaves their discarded fishing line or fly-tips an entire truckload, these selfish acts are destroying our environment and putting wildlife and marine life in danger on a daily basis.

"But it doesn't have to be like that. Instead of being part of the problem, we can all be part of the solution by doing the right thing with our rubbish, by supporting the Great British Spring Clean and pledging to pick up some litter. Every piece that's taken out of the environment is one piece less adding to the plastic pollution."

Roy will also promote outdoor pursuit safety with Ocean Signal, a leading manufacturer of marine safety equipment, and Plan B Charity. Plan B was set up by the family of Dom Jackson, a kayaker who was lost to the sea in 2017. Dom's only means of communication was a mobile phone stored in the rear hatch of his kayak and he was unable to access it when the weather changed and he got into difficulties. Plan B, along with Ocean Signal, promote and educate the importance of carrying a means



to call for help whilst outdoors. "It is so easy to buy a kayak or a paddle board and then venture onto the sea without any training or thought to potential disaster, the same goes for moorland or mountain hikes. People often dress for the current air temperature and it doesn't take much for conditions to change and for a person to find themselves in trouble. Mobile phones don't work well in the middle of nowhere and wet screens tend not to work very well either. One can have all the safety equipment on the market but having a means to call for help is perhaps the most important."

You can follow Roy on social media at @top.down.kayak.challenge on Instagram or Kayaking For Charity on Facebook.

For more information or to make a donation, please visit [www.kayakingforcharity.co.uk](http://www.kayakingforcharity.co.uk)

Supported by PB Adventures, the South West's leading sea kayaking, hill skills, navigational and expedition specialists.

Ends.



### **Notes to editors**

#### **Info about the Top Down Kayak Challenge**

Instagram: @top.down.kayak.challenge

Facebook: Kayaking for Charity

Website: [www.kayakingforcharity.co.uk](http://www.kayakingforcharity.co.uk)

For more information on the challenge please call Roy on 07413406005 or email [kayakroy@gmail.com](mailto:kayakroy@gmail.com)

*For more information about Keep Britain Tidy and Ocean Recovery Project - [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org)*

*For more information about Plan B Charity - [www.planbcharity.org](http://www.planbcharity.org)*

*For more information about Ocean Signal products - [www.oceansignal.com](http://www.oceansignal.com)*

*For more information about Clean Jurassic Coast - [www.cleanjurassiccoast.uk](http://www.cleanjurassiccoast.uk)*

*For more information about PB Adventures - [www.pbadventures.co.uk](http://www.pbadventures.co.uk)*

#### About Ocean Signal

Ocean Signal is a leading supplier of life-saving solutions, providing Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), EPIRBs, AIS, electronic flares and other safety devices for mariners and outdoor enthusiasts across the world, including the smallest PLB, the rescueME PLB1. Whether hiking, trail running or mountain biking, kayaking, paddle boarding or out on a boat or yacht, the outdoor world is a beautiful but unpredictable place and just knowing you can summon help is priceless. Anywhere where there is a possibility for injury or changes in weather – are you able to call for help? Mobile phones don't always have a signal but a Personal Locator Beacon does. Using the designated 406MHz Cospas-Sarsat satellite system, a PLB offers the best chance of survival when things go wrong. Ocean Signal has supplied Roy with a rescueME PLB1 and also a rescueME EDF1 electronic distress flare to ensure he has the best chance of survival in an emergency.