

NEWS RELEASE

from

# devon renaissance

working for rural prosperity

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## **Surfing survey launched in region**

Surfers throughout the South West – resident and visitors - are being urged to complete an online survey to find out how much surfing is worth to the coastal communities in Devon.

The survey has been launched by Trisurf an innovative community surfing project involving three surfing regions in Europe - North Devon, Donegal in Ireland and West Brittany in France, and has been produced by Devon Renaissance, the rural regeneration partnership organisation, which is managing and analysing the survey results.

The survey asks where people go to surf, how frequently they surf, how much they spend, where they stay and also gathers information on how people rate various resorts.

Chris Farris, watersports project coordinator of North West Devon LEADER+, which is managing the Trisurf project, said: "The information we collect will be used to help secure funding for projects like Trisurf in the future and will be combined with social data to work out ways in which we can all continue to enjoy and manage our marine environment.

"There is no doubt that the sport has grown in popularity over the last few years, and previous surveys have indicated that surfing is worth more to the economy in this part of the world than either sailing or golf – around £64 million to the region in 2003. It's estimated that there are half a million regular surfers in the UK and another half-million will try it for the first time this year."

Liz Abell of Devon Renaissance said: "When we were approached by Trisurf we realised that this sort of survey could provide very valuable information which will help many agencies and councils plan for the impact of this important sport on their economies.

"We hope surfers from all over the region, those living here and anyone visiting the South West will take part. The more answers we get the more accurate a picture we can build."

Chris Farris added "To compliment the economic data, we are also gathering social data in North Devon. We aim to combine the two sets of information to devise a strategy which will help this relatively new tourism phenomenon to develop in such a way as to reduce any negative impact on the environment and local people thus enhancing the experience for all".

The survey can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2vlj4p>

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Trisurf have run two years of exchanges for young surfers with opportunities to visit the partner countries and receive surf-related tuition and cultural immersion. More information at [www.trisurf.eu](http://www.trisurf.eu)

LEADER+ is a six year European Union funding initiative to support small-scale rural development initiatives. It was established to encourage local people to develop projects that address local problems. Through LEADER+ it is possible to develop links with other communities within the UK and across Europe that are facing similar problems and opportunities, in order to share ideas and experience.

The North West Devon LEADER+ programme was established to assist rural communities in Torridge and North Devon to improve their economic prosperity and quality of life. It can support innovative and sustainable community-led solutions to local issues.

Devon Renaissance is the rural regeneration partnership organisation for the county. It is a not for profit partnership of the private sector, local authorities and community-based organisations. The organisation is funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, Devon County Council, and North Devon, Torridge, West Devon, South Hams, East Devon and Teignbridge district and borough councils. Devon Renaissance provides grant funding and works with projects to help create prosperity and jobs and improve access to services in rural areas. It has funding of £7 million over three years which is estimated to be worth £25 million to the Devon economy with match funding.

[www.ruraldevon.org](http://www.ruraldevon.org)

Release issued by pr dogs limited, public relations consultants, on behalf of Devon Renaissance and Trisurf. For further information please contact John Taynton of pr dogs on 01822 600100 or 07843 436526 (mobile) or email [john.taynton@prdogs.com](mailto:john.taynton@prdogs.com)