



Media Inquiries:

London: Sarah Meaker, Membership and Events Secretary

(+44) 20 7730 5344, sarahm@wmf.org.uk

New York: Pauline Eveillard, Watch and Field Programs Administrator

(646) 424-9594, peveillard@wmf.org

For Immediate Release--London, United Kingdom, July 13, 2010... World Monuments Fund (WMF) and American Express join [St. Paul's Cathedral](#) in celebrating the completion of the first phase of work on a sustainable tourism program at this iconic London landmark.

"Many of the world's most celebrated heritage sites are facing major challenges, to manage an increasing visitor demand while preserving the integrity of the place. Our Sustainable Tourism Initiative, here and elsewhere, is a platform for improving tourists' experiences while advancing conservation efforts at significant sites. World Monuments Fund is pleased to join the conservation efforts at St. Paul's Cathedral," said **WMF President Bonnie Burnham**. "We believe that it will be a model of how to adapt an important sacred site to wide public use."

The new offerings in St. Paul's are part of a multi-year, multi-million-pound project designed to enhance visitors' experiences while aiding conservation.

A visitor's area, now open in the crypt, called "Oculus: an eye into St Paul's," will provide a new welcoming spot for tourists and provide a visual experience to give an in-depth history of the church. This area will also encourage people to disperse on their own itineraries throughout the cathedral.

Concept design work is now beginning on the next phase of the project that will enable formerly inaccessible areas to be open to visitors, including the triforium. This will alleviate congestion in previously crowded parts of the building, thus aiding in conservation.

Christopher Wren's Great Model, once accessible only by appointment, will be permanently on view, as will a selection of carved stones from the medieval cathedral, which was destroyed in the 1666 Great Fire.

"The benefits of this project will be great," said **WMF Britain CEO Jonathan Foyle**. "Oculus: an eye into St Paul's' is revolutionary in relating the long story of all the St Paul's over the ages, while limiting the impact of millions of visitors on the present iconic building. St Paul's has solved its challenges and found important opportunities. Oculus will be a triumph."

World Monuments Fund joined the project in 2007 with a \$500,000 grant, the largest awarded to date through its Sustainable Tourism partnership with the American Express Partners in Preservation program. WMF support

has been focused mainly on displaying important artifacts and the opening up areas that have been previously inaccessible. This will improve circulation away from high-traffic areas, such as the west end of the nave.

"American Express is proud to be a part of the effort to preserve the great landmark of St. Paul's in a way that makes it even more accessible to the public," said Timothy J. McClimon, President of the American Express Foundation. "Working in partnership with the World Monuments Fund, we are able to help make sure that historic places around the world remain open for generations of visitors to come."

The St. Paul's initiative is one of five sustainable tourism projects funded to date by the WMF/American Express program, which will provide \$5 million in support for sustainable tourism projects around the world. In New Delhi, India, the Delhi Heritage Route is being developed in partnership with INTACH, the Indian National Trust, in time for the Commonwealth Games in October 2010. In Mexico City, the historic but dilapidated Rule Building and surrounding open space will be transformed into a visitor's center and public square. On the iconic Route 66 in the United States, a heritage-themed travel itinerary has been developed in partnership with the National Parks Service to bolster tourism and aid in the preservation of the numerous historic structures along the highway. At Orongo on Easter Island, work on a sustainable visitor center is in progress, the final phase of a tourism plan designed to regulate and manage the increasing visitation to the island while also improving tourists' experiences.

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's most treasured places. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide, including WMF Britain, based in London and headed by Jonathan Foyle. www.wmf.org

American Express

American Express is a global services company, providing customers with access to products, insights and experiences that enrich lives and build business success. Historic preservation has long been a hallmark of American Express' involvement in the community, reflecting its recognition of the contribution of sites and monuments to a sense of national and local identity and the role that their preservation can play in attracting visitors and revitalizing neighborhoods. Learn more at www.americanexpress.com and connect with us on www.facebook.com/americanexpress, www.twitter.com/americanexpress and www.youtube.com/americanexpress.