

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Dianne Whelan Set to Be First Person to Complete 27,000-km Trans Canada Trail this Summer**

*After six years, filmmaker and author Dianne Whelan will complete her journey by paddling through British Columbia*



VICTORIA, BC—On July 1, award-winning filmmaker and multimedia artist Dianne Whelan will begin the final leg of a monumental trip across the world’s longest recreational trail, the Trans Canada Trail, which connects the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific Oceans. Whelan will begin her final paddle of 500 kilometres in Vancouver on Canada Day and is expecting to arrive in Victoria on August 1. When she does so, she’ll become the first person to complete the water and land trails of this epic traverse of Canada.

Since beginning her journey in Newfoundland in 2015, Whelan has hiked, mountain biked, snowshoed, cross country skied, and, for close to 7,000 kilometres, paddled a canoe. And for most of it, she has travelled solo, while simultaneously writing and filming an independent documentary about the experience.

What makes Dianne’s perspective unique, in today’s world, is that this journey is not about the challenge or the athletic achievement. Instead, she describes the journey as an ecological pilgrimage to honour the land, the water, and to pay respects to the Indigenous people of Canada.

“I am an artist of settler descent. My mother is Acadian with ancestral roots on this land that go back to the 1600s and my father is a Newfoundlander whose ancestors arrived from Ireland in the early 1800s. On this journey, I wanted to pay my respect to Indigenous people on this land whose ancestors date back 10,000 years. I was taught there is no word for forgiveness in the Mi’kmaq language, the literal translation of the word means, to make things right. I hope what I have carried in my heart on this journey and the art made from it will be a ripple on those healing waters.”

Whelan's goal was to search for the wisdom needed to protect the Earth for future generations. A book and a film, both under the title *500 Days in the Wild*, will chronicle her journey and are expected to be released in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

*500 Days in the Wild* is the story of an artist dropping out of society and reconnecting to nature—but it also challenges us to revisit our past, our connection to the land and its people, to find an inclusive narrative with the potential to carry us into our shared future.

The final paddle of her journey will take her through traditional territories of the Coast Salish People and will travel through the following locations:

Vancouver

West Vancouver

Squamish First Nation

Horseshoe Bay

Bowen Island

Keats Island

Gibsons

Roberts Creek

Sechelt

Sechelt First Nation

Halfmoon Bay

Texada Island

Lasqueti Island

Parksville

Lantzville

Nanoose First Nation

Nanaimo

Snuneymuxw First Nation

Gabriola Island

Penelakut Tribe

Saltspring Island

Sidney

Tseycum First Nation

Victoria



### **About Dianne Whelan**

Dianne Whelan is an award-winning Canadian filmmaker, photographer, author and public speaker known for taking a multi-disciplinary approach to her subjects. In addition to the award-winning documentary and interactive project *This Land*, she wrote a book about her time in the High Arctic called *This Vanishing Land*. The film won numerous awards and the interactive project was nominated for a Gemini. Whelan then turned her attention to Everest as seen in the independent documentary *40 Days at Base Camp* and companion book *Base Camp: 40 Days on Everest*.

For the past six years, while on the journey, she co-created with filmmaker Ann Verrall, in collaboration with other artists and Indigenous communities, to make a series of three films called The Beacon Project. Two of the episodes are on CBC Gem and can be accessed along with other multimedia pieces at [www.beaconprojectfilms.com](http://www.beaconprojectfilms.com)

Also a sought-after public speaker, Whelan's multimedia presentations have been described as "inspirational, motivational, thought provoking, and profoundly moving."

Canadian donations in support of *500 Days in the Wild* can be made at <https://cpaws.org/500days/>

Donors will receive a tax receipt and will have their name added to the credit list of the film.



More photos and stories are also on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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Phone interviews are available with Dianne Whelan while she is completing her final paddle. In-studio and on-location interviews are available when the journey is complete in late August.

Exceptional b-roll and photography is available to use.

Link to film trailer: <https://youtu.be/oY4hPjqmm3k>

Websites: [www.500daysinthewild.com](http://www.500daysinthewild.com)

[www.diannewhelan.com](http://www.diannewhelan.com)

[www.beaconprojectfilms.com](http://www.beaconprojectfilms.com)

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