



World Rowing Tour Returns to Ontario in September

In just under a month, the 2022 World Rowing Tour will come to Canada for the third time in history. The two previous World Rowing Tours on Canadian waters were both hosted in Ontario, and this time around is no different as the Bays and Islands Tour will take place on the beautiful waters of Southeastern Ontario.

The World Rowing Tour has been all over the world and its history dates to 1971 when the first tour ran on Lake Constance in Germany. The first tour to be held outside of Europe took place in 1977 on the Sea of Galilee and the Red Sea in Israel. In the 1980's, the tour travelled across the Atlantic Ocean for the first time, landing in Argentina and Brazil in 1982, and the USA in 1989 for the first North American Tour. Australia hosted its first World Rowing Tour in 1997 and in 2011 Japan hosted the first tour to be held in the far east of Asia.



Canada hosted its first World Rowing Tour in 2002 on Ottawa's Rideau Canal, and ten years later in 2012 the tour returned to Ontario on the French River near Sudbury. After another ten years, the World Rowing Tour is back again, and the participants will row down the Bay of Quinte and through the Thousand Islands from Sept. 11-17.

"Ontario Adventure Rowing hosted the World Rowing Tour in 2002 and 2012 and both events were successful, and it seemed like it would be a good idea for Canada to try to host one every ten years," said Peter Jepson, Leader of the Organizing Team on how the planning of the 2022 Tour got started. "In 2019, we told World Rowing we'd like to host it in 2022. We put together a proposal and sent it to them at the end of 2019. Because of the pandemic we didn't get approval until about a year later at the end of 2020. Once we found out it was official, we formed a complete organizing committee and got started on the planning. Now it's building up to a crescendo with it being it a month away."



After the tour was confirmed, the organizing team created several committees to help with the planning of the event. A publicity committee, an off-water activities committee, a routes committee and a finance committee were all formed to separate the various duties involved in putting on a tour of this scale. Jepson points to committee chairs Shelagh Baker (publicity), Isobelle Gray (off-water activities), and Cynthia Warn (finance) as the three key stalwarts on the organizing team who have been intricately involved in the planning of the event. Many other volunteers have also been involved in the planning and will be a big part of the execution of the tour. Approximately 20 volunteers will be on hand throughout the week to help with off-water activities, preparing lunches and dinners, driving motorboats and trailers, and helping the boats in and out of the water.



With just under four weeks until the boats launch on the west side of Prince Edward County, there's still lots of preparations to be done.

"The two main things we'll be focusing on over the next four weeks are publicity and logistics," said Jepson. "Because 'World Tour' attracts the press and gets people's attention, one of the goals is to raise the profile and general knowledge about recreational rowing. So, one of the big things we're doing is hosting the Quinte Watersports Fair that will take place in Belleville on Sept. 10. We're also going to be ramping up the publicity in the next month or so in the local area. And then the other big thing that needs to be sorted out is logistics, how to get the boats to the starting point, and transport the boats and participants throughout the route. It's just sorting out all those details and the timing of everything that we need to finalize."

Last September, OAR members completed a dry run of the route which provided them with valuable information about all sorts of things like the timing of the route and the need to use coastal boats because of the openness of some of the waterways. The participants will row through the Murray Canal and into the Bay of Quinte on the first day, and by the end of the third day they'll reach the east end of the Bay. Rather than row through a rather boring stretch of water on the way to Kingston, the rowers will take a rest day and the boats will be trailered to the Kingston Rowing Club to launch and head east from there. The fourth day on the water will see the crews head to Gananoque, and the fifth day will see them take a bit of a circular route to see as many of the spectacular Thousand Islands as possible. They'll reach the end of the tour on their sixth day on the water.

There will be 50 participants in the tour, as there will be 10 coxed quads on the water with each participant taking a turn as the coxswain. A total of 12 countries will be represented, as

participants from Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the USA will all take part.

For more information on the 2022 World Rowing Tour, visit <https://worldrowingtour2022.ca/>.



Many thanks to Frank Christie.



August 2022