

**October 5th, 2020**

Thank you for your inquiry into the B.C. Green's position on issues affecting wildlife and recreation in our province. Please find our answers below, we hope this explains our past work and commitments to pushing these issues in the Legislature.

Thank you,  
B.C. Greens

---

***1. FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT In B.C., we now have endangered steelhead, endangered caribou, record low salmon and moose populations, and in parts of the province, declining sheep and mule deer populations. Dwindling fish and wildlife values mean increased social conflict and a loss of food security and tourism-related jobs, all while leaving today's British Columbians wondering if they will leave this province better than they found it.***

***Fish and Wildlife Questions:***

***What do you feel is the most critical factor negatively impacting B.C.'s fish and wildlife and their habitats?***

The B.C. Greens believe that poor government management has been the most critical factor negatively impacting B.C.'s fish and wildlife. Lack of funding and commitment to science, vague population and ecosystem objectives, and a tendency to side with industry instead of threatened species has meant that many of B.C.'s fish and wildlife populations are being managed to zero. The proportion of the provincial budget dedicated on renewable resource management has declined dramatically over the last few decades. Our ecosystems are suffering degradation related to cumulative impacts that ought to be scientifically evaluated, tracked, mitigated, and prevented by government, in consultation with local communities and First Nations. As climate change worsens, these problems will be exacerbated.

***If you are elected, what legislative changes or initiatives will you commit to in order to reverse the declining trends for B.C.'s fish and wildlife, and how do you envision that change making a positive impact?***

In the three and a half years working through the Confidence and Supply Agreement, the BC Greens were able to push the B.C. NDP on wildlife and fisheries management in many different ways. We pressed issues facing wild salmon and steelhead, leading to the creation of the Wild Salmon Advisory Council and \$142 million Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. We also legislated science-based climate policies, including reporting and transparency requirements,



and negotiated new Environmental Assessment and Professional Governance laws to better capture and manage cumulative environmental impacts.

We commit to continuing to push for enhancing funding to conservation efforts, creating dedicated endangered species legislation, and adopting holistic natural resource management practices that address economic, social, and environmental values in tandem. The B.C. Greens strive to make a positive impact by targeting the root cause of systemic environmental problems. More details relevant to these commitments will be included in our platform. We commit to working for more funding to conservation, more science, and more accountability for the cumulative impacts of resource management.

***2. HABITAT AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY The B.C.WF, in partnership with the Watershed Security Coalition, is calling for increased investment in watershed security in British Columbia. Population growth, increased development and a warming climate are putting pressure on watersheds in every region of B.C. The solution is to invest in wetland and streambank restoration, invasive species removal, indigenous and local government watershed monitoring programs, and fish and wildlife stewardship. We need to ensure we have sufficient water left in rivers to support salmonids' migration to their spawning grounds in regions most impacted by climate change.***

***Habitat and Water Sustainability Questions:***

***Will you establish a B.C. Watershed Security Fund to fund local and regionally-led clean water initiatives and create good, sustainable, local jobs for British Columbians of all ages and backgrounds in watershed restoration, monitoring, technology, training and education?***

Yes, the B.C. Greens will establish a fund to support local clean water initiatives and jobs in watershed restoration, stewardship, monitoring and associated programs. The protection of freshwater is the motivating reason Sonia Furstenau, Leader of the B.C. Greens got into politics after successfully fighting to prevent the contamination of her local community's drinking water supply in the Cowichan Valley.

Government needs to provide jobs for British Columbians, particularly young people who have been hit hard by pandemic-related job losses. Environmental remediation and restoration projects can provide jobs in communities across B.C. and we would significantly scale up programs to create jobs in this area. More details will be included in our platform.

The work that could be facilitated by a B.C. Watershed Security Fund will be vital with worsening climate change. According to the Province's risk assessment, the top challenges B.C. is likely to face in the coming decades are: severe wildfire seasons, seasonal water shortage, extreme



heat waves, ocean acidification, glacier mass loss, and long-term water shortage. B.C.'s freshwater is becoming all the more precious and its protection must be prioritized.

**3. PARKS AND PUBLIC ACCESS** *The B.C.WF is calling for the government to increase funding for B.C. parks and to build new campsites with a B.C. resident priority to catch up with the current heavy demand. Additional funding is required to hire more park rangers and conservation officers. Public access to public resources such as fish, wildlife, public roads, and campsites is a growing British Columbia issue.*

***Parks and Access Questions:***

***Will you increase funding for B.C. parks and Conservation Officer Service and implement resident-priority booking processes?***

***If so, how much will you allocate for these budgets, when and how many more campsites will be built?***

***Is public access to public resources and activities such as fishing, hunting, camping and hiking important to you?***

***How will you protect British Columbians access to crown land and address attempts to restrict public access to B.C. parks and wild spaces?***

Yes, the B.C. Greens support increasing the budget for B.C. Parks and the Conservation Officer Service (COS). B.C. Parks continue to be under-staffed and under-resourced, even as parks use increases. We would support a budget increase in the next fiscal term, with more details in our forthcoming platform. Investing in parks and the COS who support in the protection of our ecosystems is crucial to the health and wellbeing of our province.

As has been demonstrated by the spike in camping this year, we need more campgrounds and recreational facilities. We would review the access and waitlist data from this summer to identify exactly how many additional sites are needed, however we would ensure that the creation of more sites is commensurate with expanding overall park land and does not cut into existing protected areas.

Public access to our natural environment is incredibly important to the B.C. Green Party. The B.C. Green caucus previously tabled legislation to protect British Columbian's right to access crown land for non-motorized recreation and we remain committed to supporting greater access to public resources.

**4. FISH AND AQUACULTURE** *The B.C.WF joins with other sports fishing and conservation groups to push for full implementation of the Cohen Commission's*

***recommendations. The aquaculture industry needs to be transitioned to closed containment where possible. B.C.WF members and partners have been doing salmon enhancement for years. Citizen scientists and Indigenous communities know what needs to be done to help the fish both as smolts and returning adults. We need to engage all parties to work on sensible solutions to issues. The community fishers need to have a place at the table when discussions are held between governments. There are roughly 9,000 jobs created by community fishing service providers.***

***Fish Management Questions:***

***With the collapse of salmon populations happening across B.C., how do you anticipate the rebuilding of these populations?***

***How will you ensure the recovery of the endangered steelhead?***

***Will you ensure aquaculture moves to closed containment?***

***Please provide the resources you will dedicate and a timeline for all three questions.***

The threats to fish stocks are many - habitat and ecosystem degradation, poor management, fish farms and climate change. Standing up for wild salmon has been a defining mission for the B.C. Green caucus during the minority government. Over the course of the last government term, MLA Adam Olsen dedicated a large portion of his work in the Legislature to salmon policy. He questioned every ministry about their fisheries policies and learned that six Ministries all have a “lead role” in managing salmon and steelhead, in addition to the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. From a provincial perspective, we urgently need better coordination and accountability.

We also need someone who can be a strong defender of B.C.’s fish against DFO, who has proven to be absent, at best, and negligent, at worst, when it comes to protecting wild salmon. Given their track record, we do not trust DFO to be an authority on whether fish farms are adversely impacting wild salmon stocks. Instead of permitting extensions and focusing only on one area, the B.C. Greens wanted to see a short transition period for the industry to harvest and then decommission their sites, and then we would have cancelled their provincial tenures.

We need to see far more regulatory and financial support to aid in the creation of a closed-containment land-based fish farm sector. Likewise, we would consult on alternate aquaculture practices that are not polluting, such as the farming of food-grade seaweed, to create new and sustainable employment opportunities.

For the recovery of wild salmon, the B.C. Greens would move urgently to implement all of the Cohen Commission recommendations, as well as the Wild Salmon Advisory Council recommendations. There have been countless studies on what we should do to help wild salmon - what is missing is the political will to action those solutions. We must act urgently and ambitiously to save B.C.’s salmon.

Likewise, to support the recovery of steelhead we would invest in habitat restoration, consult on targeted and science-driven enhancement options, and manage the cumulative impacts that are impacting water quality and quantity.

***5. PREDATOR MANAGEMENT Many mountain caribou populations are at a record low and moose populations are in significant decline in parts of B.C. Science has shown anthropogenic change as the leading cause, as wolf predation has become a major source of mortality. The growing grizzly bear population has become a major concern in many of the northern rural and First Nations communities recently. There have been close-call bear encounters and attacks including human and livestock losses. While this scenario may not be important to most of the population that lives in the southern part of the province, it is of serious concern to the northern portion.***

***Question: Do you support predator management as a part of sustainable science-based wildlife management?***

The B.C. Greens accept that predator management may be a last-resort measure taken in situations where populations of endangered species are so low that they will not survive predation long enough for other conservation efforts to take effect. We also maintain that elected officials have a moral obligation to prevent endangered species from going extinct or extant, but last-minute interventions are not aligned with sustainable ecosystem management. It is not acceptable that governments let industrial or budgeting excuses push ecosystems to the brink of collapse. We maintain that B.C. needs endangered species legislation and a science-based land use planning process to ensure that no other species face the tragic outcome currently threatening B.C.'s caribou.