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BC NDP
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Sent via email

October 15, 2026

BC WIldlife Federation
Jesse Zeman, Executive Director

Re: 2026 BC Election – Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Jesse Zeman,

Thank you for reaching out to us at the BC NDP during this critical moment for British Columbians. We appreciate the opportunity to respond by way of this letter, and hope that the information provided helps provide your members with clarity during the election season.

Question 1: Enshrine public access to lands and resources into law

Will you commit to legislating public access to sustainable hunting, fishing, camping, and outdoor recreation on Crown land, grounded in science-based decisions?

Why it matters: in 2024, outdoor recreation added $11.1 billion to BC's economy (3.5% of GDP) and supported more than 127,500 jobs. Yet British Columbians are being removed from the landscape through closures of BC Parks, Forest Service Roads such as Rady Creek, moose hunting in the Northeast, and fishing on the Fraser River. Resident moose harvest fell from 10,894 in 1976 to fewer than 4,000 in 2024, a major loss of wild food for 50,000 residents a year. ☐ ***Yes, I commit*** ☐ ***Yes, with conditions (explain below)*** ☐ ***No*** ☐ ***Undecided***

Candidate comment:
British Columbia is defined by its land and water - and by the passion British Columbians have for enjoying our truly great outdoors, whether that is hiking, skiing, hunting, fishing, camping or simply connecting with nature. And unlike many places

in Canada, these landscapes are overwhelmingly public, with nearly 94% of B.C. made up of Crown, or public, land. Industries such as tourism, mining, energy, forestry and agriculture also use public land to sustain jobs and communities, driving economic development in every corner of the province. The BC NDP recognizes the interconnectedness of these industries in rural and remote communities.

We all want to enjoy the beautiful places that make BC so special. Ensuring public access is a key priority for local communities and for the BC NDP. It's by working together that we preserve these natural spaces for recreation, hunting, fishing and other activities.

Hunting is at the heart of many communities, and a critical source of food. We're determined to support sustainable hunting now and for the long term. When we can, we open new sustainable hunting opportunities. One recent example included creating a new general open-season hunt for antlerless white-tailed deer in the Cariboo. We are determined to continue working with the BC Wildlife Federation, to support good hunting opportunities for people and communities.

Thoughtful planning for how we manage this resource is thus critical. We need land-use decisions grounded in transparency, science, partnership with Indigenous people and meaningful public engagement. The BC NDP will work with hunters, fishermen, campers and outdoor recreation groups including the BC Wildlife Federation to advance shared priorities. Public land belongs to all of us, and that is why it must be protected.

We've expanded recreation and conservation to nearly 1,050 provincial parks, recreation areas, conservancies, ecological reserves and protected areas covering more than 14 million hectares, helping protect the land and water we rely on and providing recreation opportunities for people throughout the province.

Since 2017, we have invested more than $225 million in campground expansions, accessibility improvements and upgrades to trails, parking lots and park facilities, increasing access to outdoor recreation for British Columbians. With these investments, more people are visiting BC Parks than ever – increasing 30% over the past six years – as we have expanded park access and added over 2,000 new campsites since 2017.

To further protect this province we all love, David Eby and the BCDNP are advancing "30 by 30" nature protection: partnering with Prime Minister Carney to protect 30% of B.C.'s land by 2030 to conserve the environment, protect wildlife habitat, and preserve public access.

Once we lose natural spaces, we may never get them back. That's exactly the risk we face with the Conservatives, including their candidates who oppose the "30 by 30" nature protection plan, deny the science of climate change, and would roll back habitat protections.

Question 2: Guarantee dedicated fish, wildlife, and habitat management funding

Will you commit to legislating dedicated funding of $200 million per year for fish, wildlife, and habitat management, including the four components below?

Why it matters: BC's budget share for renewable resource management has fallen over fifty years to just 1% of the provincial budget. Decades of underinvestment and politically charged decisions are costing British Columbians their homes through floods and wildfire, along with their livelihoods and their fish and wildlife. Please mark Yes, Conditional, No, or Undecided for each item.

Commitment	Yes	Conditional	No	Undecided
$200 million per year in legislated, dedicated funding	☐	X	☐	☐
Legislated objectives for fish and wildlife populations	☐	☐	☐	X
50,000 hectares of controlled burns per year	☐	X	☐	☐
An independent fish and wildlife management commission, insulated from political pressure	☐	☐	☐	X
A $1 billion watershed security fund	☐	X	☐	☐

Candidate comment:

David Eby and the BC NDP are advancing “30 by 30” nature protection: partnering with Prime Minister Carney to protect 30% of B.C.’s land by 2030 to conserve the environment, protect wildlife habitat, and preserve public access.

We are also taking action to improve habitat, reduce risks and support local communities through a $1 million investment in the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation to support a provincewide assessment of water infrastructure located in areas that support fish, wildlife and ecosystems.

Through the BC Fisheries Fund - a joint Canada-British Columbia investment of $106.5 million over five years - we are investing in projects that support sustainable fisheries and strengthen the health of our watersheds and oceans. The BC Fisheries Fund builds on the success of the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), and will continue to support the conservation and recovery of wild Pacific salmon. Wild Pacific salmon are woven into the economy and the culture of coastal communities throughout British Columbia and protecting the habitat they depend on is central to the work the BC Fisheries Fund will support.

And David Eby and the BCNDP are strengthening watershed protection with a $30 million per year BC Watershed Security Fund that will provide sustainable, long-term funding and secure healthy watersheds and thriving communities for generations.

In terms of controlled burns, we’ve made the BC Wildfire Service a year-round operation and we’re putting more resources than ever before into protecting communities from climate-fueled wildfires. Planned burns when timed well can be one of the most ecologically appropriate and relatively efficient ways to improve habitat, eradicate disease and help prevent the kind of large, intense wildfires that are resulting from our changing climate and that have affected so many British Columbians in the past two decades. Wildfire prevention decisions must be made on the basis of science and be free from politics.

Question 3: Oppose the federal firearms confiscation and buyback

Will you oppose the federal firearms confiscation and buyback program, and commit that provincial and municipal police resources will not be diverted from public safety priorities to administer it?

Why it matters: the program targets law-abiding firearms owners, who are vetted through background checks, rather than criminals using illegally obtained or manufactured firearms. Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba have refused to have police administer it, and other provinces have pushed back; BC's position differs from most of the country. The province should support its law-abiding firearms owners and sport shooters, and focus police resources on the people who pose real public safety risks.

Commitment	Yes	Conditional	No	Undecided
Oppose the federal confiscation and buyback program	☐	☐	X	☐
Keep provincial administration and municipal police resources off buyback	☐	☐	X	☐

Candidate comment:

While a federal and not a provincial program, David Eby and the BC NDP encourage police in British Columbia to participate, especially given the impact the public has seen of semi-automatic rifles being used to commit violent crimes in communities across our province.

-End-