

1. Enforcement of Fish & Game Laws

Effective enforcement of angling and hunting laws is a prerequisite to the protection of fish and wildlife populations and public safety. While some recent steps have been taken to enhance the Conservation Officer service, too often serious violations remain unpunished.

Question: If you form the next government, will you take these steps to ensure that fish and wildlife violations are treated seriously by:

- Continuing with the revitalization of the Conservation Officer Service by enhancing recruitment and retention, with the goal of bringing the service back to adequate staffing levels;
- Implementing mandatory minimum sentences for violators; • Enhancing penalties for violations by strengthening regulations authorized by Bill 53 (The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution)) to make persons convicted of fish and wildlife offences liable to the government for their value; and
- Establishing a dedicated Crown Prosecutor to prosecute natural resource offences.

LIBERAL PARTY

Manitoba Liberals share concerns about the importance of enforcing conservation laws to preserve wildlife and fish populations. We should be clear, however, that there is much more to enforcement and management than punishment alone. We will certainly work to revitalize and modernize the Conservation Office Service. Like so many other Government services, it has been decimated by seven years of cuts and freezes under the Progressive Conservative Government. We strongly believe in the independence of the judiciary, which includes judicial discretion. The judiciary is a branch of government separate and independent from elected officials. Mandatory minimums, in our view are a form of political overreach.

PC PARTY

The Conservation Officer Service is the 3rd largest law enforcement body in Manitoba. We have already shown our commitment to the COS by providing more support to the officers, through new vehicles, equipment, and training. Ensuring that the service is properly staffed is of the utmost importance. That is why our government's goal will be to fill all the vacancies and even look towards the future by creating more positions with the goal of opening more regional offices, just like the office we reopened in Brandon. Illegal hunting and poaching is a serious concern in this province that we take seriously. Our focus would be to ensure that penalties and fines are properly reflective of the crime that is being committed. This is something that we have been actively working towards. Ultimately, we were always in favor of having a dedicated Crown Prosecutor and would pursue this expansion and modernization.

NDP PARTY

The Manitoba NDP will ensure there is proper staffing levels of conservation officers after years of increased vacancy rates so officers can effectively enforce laws in all parts of the province. We will ensure there is a strong retention and recruitment strategy for conservation officers. And we will ensure there is fair and competitive compensation to retain our dedicated staff. We'll also restore funding to our justice system so prosecutions of fish and wildlife violations are handled by the courts in a timely manner.

2. Shared Management

The Manitoba Government is failing to fulfill its primary responsibility to sustainably manage the harvest of fish and wildlife by Indigenous and licensed anglers and hunters within a single shared management framework, thus putting populations at risk of overharvest.

Question: If you form the next government, will you take these steps to establish a shared management framework: -

- Restart consultations towards a provincial shared management framework;
- On a regional level, engage in consultations with local Indigenous leadership to ensure that the harvest of regional fish and wildlife populations is managed within science-based limits shared equitably amongst all users having regard to constitutional principles.
- Do not commit to any expansion of the Metis Harvesting Initiative pending the establishment of a provincial shared management framework.

LIBERAL PARTY

We have committed to the establishment of an Indigenous Secretariat. We all want to ensure that we are preserving and enhancing the environment, and encouraging the recovery and growth of Manitoba wildlife. We need to be clear that Indigenous hunting and fishing rights are protected as a matter of constitutional law. There are two questions here that are affecting wildlife and fish. One is population loss due to overhunting or overfishing, the other is population loss due to habitat destruction or pollution. We need to address all of these, and Manitoba Liberals are. "Rewilding" and improving the health of our lakes, rivers, wetlands as well as land habitats is a major priority for our party. We have committed to a \$300-million annual Green Fund, to be administered through Efficiency Manitoba, which would pay for projects that fight climate change. One of the major ways we want to do that is through "re-wilding" - working with RMs, landowners, First Nations and other partners to return land, lakes and watersheds to their original state. We would also create "wildlife corridors" to link parks to expand the range of Manitoba wildlife and encourage their return, while also providing grants for the removal of invasive species.

PC PARTY

We would commit to restart consultations towards a provincial shared management framework, understanding that consultation is essential for sustainable harvest management. On a regional level, we will engage in consultations with local Indigenous leadership to ensure that the harvest of regional fish and wildlife populations is managed within science-based limits shared equitably amongst all users having regard to constitutional principles.

NDP PARTY

The Manitoba NDP will work with all stakeholders and Indigenous communities on the issue of shared management frameworks with the goal of supporting fish and wildlife populations while respecting Indigenous rights. We are committed to consulting with all parties on this important matter.

3. Fish and Wildlife Surveys

Scientific monitoring of Manitoba's wildlife is fundamental to support management decisions that ensure sustainable populations and ensure the success of a shared management system. While recent investments in annual surveys have been welcome, long term, dedicated investment in cutting-edge survey technologies is required to avoid gaps in these essential data. Currently the province spends approximately \$400,000 annually on aerial wildlife surveys, well short of the \$3 million required to ensure accurate population estimates.

Question: If you form the next government, will you establish permanent and adequate funding for annual surveys of wildlife populations using the best available technologies?

LIBERAL PARTY

We are committed to ensuring that we are doing the best possible job of assessing wildlife populations. This is the only way we can measure the success of re-wilding programs.

PC PARTY

We currently do annual surveys but are using older methods. Manitoba has already begun to implement newer technologies in regards to surveys. Last fall we began using infrared cameras to survey the moose population and will commit to continuing this practice. Having accurate data on the populations in this province is a key resource in allowing the province to make informed decisions about fish and wildlife and we are committed to ensuring that surveys and studies can continue to be done across Manitoba.

NDP PARTY

No answer provided.

4. Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund

Travel Manitoba has reported that licensed anglers and hunters contribute \$1.1B annually to the Manitoba economy, but participation in this outdoor lifestyle depends on access to our natural areas. Support is needed for the construction and maintenance of a wide range of local infrastructure including launching ramps for watercraft, parking areas for vehicles near recreation areas, and local toilet and garbage collection facilities. While local governments and community organizations are often willing and in the best position to efficiently develop and maintain this infrastructure, provincial funding is ad hoc and short term.

Question: If you form the next government, will you establish an endowment fund to generate matching funds for local infrastructure projects necessary to support recreation and tourism activities, along the lines of existing funds established that support trail infrastructure, heritage preservation and conservation activities?

LIBERAL PARTY

In our platform, we commit to the modernization of funding for recreational and cultural structures across Manitoba. Conservation activities would be eligible for funding under the Green Fund.

NDP PARTY

The Manitoba NDP will work with local municipalities and communities as well as with the Manitoba Wildlife Federation to help build the necessary infrastructure to support recreation and tourism activities across the province. We will end the municipal funding freeze to support local communities while also investing in infrastructure projects across our province. We will restore a dedicated Minister responsible for tourism to the cabinet table to ensure the sector receives the attention and support it needs and deserves.

PC PARTY

We currently have the fish and wildlife enhancement fund (FWEF) that communities can apply to for funding for their projects. These projects can range from something as simple as a boat launch to cleaning a body of water. Recognizing the important contributions that recreation and tourism contribute, we are committed to working with local organizations and municipalities to assist in development.

5. Closure of Protected Areas to Licensed Hunting and Angling

The federal government has announced a proposal to “protect” 30 percent of Canada’s lands by 2030. If implemented, this would unilaterally curtail access to a vast area of provincial public land by licensed hunters and anglers. The Manitoba Wildlife Federation is adamant that licensed anglers and hunters have a right to access public lands, and that licensed hunting and angling within a shared management framework is entirely consistent with conservation objectives.

Question: If elected, will your government oppose the federal government’s ‘30 by 30’ proposal? Further, will you commit to working with all stakeholders, including licensed hunters and anglers, to develop practical solutions to land protection that benefit all Manitobans?

LIBERAL PARTY

We have committed to the 30 by 30 proposal, as have other parties. It is a foundational principle of being liberal that we will work with all stakeholders, as government should.

PC PARTY

Under the PC government currently 11.4% of Manitoba is protected, and we understand the importance of protecting lands for future generations to use and enjoy. We understand that there is a large economic development opportunity in northern Manitoba where a majority of these potential protected lands are located. We are about finding a balance between preserving nature while taking advantage of the natural resources that we are blessed to have in our borders. Consultations between all stakeholders will be key, especially as we balance environmental priorities with local communities need to provide for themselves.

NDP

The Manitoba NDP has committed to preserving 30 per cent of the province’s lands by 2030 and will work with all interested groups on this important goal.

6. Sustainability and Certification of Manitoba’s Fisheries

Manitoba will have one of the most sustainable fisheries in the world once the eco-certification process is complete. Fishing, both commercial and recreational, contributes close to 750 million dollars annually to our provincial economy (100 million commercial and 650 million recreational). World fish markets are now demanding eco-certified fisheries and we feel strongly that following through with the current government's commitment, will create enormous positive outcomes in terms of jobs, economic spinoffs, and a sustainable fishery.

Question: If you form the next government, will you continue to support and deliver the programs needed to achieve sustainability and eco-certification of Manitoba's fisheries?

LIBERAL PARTY

We recognize that it is essential that fishing in Manitoba be sustainable. It is a critically important industry that sustains thousands of jobs and generates significant revenues. There is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done to achieve eco-certification, and it is critical that we achieve buy-in from fishers whose livelihoods and entire communities are at stake.

PC PARTY

Manitoba is lucky to have our own "great lakes". These lakes are a key economic driver to our fisheries. We have overseen the eco-certification of 2 lakes recently in Manitoba, Waterhen and Cedar Lake. Those bodies of water are now MSC certified and the fish that is pulled out of those areas can be advertised as such. On average MSC certified fish are sold for a higher profit. This economic benefit will help Manitoba fisheries compete with not just the other Canadian markets but the world markets as well. Our goal is to have the 5 major lakes of Manitoba MSC certified, but work needs to be done, which our government has already undertaken to get Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis ready for MSC certification.

NDP

The Manitoba NDP will support and deliver the programs needed to achieve sustainability of Manitoba's fisheries for generations to come.