



MANITOBA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

## MWF Questionnaire

### Questions for our Political Leaders from the Manitoba Wildlife Federation in Advance of the 2023 Manitoba Provincial Election

#### 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.

#### 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.

### **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?

### **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?

### **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?

**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?