



September 9, 2019

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society –NWT Chapter

NWT Territorial Election All Candidates Questionnaire

Sent Via E-mail: All Candidates

CC: Phil Mercredi - Communications Coordinator CPAWS-NWT

Dear Candidate,

Please consider answering the following questions provided by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – NWT Chapter (CPAWS-NWT). Our organization is interested in knowing your viewpoint on three (3) questions which are focused on stewardship of our natural environment.

We will post all responses on our website, www.cpawsnwt.org with links through or social media and circulated to our NWT membership.

Who we are:

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – NWT Chapter (CPAWS-NWT)'s mission is to promote the conservation of land, water, and wildlife in the NWT for current and future generations, by working with NWT residents, Indigenous and public governments, communities, and organizations. We are based in Yellowknife where our local staff, members and volunteers have participated in a variety of conservation and resource management initiatives since our establishment in 1996.

Please return your response to nwtadmin@cpaws.org by Monday September 16th, 2019

Thank-you for your time in responding and best of luck with your campaign!

Kris Brekke
Executive Director
CPAWS-NWT

Three (3) questions total -

1. Barren Ground Caribou:

A number of factors are contributing to the decline of barren ground caribou populations across the north. One recovery action that could be championed by the GNWT is to approve a policy that protects caribou calving habitat from the negative impacts of human land use activities.

It would be necessary that the scope of this policy would oppose development on caribou calving grounds in all political jurisdictions because most NWT caribou herds are shared with other jurisdictions including most calving habitat. Although the GNWT has no mandate beyond our borders, the government makes recommendations to other jurisdictions (such as Alaska and Nunavut) in cases where environmental reviews and land use planning processes involve calving habitat of NWT caribou herds.

Would you support a GNWT policy that directs the territorial government to oppose the construction of infrastructure corridors (including roads) or any other industrial developments on caribou calving grounds?

Yes. I have consistently raised the issue of the perilous decline in barrenground caribou herds and the need for action during my first term. Most of the action to date has been focused on harvest restrictions and some limited predator control which has caused very significant impacts on Indigenous communities. While there are now some plans and recovery strategies in various states of completion, there has been almost no specific action to protect habitat other than the recent creation of Thaidene Nëné. GNWT has opposed development in the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd in Alaska and I drafted a motion to this effect for the 18th Assembly that was successfully passed https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/motion_6-183_0.pdf. I support similar action to protect calving grounds and other key habitat for other caribou herds. That being said, any new infrastructure in the range of caribou herds that are threatened needs to be carefully evaluated and designed to avoid key habitat. Land use planning, mobile caribou protection measures (activity restrictions while caribou are present), research and monitoring, trans-boundary agreements and funding are also needed to ensure a comprehensive approach to caribou protection.

2. Candidate Protected Areas:

Over the past two decades a number of NWT communities have identified lands and waters of significant cultural and ecological value for nomination as candidate protected areas. The GNWT now has a legislative tool to sponsor this work through the NWT Protected Areas Act which provides an opportunity for the GNWT to enter into innovative Nation to Nation partnerships for co-managing and governing protected areas. Two proposals - Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta (Ramparts) and Dinàgà Wek'èhodi (North Arm) could be ready for establishment early in the upcoming 19th Assembly, others could move forward within the term.

If elected will you support the establishment of the previously nominated candidate protected areas?

Yes. My track record is very clear in having supported conservation area planning in my first term. I also worked very hard to change the *Protected Areas Act* to better incorporate co-management, improve access to information for the public and stronger accountability through public consultation requirements and written reasons for decision. The two proposals cited have received strong local and regional support and should be established in a timely fashion with appropriate support from GNWT. I will also support the creation of innovative co-management and governance arrangements for both areas, undertaken in partnership with First Nations.

3. Planning Ahead - Investing in Local Environmental Stewardship Capacity:

There are a number of innovative and exciting land based programs evolving in regions of the NWT, for example "Guardians" which have objectives related to environmental stewardship and could include training for participation in the many facets of land, water and resource management.

Do you support that the GNWT should have a focus on collaborating, promoting and contributing to proposals that bring new investment into innovative programs that increase the local capacity of Indigenous Governments and regional land and resource management departments?

Yes. I fully support the development of GNWT programs that promote and or provide resources that increase the capacity of local communities, groups and individuals to participate effectively in land water and resource stewardship activities. There are some good opportunities to partner with the federal government on guardianship programs and private foundations. Examples include the NWT On the Land Collaborative <http://www.nwtontheland.ca/> and the partnership approach to support Thaidene Nëné. These are great investments in building a Conservation Economy that is truly sustainable, supports cultural diversity and creates economic activity and wellness in NWT communities.