

# 2016 Territorial Election Environment Questionnaire

CPAWS Yukon and the Yukon Conservation Society have collaborated on a set of nine nonpartisan environmentally themed questions that were posed to all territorial parties in advance of the 2016 election. You will find both the questions and the parties' unaltered answers enclosed.



Yukon Conservation Society

 **CPAWS**  
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY  
YUKON CHAPTER

Vote on  
November  
7th!

A process for regional land use planning in the Yukon was laid out in the Umbrella Final Agreement, but to date, only the North Yukon Land Use Plan has been completed. How would your party get regional land use planning back on track?



Without fully accounting for and respecting the values of Yukon's natural systems and resources - monetarily, socially and historically - the most sustainable and efficient use of land within a planning area is often overlooked. The Yukon Green Party is committed to immediately commencing planning in all areas of Yukon. We would restore and enhance public and First Nations government control over resource use, development and the protection of ecosystems. The completion of planning would encompass full disclosure of all resources and would include consensus-based agreements for use, based on the most sustainable use of resources within a given planning area.



We believe that a critical missing ingredient in the land use planning process is trust. A Liberal government would respect the Land Use Planning process established in the Treaties and accept the final report of the original Peel Land Use Planning Commission. We believe the process laid out in the U.F.A. is sound and must be implemented. The current Yukon government and its refusal to respect the process is the sole reason land use planning has gone off track. A Liberal government will get out of the courts and work with First Nations to see the Peel and all other land use plans move forward. Land use planning will be a major priority of our Liberal Government.



The Yukon NDP was the only party to endorse the Final Recommended Peel Plan. We will end the Peel conflict and work with Yukon First Nations to implement the final plan. The Yukon NDP will fulfill the commitments set out in the UFA as well as work with First Nation Governments who have not signed final agreements. We also commit to work with all stakeholders to develop a process to expedite the completion of land use plans in Yukon.

The Yukon NDP recognizes that land use planning is essential to a healthy economy and environment.



Since the first four Land Claim Agreements were signed in 1993, the Yukon Party is the only government to achieve a regional land use plan (RLUP), the North Yukon RLUP in 2009, in collaboration with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. In view of the dispute over the Peel RLUP, on December 1, 2014, both the Trondek Hwech'in and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations mutually agreed to suspend the Dawson RLU planning process and to look for clarity before continuing with the planning process in the Dawson region. We will await the ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada before proceeding with further regional land use planning.

While mining brings revenue into the Yukon, it also has negative impacts on the land and wildlife, and can result in major clean up and maintenance costs when mines are abandoned. How would your party improve mining in the Yukon to minimize environmental harm?



The Yukon Green Party would minimize environmental impacts from mining by: ~ continuing to fund academic geology, data collection and continual progression and development of best mining practices ~ favouring small mines over large, and long term extraction over short ~ adopting a 'Best Practices' certification process to ensure individuals and companies are able to reduce negative impacts, which would include, among other things, that no permits are issued to plans involving tailings ponds and instead favour dry stacking ~ rewarding the entrepreneurial spirit and respect for nature that many small scale miners have through voluntary adherence to the 'Best Practices' certification process.



Yukon Liberals recognize the contribution of the mining industry and believe it will be an important part of our economy for many years to come. Full implementation of existing mining regulations and environmental assessments will go a long way towards protecting Yukon's environment from undue harm. We believe that mining and development in general must be balanced with strong environmental stewardship. We do not support the practice of the current Government of Yukon, which allowed companies to delay the payment of required security bonds. Security deposits where necessary will be required when permits are issued and will be sufficient to cover the company's obligations.



The Yukon NDP supports mining. We echo Yukoners' expectation that mining companies play by the rules, employ Yukoners, benefit Yukon businesses, and clean up when they are done. It is government's job to ensure that mining is done in an environmentally sustainable manner. We will respect the recommendations of environmental assessment bodies like YESAB and the Yukon Water Board. We believe the Yukon has a strong environmental protection regime that is not being used to its full potential. We will develop a wetlands policy and conduct land use planning to clarify land use purposes. We will separate environmental oversight from mining promotion within the Government of Yukon.



The Yukon Party government initiated two major mining and environmental improvements: the Mine Licensing Improvement Initiative (MLII) and the Mineral Development Strategy (MDS). MLII examines policies governing closures and security payments required for site clean up if companies are unable to complete reclamation themselves. Closure plans are reviewed and security payments are recalculated every two years. MDS guides the long-term development of the mining industry and covers environmental stewardship, regulatory streamlining, business climate, infrastructure and workforce training. Both MLII and MDS have full First Nation, Water Board, YESAB and industry engagement.

## What is your party's position on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and conventional oil and gas development in the Yukon?



Our policy, which is available at [yukongreenparty.ca](http://yukongreenparty.ca), clearly states:

1. Place a permanent moratorium on coal bed methane projects and shale bed gas exploration and production - ban fracking.
2. Institute a moratorium on oil and gas exploration.
3. Enact a moratorium on pipelines to, from and through Yukon.
4. Phase out imports of oil, gas and fossil fuels in general and replace them with renewable energy.
5. Invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency that shifts Yukon to a decarbonized economy.

A Liberal government believes that sustainable energy is the path forward for the Yukon. We would place an immediate moratorium on fracking in Yukon and a Liberal government would not any issue permits for fracking. We are supportive of the collaborative land use planning process, and therefore would permit conventional oil and gas development in Eagle Plains in conjunction with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. We would also continue the moratorium on oil and gas development in the Whitehorse Trough. We will put programs in place to transition the Yukon towards a post-carbon future.

The Yukon NDP will permanently ban hydraulic fracturing. An NDP Government will not subsidize conventional oil and gas development. The onus is on the oil and gas proponent to develop an independent business case, successfully raise the necessary capital and meet the high standards necessary to pass through YESAB, get a water license and satisfy all other socio-economic and environmental assessment requirements. The Yukon NDP is clear that renewable energy is the future for Yukon both in terms of meeting our climate commitments, providing clean energy and creating employment opportunities for Yukon.

We believe in responsible resource development and that oil and gas can play an important role in growing and diversifying our economy. While we are open to responsible shale gas development, we would only allow this activity to occur in the Liard basin where natural gas development has occurred for decades. We believe that any shale gas development activity must have the support of affected First Nations. We will continue to implement the Oil & Gas Action Plan that includes expanding groundwater monitoring and seismic data, seeking expert advice to confirm that baseline information is adequate, and ensuring that regulatory processes will protect human health and the environment.

Yukon political leaders were in Paris last year for the UN conference, where Canada and the world agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to 1.5-2°C and avoid catastrophic climate change impacts. How would your party make the Yukon a leader in achieving this goal?



By adopting any one of the many great policies in our platform, available at [yukongreenparty.ca](http://yukongreenparty.ca), the Yukon could become a glittering example of climate change action and adaptation. Greens would start by implementing a revenue neutral or fee and dividend carbon tax of \$30/tonne and increase that by \$10/tonne per year. We would then shift taxes away from things we want, like jobs, and onto things we don't want, like pollution. Our next step would be to transfer all current subsidies from oil, gas, mining and other large polluting industries to environmentally, socially and economically net positive programs. We would also actively participate in the Western Regional Climate Action Initiative.



The Government of Canada has indicated it will introduce a price on carbon by 2018. Like all Canadians, we want to do our part. We would work respectfully with Canada to implement that national plan, while ensuring that any revenue is rebated back to Yukoners. We will accurately measure emissions and make sure this information is public. We would also update Yukon's Climate Change Action Plan and Energy Strategy to establish greenhouse gas reduction targets including intensity based targets for industry, and measure the results and report publicly to achieve our goals. We plan to introduce significant incentive programs to encourage energy conservation and efficiency.



The Yukon NDP believes that climate change is the biggest challenge facing the Yukon, and that the solution lies in renewable energy.

It will allow us to transition away from fossil fuels and create good paying, sustainable jobs. Yukon Government capital projects will come with expectation for built in renewable energy. We will provide funding to Yukon First Nations Governments, municipalities, private industry and members of the public to develop their own renewable capacity and transition away from fossil fuels.



The Yukon Party takes climate change seriously and will build on our record of taking significant action to make Yukon a leader in climate change adaptation, mitigation and scientific research. We do however, oppose Ottawa's plan to impose a carbon tax on Yukoners because it will do very little to reduce emissions and will dramatically increase Yukoners' cost of living. We support retrofitting buildings and homes to reduce our emissions while also creating jobs and economic activity. We will also work to increase our supply of renewable energy with programs like the microgeneration policy that will help Yukoners install energy projects on their homes.

In the consultations on Next Generation Hydro, there was opposition to large hydro and strong support for smaller hydroelectric sites and other forms of renewable energy. What is your party's vision for meeting the territory's future energy needs?



The YGP sees smaller scale and regionally managed energy projects with great efforts being made to reduce overall energy demands and use our existing energy resources more efficiently. We would focus on conservation first, renewables second and then push for enhanced efficiency codes. We would invest in renewables in all communities, set goals to achieve energy independence with achievable time lines and take into account unique requirements and assets. Also, require that Yukon's energy needs are met before foreign energy sales took place and legislate that Yukon's energy providers serve Yukoner's first and foremost with independent industries and corporations providing their own power.



Yukon Liberals will promote energy policies that primarily source future needs from renewable technologies, such as small-hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal sources, positioning the territory as a renewable energy leader in Canada. Yukon Liberals will be implementing a major solar pilot program and move forward with small renewables that meet the energy needs of a growing territory. We will support IPP projects that fit into the small renewable category. We will work with the Federal government to source funding for conservation, renewables and energy storage. With energy storage, renewables make even more economic sense. We will explore grid connections to other jurisdictions.



The Next Generation Hydro Project consultation demonstrated that social license for large scale hydro does not exist in Yukon. During the open houses Yukoners voiced their support for small scale projects. The Yukon NDP's vision is for an array of scalable renewable energy projects such as wind, solar, geothermal, small scale hydro, biomass and biomass gasification that are cheaper and can provide regional green job benefits.



The Yukon Party is proud of our record on the promotion and development of renewable energy in Yukon. While our current hydro-electricity assets have served Yukon well, it is time to begin planning for the future, which is why the Yukon Party support the Next Generation Hydro project to chart a course and allow Yukoners to make informed decisions about our energy future. While we hope a new hydro-electric facility will help meet future energy demand, we also believe that a range of smaller projects could be incorporated. We support programs like the Independent Power Producer Policy and the microgeneration policy to help achieve this.

## The Yukon lacks an active territory wide conservation strategy for protecting wildlife and important natural areas. How would your party address this gap?



A Green government would enshrine the right to a healthy environment in the Human Rights Commission mandate, which in itself would offer protection for our land and wildlife. We would increase our parks and protected areas, including aquatic environments, to 20% of the land base within 10 years. We would create jobs in all Yukon communities that monitor pollution, protect species at risk and enforce fish and wildlife regulations. We would pass strong Species at Risk Legislation that would include appropriate habitat protection and eliminate sport and trophy hunting of at risk animals. And many more things which you can read about in our policy book at [yukongreenparty.ca](http://yukongreenparty.ca).



One way we will protect wildlife is to enact a Yukon Species at Risk Act. Second, we will establish an Independent Task Force on Economic Enhancement and Environmental Sustainability, comprised of representatives of private industry, environmental groups, First Nations, the scientific community and municipalities, to recommend sustainable economic and environmental practices and standards. This new body would be mandated to address any identified gaps as well. Finally, the land use planning process can and will be used to protect important natural areas of the territory.



The Yukon NDP is keenly aware of the lack of protection for much of the Yukon's wilderness. Rather than one overarching plan we will use a number of mechanisms to protect Yukon's vast wilderness. We will:

- a. Use the Territorial Lands Act to create special management areas in sensitive parts of Yukon to protected areas.
- b. We will finalize implementation of the habitat protection areas set out under chapter 10 of the First Nation Final Agreements like Ddhaw Ghro.
- c. We will work with Yukon First Nation Governments, citizens, and stakeholders to develop a territorial wetlands policy.
- d. We will implement Yukon Species at Risk Legislation.



The Yukon Party committed to work within the framework established by the UFA to protect Yukon's wilderness by working with the Fish & Wildlife Management Board, regional Renewable Resource Councils and individual First Nations to implement their agreements. Through this work we have designated the Devil's Elbow and Big Island areas of the Stewart River and Ts'alwnjik Chu, a 30-km long stretch of the Nordenskiold River as Habitat Protection Areas. We have signed accords addressing the Fishing Branch Management Plan and the North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan. We will continue to respect the framework outlined in the UFA and work with our First Nation partners.

Wetlands have enormous economic and environmental value but they are also one of the ecosystems most threatened by human activities. Will your party commit to developing a Yukon wetland policy?



Yes the Yukon Green Party will commit to a Yukon Wetland Policy. We will also protect the Peel, remove the ability for Yukon waters to have any claim of sovereignty by any other jurisdiction or corporation through resisting bulk water exports, prioritize the protection, filtration and infrastructure maintenance required for ensuring a drinkable fresh water supply, create multi-skill level jobs in waterway management in all Yukon communities from waterway cleaners, monitors and managers to water testing, enforcement and research positions and ensure that these jobs can be certified locally through Yukon college or distance learning. Check out [yukongreenparty.ca](http://yukongreenparty.ca) for more wise water policy.



Yes. We intend to develop a policy for managing Yukon wetlands, including support for wetland inventory and monitoring, in partnership with other governments, stakeholders and the public. This is a commitment outlined in the Yukon Water Strategy.



Yes. The Yukon NDP acknowledges the need for a Yukon wetland policy.



The Yukon Party Government was proud to develop the Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan which allowed us to make historic investments in surface and groundwater monitoring stations throughout the Yukon. As a result we know more about Yukon's groundwater than ever before and are happily sharing that information with the public in exciting new ways. That Action Plan, which we are in the midst of implementing, included a commitment to develop a policy for managing Yukon wetlands including support for wetland inventory and monitoring, in partnership with industry and other levels of government. We will enthusiastically continue with this work if re-elected.

With wise stewardship, the Yukon's wilderness can provide economic opportunities for generations to come. How would your party strengthen the conservation economy and opportunities for wilderness experiences?



One way the Yukon Green Party would strengthen the conservation economy and wilderness opportunities is through 'slow' tourism which focuses on quality, not quantity. We would support Dawson's bid to become a UNESCO world heritage site, the development of culinary tourism to support local food and agricultural producers and the establishment of an Eco-tourism industry in Yukon by encouraging education and funding for product development, creating regulation and accreditation programs and strategies for international marketing and promotion. We would also commission an Aboriginal Tourism strategy in order to support a sustainable First Nations tourism and cultural events industry.



We recognize the economic impact and potential for growth of outfitting and wilderness tourism. We will make the temporary two-year tourism marketing funds permanent and increase the annual core marketing fund from \$5 million to \$7 million. Another plan to expand wilderness experiences is to market the territory's community-based trail systems.

Finally, we will expand our existing campground and hiking/biking trail infrastructure, to encourage more tourists to vacation in the territory. Eco-tourism opportunities along with Arts and Culture tourism can expand our current base and provide low impact opportunities to grow our economy.



The Yukon NDP believes that Yukon's economy and environment are intrinsically linked. A Yukon NDP Government established the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment (YCEE) under the Environment Act. The Yukon Party disbanded this council. The YCEE is referenced in the UFA. Re-establishing the YCEE with a refreshed mandate will achieve the goal of strengthening the conservation economy and growing opportunities for wilderness viewing experiences.



The Yukon Party is committed to ensuring a balanced approach for access to land. The Yukon Party believes that activities based on the extraction of natural resources, such as placer mining, hard-rock mining, forestry, trapping and outfitting, are critical to the future of Yukon, and we will stand up for these industries. We are also committed to working with communities and the tourism sector to grow Yukon's economy by expanding tourism marketing opportunities through sustainable tourism initiatives.

## Territorial parks depend on stable funding to ensure that wildlife and plant species are being adequately managed and preserved. How would your party support the health of Yukon's parks?



As stated, the Yukon Green Party's first priority would be to expand our parks and protected areas, including aquatic environments, to 20% of the land base within 10 years. First priority would go to areas of cultural or historic significance, and unique or sensitive flora and fauna in close consultation with First Nations and the Yukon public. During this time the YGP would renew Yukon Parks and campgrounds by restoring and improving interpretive services and increasing the number of ranger and conservation officer staff. We would fund the development of new walking and hiking trails in all Yukon communities, campgrounds and parks, as well as fund programming offering guided day hikes.



We share your assessment of the importance of stable funding for territorial parks. Yukon Liberals have no plans to cut funding from these vital services. We intend to look at the financial books, left by the current government, to determine what resources might be available to make enhancements to these services. It is vital that our parks are healthy for the long term.



While the increased interest in Yukon's territorial parks is great. The Yukon NDP recognizes the need to ensure that funding to our territorial parks (including staffing) keeps pace with increased pressures on our land, wildlife and plant species that make Yukon's parks such special places, now, and into the future.



Most of Yukon's parks were created through First Nations Land Claims and are co-managed with respective Yukon First Nations. In each park the Yukon Party will continue to work with the respective First Nation to create management plans that consider the management and preservation of wildlife species and plants and to implement those plans with appropriate funding. We will also ensure that Yukon parks remain available as recreational opportunities for Yukon citizens where appropriate. Some Parks are home to campgrounds and we will continue to invest in our campgrounds to ensure Yukoners enjoy some of the best outdoor recreational opportunities in North America.