



2018 WISCONSIN CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE GOVERNOR

OUTDOOR RECREATION INCLUDING HUNTING AND FISHING IS A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY in Wisconsin and the United States, supporting jobs and economic development in rural communities. But for many sportsmen and women, hunting and fishing are more than a pastime – they are a passion. Hunters and anglers care deeply about wildlife, habitat and the public lands they have used for generations. They also have a long track record of civic engagement.

For all of those reasons, the Wisconsin Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers developed a short general public interest questionnaire for every candidate listed in a contested 2018 general election race for Governor, U.S. Senate, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer. Our goal was to develop questions that affect all Wisconsinites, but which are not often considered during the course of a typical political campaign.

6 candidates are vying to become the next Governor of Wisconsin. We submitted the same questions to each campaign on August 29th. We followed up numerous times, in equal measure, with emails, and phone calls to ensure they had received the questionnaire. We reminded each campaign a week in advance as the deadline to respond approached. Additional time was provided if requested.

Responses were received were received from Democrat Tony Evers and Independent Maggie Turnbull. We did not receive responses from Republican Candidate and incumbent, Scott Walker, Green Party Candidate Michael J. White, Libertarian Candidate Phillip Anderson, and Wisconsin Party Candidate ArnieENZ.

The candidates' answers are on the following pages. We specifically asked the candidates to keep their answers short. We hope that Wisconsin voters of all political backgrounds will find the responses informative.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is a nonprofit charitable 501(c)(3) organization. We do not endorse or oppose any candidate or party for any political office. We do urge all eligible Wisconsin residents to vote.

TONY EVERS DEMOCRAT

WHAT ISSUES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO WISCONSIN HUNTERS AND ANGLERS?

In my conversations, Wisconsin hunters and anglers are looking both for access and opportunity to enjoy our public lands.

We need to ensure continued access for our sportsmen and sportswomen to public lands for all activities, including areas for non-motorized sports. As Governor, I would help ensure this by supporting the reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which protects and conserves land for future generations.

The opportunity to use our public lands and waterways will disappear unless we restore a science-based approach to natural resources and our Public Trust responsibilities. Under Scott Walker, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been deeply politicized and diminished by significant staffing reductions. This slash and burn approach has weakened safeguards for our lakes and streams, destroyed wetlands, polluted our water, failed to address the spread of chronic wasting disease and eliminated state support for our parks. Wisconsin can do better.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS WOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN INDIVIDUALS YOU WOULD NOMINATE TO SERVE ON THE NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD?

As Governor, I am committed to appointing board members who will further the core mission of the DNR to protect and enhance our natural resources. We need leadership committed to a healthy, sustainable environment, not what's best for campaign donors and politicians.

Gathering input from stakeholders, I will select board members with diverse backgrounds and strong professional qualifications from geographically diverse areas across the state. Appointees must understand and value science-based decision making in managing our natural resources. Given the DNR's broad responsibilities, the board will need expertise in wildlife, fishing, hunting, forestry, agriculture and environmental protection.

THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP FUND WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1989 TO PRESERVE VALUABLE NATURAL AREAS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND FISHERIES, AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION. WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MADE TO THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP FUND?

Wisconsin's scenic beauty, great natural diversity, abundant wildlife and plentiful water resources are a blessing that generations in our state have worked hard to safeguard. That bipartisan commitment to thoughtful stewardship of our outdoors has been gutted by Scott Walker.

As Governor, I will support re-authorizing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to conserve lands for future generations. We need to ensure sufficient resources to provide stewardship of public lands and waters.

Our state and county forests, wildlife and fishery areas, and parks have a large and growing backlog of development needs. Beyond land acquisition, the Stewardship Program plays an essential role in conservation development, habitat restoration, and land rehabilitation.

I think it is important to engage with local governments, land trusts, sportsmen and sportswomen, foresters and the public, if any changes are needed to the current program. The Stewardship Fund preserves the best of Wisconsin for the people of Wisconsin, and they should be a part of the decision making process.

DECADES OF DECLINE IN THE NUMBERS OF HUNTERS HAS RAISED CONCERNS THAT THE CURRENT FUNDING MODEL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES WILL NOT ADEQUATELY MEET THE MONETARY NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT IN THE FUTURE. DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED TO ADDRESS AND POTENTIALLY ADJUST THE FUNDING MODEL FOR THE DEPARTMENT? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Yes. As Governor, I will select a DNR leadership team committed to its professional mission and staff. In addition to sustainable conservation practices, under new leadership the DNR will bring stakeholders together to evaluate sustainable and fair fiscal policies.

For many years, hunters and anglers have contributed significantly to resource management through license and stamp fees. Moving forward, stakeholders and the DNR will need to consider what, if any, changes or increases are necessary to create a fair and balanced funding system.

IN 2017, WISCONSIN CONSERVATION GROUPS CAME TOGETHER TO REQUEST INCREASES IN DEDICATED LICENSE FEES FOR SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN. THOUGH SUPPORTED BY A BROAD BASE OF CONSERVATION AND SPORTSMEN GROUPS, THE FEE INCREASES WERE NOT IMPLEMENTED. WOULD YOU SUPPORT A SIMILAR MEASURE IF GROUPS OF HUNTERS, ANGLERS, AND CONSERVATIONISTS AGAIN REQUESTED INCREASED FEES? WHY OR WHY NOT?

I will seriously consider and give significant weight to any consensus proposal put forward by sporting groups, but increasing fees is not the only solution to the DNR's funding needs. I will seek input from affected stakeholders on other possible revenue sources and management issues.

DO YOU SUPPORT RETURNING THE SELECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD? WHY OR WHY NOT?

The politicization of the DNR has been among Scott Walker's biggest failures as governor, and addressing that is my first priority. We must restore professionalism, trust and respect for science-based decision making to the DNR leadership. Restoring the independently selected Secretary certainly could be part of that effort. My primary concern is removing the excessive political influence from the DNR and putting career professionals into executive positions. Wisconsin's natural resources are owned by all state residents, not those seeking to reduce environmental protections and eliminate safeguards.

IN THE 2005-2006 BUDGET, A LAW WAS PASSED THAT ESSENTIALLY BLOCKED HUNTERS AND ANGLERS FROM CROSSING RAILROAD TRACK UNLESS AT A DESIGNATED CROSSING. A DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES REVIEW STATED 134 FORMER CROSSINGS WERE LOST. RAILROADS CROSS 121 PUBLIC ACCESS AREAS. HUNTERS AND ANGLERS HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH TRESPASSING TICKETS BY RAILROAD COMPANIES FOR ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS. WOULD YOU SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT REVERSED THIS LAW AND RETURNED ACCESS TO WISCONSIN'S HUNTERS AND ANGLERS?

As Governor, I will work with conservation leaders in the Legislature to address this issue. Returning reasonable access is a common sense approach. This law was passed to address liability issues for railroads, but there have not been any reported instances of an angler or hunter being injured by crossing railroad tracks to access public lands to hunt or fish. Unfortunately, this law took away large tracts of land from the public, and that needs to be addressed.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION GUIDING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS AND THE IDEA THAT ALL WILDLIFE ARE PUBLICLY OWNED?

I agree with the main principles of the North American Model, including supporting the public ownership of wildlife, opposing commercial hunting, believing wildlife should only be hunted for a legitimate purpose, supporting public access to lands, and believing that science should be the basis for informed management and decision-making processes. These principles are still valid today.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) CONTINUES TO BE A THREAT TO WISCONSIN'S DEER HERD AND HUNTING COMMUNITY. WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED TO HELP CONTROL THE SPREAD OF CWD AND REDUCE PREVALENCE OF CWD INFECTED DEER IN AREAS AFFECTED BY CWD?

Scott Walker's passive approach to CWD has been an unmitigated failure, and as a result we now have CWD in 55 of 72 Wisconsin counties. The DNR has a trust issue with the public on this topic; to regain public confidence, the DNR must:

- Make CWD testing easily available with a higher density of testing locations for harvested deer statewide;
- Invest in more herd monitoring, not less;
- Act quickly and aggressively to limit satellite outbreaks when they occur

- Seek additional scientific research on the disease, including how it spreads and its impact on other wildlife and humans; and
- Have more open and transparent communications with the public regarding CWD.

This is just a start. Wisconsin hunters and citizens need to have confidence the DNR is adequately and proactively addressing the CWD epidemic.

IN 2013, THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ORDER THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO SELL 10,000 ACRES OF PUBLIC. WOULD YOU SUPPORT SIMILAR LAND SALE EFFORTS IN THE FUTURE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

No. While there may be instances where transfer of public land to another unit of government could be warranted (provided public access is not limited), the sale of public land that results in privatization is not good policy.

Our Legislature should be in the business of setting policies, not establishing arbitrary targets. Decisions to sell public lands that do not meet conservation priorities should be made by land managers, not legislators.

DO YOU SUPPORT WISCONSIN'S DEFINITION OF NAVIGABLE WATERS AND THE PUBLIC'S ABILITY TO ACCESS THOSE WATERS BASED ON THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Yes. Wisconsin's public waters are guaranteed by our Constitution to be forever free and open for public use. The long-standing legal precedent of the Public Trust Doctrine must be honored and protected from those who seek to diminish the public's rights of free access. Wisconsin's Public Trust Doctrine puts water, including groundwater, in the hands of its citizens. Scott Walker and Attorney General Brad Schimel's decision to severely curtail regulations related to high-capacity wells is a direct assault on the Doctrine to the benefit of large factory farm and real estate donors.

MAGGIE TURNBULL INDEPENDANT

WHAT ISSUES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO WISCONSIN HUNTERS AND ANGLERS?

I would point to (1) Chronic Wasting Disease and the increasing complexity of hunting regulations, (2) the impact of climate change on fish and bird species, (3) agricultural runoff, and (4) prevention and control of invasive species. These problems are made worse when scientists and scientific language (including the phrase "climate change") are driven out of the DNR. Finally, (5) the number of young hunters and anglers in the state is in decline. We need to expand the Wisconsin Conservation Core (which my dad and uncles all worked for as kids) and involve our public schools in getting young people outside learning to appreciate native wildlife and understand how to be respectful and responsible stewards.

Thankfully, the DNR has recently made great strides (1) to become a more user friendly organization that is there to improve our experience as sportspeople and landowners, and (2) to enlist Wisconsin citizens in the task of maintaining the wildlife population. Positive change includes the wallaye initiative, the increasing use of Snapshot Wisconsin, the simplification of certain regulations (e.g., opening the duck hunt on the same day, state-wide), and the cooperation between the DNR and private conservation groups (e.g., lake alliances, friends groups, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, etc). However, we have a long road ahead in protecting wildlife and waterways from the increasing footprint of large scale agricultural and other developments, the spread of invasive species that could entirely shut down fishing and other industries, increasing water temperatures, and pressures to sell off public land in order to expand the tax base.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS WOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN INDIVIDUALS YOU WOULD NOMINATE TO SERVE ON THE NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD?

First of all, I think the Conservation Congress should be nominating at least one Board member from each of northern and southern Wisconsin – not just the Governor. I'd like to see all Board members be longtime residents of Wisconsin, with at least half of them purchasing and filling permits for hunting, fishing, and wild food harvesting on a regular basis. We also need to include wildlife biologists and environmental educators on the Board who are themselves avid outdoorswomen and men. All Board members should have a demonstrated love for Wisconsin wetlands and forests, and understand that our economic survival depends on a clean and healthy natural environment statewide -- whether they represent farming, business, tourism, real estate, or other stakeholders.

THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP FUND WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1989 TO PRESERVE VALUABLE NATURAL AREAS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND FISHERIES, AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION. WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MADE TO THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP FUND?

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund is an excellent program that brings private landowners and local municipalities into the statewide conservation effort. For the next decade, I would like to see a special emphasis on (1) the Streambank Protection Program to protect waterways from agricultural runoff, and (2) the Urban Green Space Program. We currently have large swaths of urban "green space" that are really just grass deserts, and they are used for little more than running the lawn mowers. In areas where many children are growing up without any contact with the natural worlds, the Urban program should transform some of this grass into bird and pollinator habitat. Designing these urban habitats to be useful as outdoor classrooms for exploration-based school projects, and involving students in the creation of these greenspaces, should provide a link to our natural heritage that is otherwise hard for city-dwelling kids and families to experience.

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Different programs within the DNR are funded by different models, some of which are working well and some of which need to be re-evaluated. As of 2015, our state parks are relying almost entirely on user fees, and we should keep a close eye on how well that is working. For conservation and services that support hunting and fishing, let's make sure that our registration fees are definitely being used to support those uses – and that science is being used to direct those funds to be more effectively. We can also take a page from the playbooks of other states: Michigan has a fee structure that has proven to be more sustainable for hunting and fishing licenses, Minnesota has a 0.1% sales tax that supports a Legacy Fund for arts and conservation efforts, and the Missouri DNR is widely known as a user-friendly, well run operation. Finally, let's not forget that an important source of DNR revenue has been in the form of fines for violating our environmental laws. It's important to have a "user friendly" DNR whose regulations are easy to understand and which helps property owners to be compliant – but we also need to have confidence that the DNR will crack down on blatant violations.

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I would certainly support reasonable increase in user fees for those who enjoy our natural resources, including hunting and fishing licenses – especially if that increase is backed by the users themselves. However, I also see need for transparency in exactly how these funds are spent in order to maintain a good rapport with sportsmen and sportswomen.

DO YOU SUPPORT RETURNING THE SELECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD? WHY OR WHY NOT?

The Natural Resources Board should select the Secretary of the DNR, as a simple check on the power of the Governor and his/her political agenda. Returning this power to a Board that is nominated by the Governor, and approved by the Senate, as was previously done, would be an improvement. However, I would go further and consider a model that is more accountable to Wisconsin citizens – for example, by allowing one each of the northern and southern Board members to be elected by the Conservation Congress.

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Yes, and I hope that all users of Wisconsin's natural resources will vote out the legislators who passed that ridiculous law, which has had NO effect whatsoever on railroad safety and has only caused problems for legitimate uses of public land. I support not only reversing this law, I support reimbursing any fines that were assessed for crossing tracks. As it stands, many miles of railroad effectively block longtime fishermen and woman from heading out for a quick fish with their grandkids, or simply to enjoy life. I would not object to an "at your own risk" crossing policy with limited liability for railroads, but I do not support a law that fines people for trespassing.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION GUIDING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS AND THE IDEA THAT ALL WILDLIFE ARE PUBLICLY OWNED?

I do support this model, where wildlife is in the public trust. In the permitting process, I am not in favor of distinguishing between game that are harvested from live vs. public lands. This negatively impacts the deer hunt, and is an example of government control gone too far.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) CONTINUES TO BE A THREAT TO WISCONSIN'S DEER HERD AND HUNTING COMMUNITY. WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED TO HELP CONTROL THE SPREAD OF CWD AND REDUCE PREVALENCE OF CWD INFECTED DEER IN AREAS AFFECTED BY CWD?

I would like to see the entire state following Bayfield county's lead, and completely stop the transporting or keeping of live deer. Furthermore, the management of all white tail deer in Wisconsin should all fall under one organization – the DNR (not DATCP). In CWD areas, I am interested in exploring whether a 1 year "pay for positives" program (where hunters are paid for harvesting CWD positive animals) could help to quickly and dramatically cull the herd in overpopulated areas. I just question whether a modest baiting allowance (less than a gallon a day) on actively hunted stands is truly a problem -- or just makes the hunt less effective. However, I do support a ban on backyard deer feeders kept for "fun," which can significantly alter deer behavior and encourage deer to congregate in large numbers, in small areas, for long periods of time. Deer are wild animals, not pets. Homeowners should be encouraged to appreciate the sight of a deer passing through the back yard, and let them go on their way.

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No. In the last 150+ years, the DNR has sold only 80,000 acres of land, so the direction to sell 10,000 acres in just two years does represent a significant change of policy. Public land is a limited resource that is in the public trust, and we should continue to acquire land that is important for wildlife conservation efforts. If the DNR has an opportunity to swap heavily degraded land for higher quality habitat or wetland resources that would otherwise come under threat, this is worth considering.

DO YOU SUPPORT WISCONSIN'S DEFINITION OF NAVIGABLE WATERS AND THE PUBLIC'S ABILITY TO ACCESS THOSE WATERS BASED ON THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

I absolutely do support the Public Trust Doctrine. Part of our natural resource philosophy in Wisconsin is that free access to our waterways, and the protection of their quality, is sacred. As a hunter, an angler, a wild food harvester, and a paddler, I believe that all navigable waters are "common highways and forever free."

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