



The Wildlife Society Manitoba Chapter



December 22, 2017

Honourable Rochelle Squires
Manitoba Sustainable Development
Room 344, Legislative Building
450 Broadway Ave., Winnipeg, MB
R3C 0V8

Dear Honourable Squires,

On behalf of the membership of The Wildlife Society Manitoba Chapter, Manitoba's oldest science-based wildlife management organization, we would like to state that we were very pleased to meet with you on November 1st. Further, we are pleased to see the development of "A Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan" and are grateful for the opportunity to provide feedback, and advice on three of the four pillars: climate, water, and nature.

Climate Pillar

Climate change has, and will continue to, significantly impact wildlife and wildlife habitats through land use changes responding to shifting climates. These impacts will be felt by stakeholders across the spectrum, from industry to the public, who appreciate and rely on the wildlife resource base that we strive to conserve. As part of the scientific community, we believe that the agricultural industry, as the second largest source of CO₂ emissions (31%) in Manitoba (not including emissions related to transportation of goods) (Environment Canada, Canada's Greenhouse Gas Inventory, 2015), must play a key role in this plan. We feel that carbon pricing and other initiatives to reduce CO₂ emissions and increase carbon sequestration within the agricultural industry could focus on conserving and restoring natural ecosystems, which will increase Manitoba's resiliency to climate change.

Water Pillar

Wetlands are an essential component of climate and green plan development. They provide multiple ecological services including carbon storage, climate change resiliency, biodiversity, and nutrient containment. Protection of existing wetlands from drainage or other damaging activities is critical to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Allowing wetland losses to continue could nullify over 80% of the projected carbon dioxide emission reductions. Since wetlands have a very high return on investment in terms of ecological services and carbon storage in particular, we consider them to be a very worthy investment of carbon tax dollars. Specifically, we feel that the inclusion of seasonal wetlands for protection will be a significant step toward ensuring healthy watersheds. We recommend the entrenchment of Class III (seasonal), wetlands in regulations, and a no-net-loss of a minimum 3:1 ratio (restored:lost) to ensure the benefits of wetlands are maintained. We support development a

boreal wetlands conservation policy that balances wetland protection and conservation with ongoing and future economic opportunities.

Nature Pillar

Manitoba is an ecologically diverse province with many opportunities for healthy communities, wildlife and wild places. While the proposed climate and green plan has a strong focus on how nature can be used for economic gains to all Manitobans, we urge the government to continually consider the needs of wildlife and wildlife habitats as a top priority when making project and development decisions. Improving visitor access and services in the Provincial Park System should be balanced with managing and conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Protected Areas Network initiative, built on partnerships with Indigenous communities, local stakeholders, and scientific input, will be important in achieving this goal. Additionally, we support the development of improved surveys, co-management strategies, and disease monitoring as part of the Wildlife Management initiative, and recommend a collaborative partnership be established with Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative to this end. We urge the timely release of existing SAR planning documents and a re-engagement with federal and provincial partners. We encourage investment in research to combat invasive species in addition to ongoing control measures, as this will aid in implementing less costly preventative measures. Finally, we are pleased to see that developing a credible strategy for certifying Manitoba's commercial fisheries is a priority, and emphasize that science-based fisheries management will be critical to the future of a sustainable Manitoba fishery.

In order to achieve the goals for all three of the above pillars, science-based Best Management Practices must be implemented. The Conservation Trust is an excellent idea as the investment in science and communities is money well spent. We encourage the Province to ensure the funding envelope and allocation of those funds is transparent. Importantly, for management practices succeed, the initiatives of the above pillars must also be informed by stakeholders, and be supported by the necessary enforcement in order to ensuring our natural resources are indeed allowed to be renewable.

In closing, we would like to congratulate you on developing a new climate and green plan for Manitoba and we hope that our feedback is helpful in moving the plan forward. We encourage you to contact us if we can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C-Jae Breiter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

C-Jae Breiter, M.Sc.

Conservation Affairs Committee Co-Chair

Past-President

The Wildlife Society- Manitoba Chapter, Inc.