

Biodiversity and Environmental Protection

By reversing biodiversity loss and protecting our natural systems, we can ensure a thriving, resilient BC into the future

HOW WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS

Our goal is clear: to halt and reverse biodiversity loss while building resilience for both ecosystems and communities. We have the roadmap, the tools and the vision to shape a better future—one where ecosystem health and biodiversity are central to every decision we make.

We know that a sustainable future begins with protecting and restoring the natural areas that make our province so ecologically diverse. We will create a sustainable economy that provides good, well-paid jobs without compromising the environment.

The role of government is crucial in this transformation. When elected, we will proactively engage communities to identify and safeguard environmental and social values to develop long-term solutions that allow us to flourish today without impacting the ability of future generations to do the same.

With bold leadership, BC can become a global leader in nature-based climate solutions, where healthy ecosystems not only support life but also naturally sequester carbon, helping us mitigate the impacts of climate change.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

BC is home to the most biodiversity in all of Canada. It's also home to more species at risk than any other province or territory.

Despite campaign promises from the NDP, our province still lacks stand-alone legislation to protect species at risk. We are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis and standing at a crossroads: either we take bold action to protect our ecosystems or we risk losing iconic species like caribou, spotted owls and orcas forever.

Decades of resource extraction have degraded the natural systems that both wildlife and communities depend on—with global climate change only worsening these threats. As BC faces more frequent

and intense wildfires and floods, it's clear we need a fundamental shift in how we manage our land, water and air—one that prioritizes resilience, values ecosystem services and invests in our communities for the long term.

POLICIES FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

When elected, the BC Greens will:

Prioritize Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity

- Require measures to protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem health where necessary.
- Improve decision-making for industrial projects by holding industry to higher standards.

Prioritize Protection

- Achieve 30% land and water protection by 2030, in consultation with First Nations.
- Work with Indigenous communities to establish Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), fully upholding those declared by First Nations.
- Strengthen and fund BC's park system, create new provincial parks, and expand camping and recreation opportunities.
- Establish urban tree canopy targets and improve legal protections for urban trees.

Protect Species-at-Risk

- Immediately enact Species at Risk legislation to safeguard vulnerable species.
- Allocate \$120 million to fish and wildlife programs over three years.

Nature-Based Solutions

- Invest \$50 million in a Youth Climate Corps to provide good-paying jobs for youth in restoring and protecting natural systems.
- Invest in a Watershed Security Fund to protect BC's

watersheds (see Watershed Security section).

- Invest in Indigenous-led conservation and Indigenous Guardians programs.
- Shift to long-term, stable funding for nature-based solutions.
- Support long-term employment and governance in line with community goals and priorities.

Strengthen Environmental Oversight

- Create an integrated and independent compliance and enforcement regime for the Ministry of Energy and Mines.
- Increase bonding rates for industry to account for worst-case scenarios and raise fines to deter reckless behaviour.
- Address industry's disproportionate access to government in decision-making processes.
- Lower thresholds for mandatory environmental assessments and close loopholes that allow projects to avoid assessments.
- Increase oversight and independence of the BC Conservation Officer Service and other Natural Resource Compliance Officers.

Reform the Mining Sector

- Modernize BC's mining and mineral staking regimes to respect Indigenous rights and reduce risks to our watersheds and communities.
- Modernize the Mineral Tenure Act to ensure it reflects current environmental, social and Indigenous rights concerns.
- Establish an industry-levied fund to mitigate the costs of mining pollution and disasters, including the rehabilitation of abandoned mines.
- Enhance oversight of the mining industry through a robust inspection and audit process.
- Designate certain areas, including salmon rivers, as off-limits to mining.
- Engage in a conversation about the future of critical minerals in BC. Prioritize transition minerals in mining. Ensure that benefits flow to communities and First Nations, not just shareholders.

Invest In Our Coasts

- Transition all open net-pen salmon farms in BC to land-based aquaculture systems.
- Restore and protect salmon habitat to ensure the survival of key species.
- Regulate the shipbreaking industry to protect coastal habitats from harmful practices.

