



Micheli SFW Answers

The following questions were submitted to the five candidates attending the WWGA/WSFW Gubernatorial Candidates Forum. Ron Micheli's responses to the WSFW questions are found below:

[Do you support or oppose the states continuation of elk feed grounds? Please explain your support/opposition.](#)

I fully support the continuation of elk feed grounds in the northwest part of the state. Elk were originally more of a plains animal than they are a high alpine/mountain species, and while they have semi-adapted to where they are found now, if we want to continue to have huntable populations of elk, we need to continue to provide supplemental feed to them to get them through the most crucial times of the year.

In addition, elk feed grounds aid us in other ways, including the prevention of the spread of brucellosis from elk to cattle. If we were to eliminate our feed grounds and cease to supplement the elk population in the winter, the animals would immediately move onto private land, commingle with cattle at a much higher rate and level than they do now, and thereby increase the exposure and possible transfer of brucellosis from elk to cattle. That is a risk we cannot take.

Finally, due to the tremendous impacts that wolves are having on our elk population in the northwest part of our state, particularly on reproductive rates of cow elk, eliminating elk feed grounds would exacerbate and intensify that problem and decline. As Governor, I will not stand idly by while our elk populations are decimated by non-native wolves. That is a fight I will continue to wage until we win it.

[As the next Governor, will you continue to allow the G&F Department to promote educational campaigns about “how to live with bears and wolves” rather than emphasizing the impacts bears and wolves are having on our once sustainable wildlife populations and the necessity to restore management authority of large predators to the state?](#)

I am supportive of those educational efforts by the Game and Fish Department that are designed to explain the potentially dangerous, and as we have just seen in our state,

possibly lethal effects of encounters with both bears and wolves. The Game and Fish has a duty to educate and protect the public from these animals and such efforts should be undertaken.

At the same time, the Game and Fish has a duty to the members of the public to fully explain what the real and true effects of large carnivores are on our wildlife populations. They should not be allowed to “gloss over”, downplay or ignore what those effects are. The Game and Fish should be the lead agency in spelling out and describing the disastrous effects of an exploding and non-sustainable population of large carnivores on our other wildlife resources.

One of the ways to ensure that the public is provided with real science is through the Governor’s appointments to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. I intend to find and appoint to the Game and Fish Commission solid, common sense, thoughtful and intelligent Sportsmen who have an appreciation for all of the varied factors which go into maintaining and enhancing sustainable, huntable populations of wildlife. The days of appointing environmental activists to the Game and Fish Commission will be over under my leadership.

As Wind Energy Development begins to expand throughout Wyoming , how will you ensure that our hunting, fishing, and trapping heritage is protected, maintained, and/or enhanced?

In order to answer this question, we need to accept some basic truths. First, whether or not wind turbines are installed on a piece of land is a basic and fundamental right of ownership of property. If a landowner wants to lease his land for wind turbines, he has the right to do so. Another reality however, is that when wind turbines are constructed, hunting and other recreational activities in the area are likely to be curtailed. Therein “lies the rub” and the avenue for increased conflict and animosity between landowners and sportsmen. That is a conflict we need to address.

There is typically only one reason a landowner allows wind turbines to be placed on their land -- the revenue that can be derived from leasing the ground to wind-power companies. As a proponent of the free-market system, I feel we should encourage competition and alternatives to wind for landowners, thus providing ways to add economic value to landowners for those who choose not to lease to wind development or don’t have adequate wind on their property. Herein is an opportunity for landowners and sportsmen to work together to increase access for sportsmen and incentivize landowners. Partnerships between state agencies, sportsman and landowners would ensure our hunting and fishing heritage is not only maintained, but enhanced.

We should be able to find ways to incentivize landowners who forgo wind turbines in exchange for other “values”. One of those “values” can be access for sportsmen. I believe that we can find opportunities for providing additional income to landowners, while at the same time actually increasing access for sportsmen. We have shown since statehood that we in Wyoming, working together, have the ability to come up with

practical, common-sense, workable and appropriate solutions to challenges, and I am confident that we will do the same with this issue.

As the next Governor, what will you do to get large predators de-listed and under state management, restore lost hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities, and get our economy moving forward again?

As I have said throughout this campaign, we will not waiver, we will not yield, and we will not cease in our battle with the federal government over how Wyoming is going to manage large predators, particularly the wolf. It is obvious the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to be rid of this disastrous “experiment” as quickly and as easily as it can---preferably before the rest of the country finds out the true effects and extent of what I have continually referred to as the “greatest ecological disaster brought about on the North American continent since European immigrants exterminated the buffalo across the Great Plains.”

Under my administration, we ARE NOT going to let them off easily and we are not going to cave and capitulate, no matter how many activist judges “take us to the woodshed”.

Wildlife is a precious and important resource to our state. We must practice “sustainable wildlife management” in Wyoming , meaning that, as necessary, we will manage predators in order to provide for sustainable and huntable populations of wildlife for our hunters and tourists to enjoy. That is not a debatable issue as far as I am concerned.

As the question correctly suggests, there is a relationship between predators, huntable populations of wildlife, and our economy. A hunter or tourist does not live in a vacuum and only spend money on a rifle or camera. They buy meals, hotel rooms, purchase fuel, and spend money on related industries and that money turns over in the local economies, creates jobs, and improves the lives of our citizens. Therefore, in order to help the economy, we must protect our wildlife populations from predators.

What is the next step for Wyoming should the courts in Missoula , MT or Cheyenne , WY rule against us? (Us being the ones that wish to manage our wildlife in Wyoming ?)

As I said in answer to the question above and throughout this campaign, we will not waiver, we will not yield, and we will not cease in our battle with the federal government over how Wyoming is going to manage large predators, particularly the wolf. If necessary, we will fight this battle all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

We also need to look at other solutions. There has recently been a bill introduced in Congress that would make the grey wolf in the United States not subject to the Endangered Species Act, which would essentially place them under state management wherever they exist. I support that bill, and others like it.

We need to proactively work with those states that have active wolf populations, as well as with our neighbors who may soon be suffering the same fate. We will find allies in those states that have wolves, and once they are educated to the full effects of an exploding and uncontrolled wolf population, we will gain allies in those states that currently do not. Through this sort of a coalition, we can put pressure on both the federal agencies as well as on Congress to delist the wolf population in order to transfer management to the states.

Why is the outfitter welfare law still in play, WHY does this law not have hikers, fishermen, birdwatchers, campers, and trappers, have to have a guide in wilderness areas? What is the problem with only having hunters abide by this welfare law?

As with all statutes, regulations, rules and other governmental mandates, we need to continually review and assess whether changes, or outright repeals, of outdated, unworkable, unenforceable or unfair mandates need to be made. The outfitter law made sense at one time, and we may need to evaluate its effectiveness and utility now. I have every intention of working with the outfitters and sportsmen regarding whether it should remain in place or be modified in some way. Those citizens who are most directly affected by governmental mandates and actions should be the ones who have the greatest say in what those are.

We must also realize, there is no other sector of our state's economy or industry that has been harder hit by the introduction of the Canadian gray wolf than our outfitters. The outfitters have suffered greatly because of this non-native species and "experiment." Thus, I will work to see the industry once again flourish and return to viability.

If elected Governor of Wyoming, would you be willing to pursue/investigate the fact that the wolf introduction was done so illegally, on the basis that they were a non-native species and their introduction basically eliminated any remnant native populations?

I am always open to ideas and suggestions to address this tragic mess the federal government has created. I cannot promise one particular course of action over another (although I support the current lawsuit that is pending in the Wyoming District Court). I will commit to finding and appointing the most experienced, well-versed and most tenacious Attorney General who is attuned to, and compatible with, my philosophy about this issue, and together we will continue to "take the fight to them." That is a promise.

As the next Governor, what actions will you take to eliminate the poor attitude towards sportsmen and our wildlife?

I am unaware of a poor attitude towards sportsmen and our wildlife among the majority of our citizens in Wyoming. I think the vast majority of Wyoming citizens truly value and support our wildlife and our hunting heritage, as well as sport hunting as a viable and appropriate way to manage our wildlife populations. If there is a negative attitude among some quarters or sectors, I believe they are a minority and even miniscule in terms of both number and importance.

Saying that, it will be a priority of mine to enhance our wildlife resources as well as our hunting and fishing heritage through every avenue made available to me that is **SUPPORTED BY THE TRUE SPORTSMEN OF THIS STATE!** Environmental activists with radical agendas and eco-extremists masquerading as sportsmen will not fool me, nor will they have any influence over me or my administration.

Will you support the return of “fire power” over the Director to the Game and Fish Commission?

I am not ready to commit to whether it may be necessary to restructure the Game and Fish Department or the Commission. These are tremendously important agencies with a difficult task of addressing issues which are often in the cross-hairs of controversy, be it political, emotional, economic, or scientific. There is no debate we have the finest wildlife resources in the lower 48 states, and past Commissions and Directors deserve a lot of credit for that.

I do have questions and concerns regarding certain decisions the Commission has made in recent years. The members often seem to be listening to a small minority of activists, or taking all of their direction from the political-side of the debate, rather than listening to those most directly affected by their decisions, Wyoming citizens, and wildlife managers who have a fundamental understanding of what is happening “on the ground.” We need to fix that. What I can and will commit to is that after I am elected Governor, I will meet with the sportsmen, landowners, outfitters, and other Wyoming citizens who have a deep and abiding passion and love for our wildlife. I will listen to their concerns and make every effort to ensure that we are protecting this valuable resource. From the information that they provide I will be able to make the best decisions possible.