



NWT RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION

THEME: Physical Inactivity

QUESTION #1

How will you support the GNWT's commitment to increase physical activity by 10% by the year 2010?

Bob Bromley – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

I believe physical activity is essential for overall community health and wellness. Together with healthy eating it is a vital part of health promotion. Physical activity contributes to peoples' mental and emotional health, and their ability to participate fully in community life and the economy.

As MLA for Weledeh, I will push the GNWT to meet its commitments under the national Healthy Living Strategy, to increase physical activity by 10% by the year 2010. To help achieve this target, we need good public information, research, training, and culturally appropriate community-based initiatives. I particularly support:

- Outdoor programs such as walking, skiing, skating, swimming, snowshoeing, hiking, and canoeing.
- Activities readily available in all communities, at little or no cost.
- Activities that encourage a relationship with the land.

I support changes to the school curriculum to help ensure all children get some physical activity every day in school. I support the Recreation Leaders Program at Aurora College to help ensure every NWT community has a recreation leader.

Robert Hawkins – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife Centre

I definitely agree with the Canadian Healthy Living Strategy that a consultative and collaborative approach is needed. Of course, I would support the multi-agency, government and community strategies needed for this important goal. To this I would add what I believe to be a special focus to be worked on: Get fitness incorporated into daily activity at an early age! Sport North has said that "Currently only a small number of NWT schools offer quality daily physical education." Combine that with the fact that

children are spending more time in front of the TV or the computer screen and we see that action is needed. We need to re-examine and support those schools who are not offering quality physical education. Let's get schools properly supported and involved. If children are used to exercising and sport as part of their growing up, this will maximize the chances that fitness will be part of their adult life. Parents and families need to be good role models as well.

Christopher Hunt – MLA Candidate for Great Slave

I grew up in a small community in Nunavut and I know the importance of the availability of recreational opportunities in our Northern communities. I lived in Pond Inlet and was 16 years old when the community arena was built and that facility literally changed my life and I watched it transform the entire community in so many different and positive ways. I would, of course, strive to increase the amount of activity by much more than the 10% targeted. In general we need to realize in the NWT that sports and fostering physical activity and recreation are not simply not an issue of leisure or luxury, but literally mean the difference between life and death for the youth in our Northern communities. Recreational infrastructure and well-supported community recreation programs are crucial to the overall health of all of our Northern communities. I will work tirelessly as an advocate to ensure that communities get the government resources and informed support they need to create the recreational opportunities crucial to the life of all Northerners.

Peter Martselos – MLA Candidate for Thebacha

As the MLA for Thebacha, I will support the development of a common strategy to encourage residents to get off the couch; to get involved; to get active. Awareness and constant education are the keys to community involvement. It is important to support the Depts of Municipal Affairs and Health and Social Services through funding and program support to be able to deliver on our Government's commitment to the 10% goal by the year 2010. Actions speak louder than words – we've made a commitment, now let's follow up that commitment with actions.

Ben McDonald – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife Centre

The GNWT should develop a resource kit outlining ways to incorporate additional physical activity into school curriculum, a 'learning by moving' approach. Programs that feature on the land activity are culturally relevant as well.

For preschoolers, it is important to have early childhood programs that encourage physical activity. This requires adequate room and access to playgrounds and equipment.

The GNWT could encourage physical activity of its employees through challenges such as “walking coffee breaks”. The recent ‘Step Challenge’ organized by the Physiotherapists at Stanton was quite popular.

Community-based recreational activities must be available to all families regardless of their socioeconomic status or physical ability.

Mental health and food security are factors that affect activity levels and must be considered as well.

Bob McLeod – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife South

The GNWT undertook a “Get Active” campaign to address these issues. This is a beginning and is far from an end. However, it provides useful learning for the future. The biggest learning is that we need a comprehensive initiative to address, not just inactivity, but healthier lifestyles right across the NWT.

“Get Active” resides within the Department of Municipal and Cultural Affairs (MACA), however, its steering committee is comprised of representatives of Health and Social Services, Tourism, Education Culture and Employment, and others with a stake in the issue. MACA has done an a superb job of “promoting” activity. What we need is an initiative that promotes healthy nutritional choices (education), fosters awareness of consequences (education), promotes activity (as MACA has done) and targets “opportunity” groups: youth (preventative intervention), teenagers (supportive intervention) and type II diabetics (alternatives intervention).

Now that “Get Active” is through its incubation period, it is time to take an integrated approach to achieving targets; like a 10% increase in physical activity by 2010.

If elected I would work hard to create a portfolio for Healthy Choices that would put the resources of most government departments behind a number of targets. Inactivity is a sign of the times...and it’s time to intervene as described above.

The consequences of inactivity – as illustrated in your research – show up in costs to society and health care. If we can intervene with the right target groups – as we have through the very successful “Don’t be a Butthead” campaign – we can alter the course that too many individuals have chosen.

This is statistically proven: Butthead has reduced the number of smokers in the target group (ages 8-13) by almost one-third. The same sort of targeted effort can and must be applied to inactivity.

The principle obstacle is eliminating the “silos” between government stakeholders and community interest groups and creating a unified effort. That is why a Healthy Choices

portfolio must be created; to break down the silos and integrate the resources and the effort.

We can do this...we can and must lead...as other jurisdictions have...or we will fall prey to the consequences of our own inactivity...and we cannot afford that if – as a society – we are going to fully contribute to the long-term success of the NWT for our children and grandchildren.

Altering the course of society is a journey of 1,000 baby steps...but it can be done. We just have to be careful that we don't try to sprint this marathon. There is no one easy solution. With the help of groups like yours we can get to the finish line.

Michael Miltenberger – MLA Candidate for Thebacha

Question 1 and 2 are clearly linked. Firstly I will continue to be a strong role model for active, healthy living. Programs like "Get Active" and "Don't Be A Butthead" have proved their worth and effectiveness and should be supported. H&SS has committed to devote 1% of their total budget to prevention. This is a good first step, though modest. All other GNWT program departments should be required to make a similar commitment. The GNWT has to also better coordinate their efforts in this area. If we are serious then physical education has to be reintroduced in all grades. The long term savings of fitness would substantiate this investment. This also means that schools and communities will need gyms and outdoor facilities like playgrounds. All this requires a coordinated multi-year plan across GNWT departments and the funding to make it a reality. If we want a sustainable society and a strong economy, we first need a healthy environment and a healthy people.

Kevin Menicoche – MLA Candidate for Nahendeh

Health is a vital attribute of strong, healthy and vibrant communities. The Government of the Northwest Territories has an important role to play in developing strategies and programming that will promote community health. Physical activity and diet are two important components of health and in both cases more can be done in terms of education, programming and marketing.

I would support:

- A territorial wide public awareness campaign promoting the benefits of physical activity with strong themes that will appeal to young people as well parents.
- An increased focus on education in our schools and health centres in relation to the benefits of proper diet and physical activity will target youth.
- Continued support for events that have a focus on safe physical activity.

Carol Morin – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

We have National treasures here in the NWT. Their names are Sharon and Shirley Firth. What a success story! From a pilot project to get Aboriginal youth involved in cross-country skiing to celebrating Olympic glory. It is a project that worked. I have never been able to understand why the T.E.S.T. program was allowed to go by the wayside.

To encourage youth to become more physically active I am in favor of resurrecting a similar program territory-wide. The benefits are many, from increasing confidence to finding a sense of purpose to building team work. All the while increasing levels of physical activity. Re-introducing expanded sports programming in schools could work very well as a partnership between the GNWT and the Corporate sector.

Andy Wong – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

There have to be an adequate number of recreational opportunities in the communities.

These opportunities can be increased by:

- Developing GNWT policies to ensure adequate resources are allocated annually to communities to promote recreational events, leadership training in recreational promotion and educational programs that promote healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.
- Work with the community leadership, schools and health care settings to promote healthy lifestyles habits, i.e., proper nutrition and physical activities.
- Opportunities can be created in cost effective ways by promoting and organizing, all across the NWT, through partnerships and funding initiatives to local community governments, participatory events during special occasions such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and Canada Day, etc. These low cost events can be: 1 km, 3 km or 5 km walks, runs or bicycle events for families.



NWT RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION

THEME: Recreation Infrastructure

QUESTION #2

How will you support the development of a long-term Territorial Recreation Infrastructure Action Plan as a response to the recommended solutions cited in the GNWT document “2004 Building Healthy Community Plans for Infrastructure Deficit” ?

Bob Bromley – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

I support the development of a long-term Territorial Recreation Infrastructure Action Plan, including the programs and staff to make sure that communities really benefit from infrastructure spending. Communities need a variety of programs for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

As MLA for Weledeh I will work to:

- Ensure the GNWT is a partner in a coalition with non-profit sport and recreation agencies, and the NWT Association of Communities, to develop an Action Plan.
- Be alert to opportunities to increase funding for recreation infrastructure.
- Encourage the GNWT to develop a program that communities can apply to in order to support community recreation facility priorities.
- Increase access to federal recreation infrastructure funding.

We must build new infrastructure to the highest energy efficiency standards, to reduce costs in the long-term and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We need to build multi-use facilities so we can make the best use of capital and ongoing maintenance spending.

Robert Hawkins – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife Centre

Communities are sometimes faced with making the “tough choices”. Road infrastructure, water and waste management are key priorities. I agree with the need to make recreation a key priority as well. Perhaps it is time to revisit the capital planning

priority process and provide incentives to communities to build or refurbish recreational facilities. That being said, recreational facilities are no good without people in them. Yes, the fit and active among us will always advocate for, and use those facilities, but we are trying to target those who have not been active and as well children who are less active than others. A plan is needed to target those populations. It can be helped by the schools, but it starts at home. That is why the collaborative approach is vital to the success of the program.

Christopher Hunt – MLA Candidate for Great Slave

With the rising costs of building and maintaining any infrastructure in the NWT it is imperative that we maximize the efficiency of every dollar spent. That means seriously consulting the community groups "on the ground" and making sure that every dollar spent is spent where it does the most good. This means developing a common sense plan founded in good communication between the government and the existing community recreation groups. We have hard working passionate people working and volunteering already with these community groups, and they need to be heard to have any long term recreation plan succeed in the communities. They know where the priorities lie, and how best to maximize the resources available. It is indeed especially true when it comes to recreational facilities and infrastructure in our communities that "if we build it, they will come", but it is becoming ever more expensive to "build it" and we need to make sure what is built properly serves each unique community. This holds true from the proper design of specific structures (for economic efficiency, maximum utilization capability, community involvement) to the building of programs to best exploit any infrastructure built (coaching programs, physical education, cultural activities, the creation community leagues and teams, integration with existing school programs, but to name a few).

Time is also of the essence, as costs continue to rise, and generations of young people will continue to become lost without access to the recreational opportunities crucial to their growth as confident members of their own communities, with the tools and chances to reach their full potential in all facets of life.

I cannot emphasize enough how my own background and experience growing up in the North have illustrated to me the importance of recreation and sport in our communities, and I will be loud and active in making sure that we work with community groups to plan for a healthy future for sport and recreation throughout the NWT.

Peter Martselos – MLA Candidate for Thebacha

It is my understanding that most of the major water/sewer infrastructure needs in the NWT have or are in the process of being addressed. I would support a position by the Govt of the NT that expands the areas of investment permitted in funding agreements with the federal government under the Gas Tax Transfer Agreement and new Build

Canada Fund to include Recreation Infrastructure as eligible projects. In the NT, existing agreements target basic infrastructure such as water, sewer and landfill sites. Other jurisdictions include identify and address recreation needs – the NT has to open up its agreements and enable communities to make this choice.

Ben McDonald – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife Centre

Infrastructure deficit arises from major tax and deficit cutting at the national level. I agree with several recommendations including:

- Creating a permanent municipal infrastructure program with Federal funding;
- Providing access to low cost borrowing for smaller communities.

The GNWT should ensure a fair return to the public purse from resource extraction. Public private partnerships are not an effective means to fund these projects. This approach is usually more expensive for governments in the long term. RRSP-eligible government bonds may be another option.

It may be necessary to have a separate track of funding for recreational facilities built around partnerships between the GNWT and community/aboriginal government and organizations. Non-facility based options like the very successful skiing program in the Delta should also be explored.

Bob McLeod – MLA Candidate for Yellowknife South

I appreciate that the Ministers recognized the infrastructure shortfall and wish to take issue outside of the box and make fitness a non-competing “priority”. The reality is that fitness infrastructure is a competing “priority”. I can say that, in my role as Executive Secretary to Cabinet, the competition for capital dollars is fierce. Everyone has a say and everyone is right. That is why if elected I would pursue the creation of a portfolio for Healthy Choices; in that way infrastructure improvements would have a champion at the table.

In my view it is not a question of “if you build it they will come”. It is a question of certainty: “If you never build it I guarantee they will never come”. If elected, I would support the development of recreation and physical activity facilities wherever prudent.

There are many instances across Canada where facilities have been built as testimonials to municipal and provincial politicians and have failed to improve activity among citizenry. What’s needed is an integrated approach: Build it and “sell” the purpose over and over and over again. The latter requires the backing and work of associations like yours. Together I believe we can make a difference.

Kevin Menicoche – MLA Candidate for Nahendeh

The infrastructure deficit is acute in the NWT, especially in smaller non-tax based communities. Even if capital can be accessed for infrastructure, the operational costs make it unaffordable to provide appropriate levels of staffing and programming at these facilities.

At the national level, initiatives to persuade the Federal Government to lead a national recreation initiative that will provide targeted funds to communities for the development of recreation infrastructure must be pursued.

At the territorial level, the GNWT must build on the "New Deal" that provided communities with guaranteed infrastructure capital by seeking to achieve economies of scale whenever possible. Community governments must cooperate with school boards to ensure that recreation dollars are spent as efficiently as possible, sharing in the costs of infrastructure and operations.

Michael Miltenberger – MLA Candidate for Thebacha

Question 1 and 2 are clearly linked. Firstly I will continue to be a strong role model for active, healthy living. Programs like "Get Active" and "Don't Be A Butthead" have proved their worth and effectiveness and should be supported. H&SS has committed to devote 1% of their total budget to prevention. This is a good first step, though modest. All other GNWT program departments should be required to make a similar commitment. The GNWT has to also better coordinate their efforts in this area. If we are serious then physical education has to be reintroduced in all grades. The long term savings of fitness would substantiate this investment. This also means that schools and communities will need gyms and outdoor facilities like playgrounds. All this requires a coordinated multi-year plan across GNWT departments and the funding to make it a reality. If we want a sustainable society and a strong economy, we first need a healthy environment and a healthy people.

Carol Morin – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

For Aboriginal communities the initial expense of infrastructure may be something that is written into Impact Benefit Agreements. Aboriginal Governments should be encouraged to lobby for this investment to benefit our most precious resource, which is our people.

I support the concept of establishing a Trust Fund here in the NWT, from which a portion monies from resource development would be placed. The Fund wouldn't be used for day to day expenditures but rather it would address the need for capital funding in areas like sport, arts and culture.

In the interim, I feel that multi-national companies which are currently benefiting from resource development in the NWT should be required to play more of a role in the health of our communities. There is a connection between a healthy body and a healthy mind and employment. The GNWT and the people of the Northwest Territories need to send a clear message that “it’s time to give back.” Good corporate citizenship is in everyone’s best interest.

Andy Wong – MLA Candidate for Weledeh

Resource development activities have put a high demand of certain community infrastructure and have drain the ability of the GNWT to adequately address recreational infrastructure needs in the NWT. To address this shortfall, I would support the following actions:

- Push for an increase in the GNWT infrastructure funding.
- Work with other provinces and territories to get the federal government to set up a permanent municipal infrastructure program
- Push for the conclusion of our Resource Revenue sharing agreement with the federal government, which would see the GNWT receive 50% of the resource revenue royalties
- Provide communities with access low-cost borrowing
- Push for our share of First Nations funds administered by the federal government.
- Promote construction of multi-use facilities, where appropriate
- Provide resources to improve maintenance capacity to community governments