

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1180

As Reported By House Committee On:
Fisheries & Wildlife

Title: An act relating to urban wildlife management areas.

Brief Description: Establishing the Union Bay wildlife habitat management area.

Sponsors: Representatives Jacobsen, Ogden, G. Cole, R. Fisher, J. Kohl, Anderson, Appelwick, Thibaudeau, King, Johanson and Locke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 18, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives King, Chair; Orr, Vice Chair; Basich; Chappell; Foreman; and Scott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Sehlin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Lemmon.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: Several state agencies, including the Department of Wildlife, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Department of Natural Resources own or manage properties for conservation and/or recreation. Some of these properties are valuable wildlife habitat. Some are in urban settings. Few state lands in urban areas are managed for unique wildlife values.

The Union Bay of Lake Washington and its associated watershed have the potential to be managed as a unit for specific wildlife and fisheries values. Montlake Fill, located at Union Bay, is a popular birding area in the state. Landowners in the area include the University of Washington, Seattle City Light, the Department of Natural Resources, and the city of Seattle. There is interest in creating a watershed scale management approach in this area.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Union Bay portion of Lake Washington is recognized as a prime wetland area that is of significant importance for wildlife habitat, educational opportunity, and recreation.

By December 31, 1994, the Department of Wildlife is directed to develop a management plan for the Union Bay cooperative wildlife habitat management area. The plan shall:

- (a) Identify the boundaries of the Union Bay cooperative wildlife habitat management area;
- (b) Suggest methods of restoring the Union Bay watershed to a more natural state;
- (c) Using existing data and knowledge and, without conducting field work, identify wildlife resources of, wildlife management objectives for, and compatible uses with wildlife in the Union Bay cooperative wildlife habitat management area;
- (d) Present a strategy for accomplishing the wildlife objectives; and
- (e) Identify appropriate environmental education opportunities for the area.

The department shall establish advisory committees to provide technical assistance and policy guidance. Membership on the committees shall include but not be limited to persons representing the interests of federal, state, and local governmental entities, Indian tribes, relevant property owners and community members, business, and the environmental community.

By December 31, 1993, the department shall provide a progress report to the House Fisheries and Wildlife Committee and the Senate Committee on Parks and Ecology.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill removes references to Ravenna Creek and confines the management plan to the Union Bay cooperative management area.

The substitute bill requires that identification of wildlife resources in the area as an element of plan be done using only existing data and knowledge, and without conducting additional field work.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 18, 1993.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (On original bill): The Union Bay watershed has the potential to be excellent wildlife habitat. There

is an excellent birding area at Montlake Fill. The planning process in the bill serves to generate a broader base of support for restoring the Union Bay watershed including Ravenna Creek. There is much interest in restoring this area.

Testimony Against: (On original bill): The University of Washington owns property within the watershed, and the bill does not precisely define the geographic boundary of the proposed planning area. It is conceivable that parking and existing open space in which wildlife is already planned for by the University of Washington would be included, creating a conflict. There are too many land planning groups, and another creates more complication.

Witnesses: (On original bill): Representative Ken Jacobsen, prime sponsor (pro); Fred Bird, Washington Ornithological Society (pro), Clement Hamilton, Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington (pro); Jack Swanberg, Northwest Marine Trade Association, Dave Williams, Recreational Boating Association, and Bill and Celia Fritz and Mark Jurassic, recreational boating industry (pro with an amendment that would allow boating to continue); Douglas Houck, Metro (pro with amendment that will resolve potential conflict with sewer system plans); Jenene Fenton, Department of Wildlife (pro); Kristine Knowles, University of Washington (con); Kit O'Neil, Ravenna Creek Alliance (pro); Susan Burchfield, Save Union Bay Association (pro); and Bill Blair, City of Seattle (pro).