

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1426

As Reported By House Committee On:
Fisheries & Wildlife

Title: An act relating to preservation of wildlife lands.

Brief Description: Authorizing the wildlife heritage land trust.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, King, Orr, Basich, Karahalios, Brumsickle, Morton, Ogden, Bray, Shin, Pruitt, Brown, G. Cole, Rust, Springer, Kremen, J. Kohl and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 16, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives King, Chair; Orr, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Chappell; Foreman; Lemmon; and Scott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: There are a number of mechanisms which landowners can use to dispose of land that may be valuable as wildlife or fish habitat, and ensure that it remains in habitat. A landowner may sell, lease, donate, or exchange land with conditions, or provide for specific management requirements via management agreements. Some state and federal agencies and land trusts acquire properties for the specific purpose of ensuring that wildlife and fisheries values associated with the property remain. State agencies with land acquisition and protection programs include the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Wildlife (WDW), and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. There also exist nonprofit corporations that purchase land or hold it in trust until purchased by another entity. Organizations with activity in

Washington state that work for fish and wildlife habitat protection are Ducks Unlimited, the Trust for Public Land, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, and the Nature Conservancy.

In 1992, the Budget and Revenue Review Committee, a citizen group that reviewed and reported to the Legislature on funding needs of the state Department of Wildlife, recommended the establishment of a Washington Wildlife Heritage Trust Fund within the Department of Wildlife.

The Department of Wildlife is a major state landowner, managing almost one million acres of land for wildlife habitat. The department pays to counties monies in lieu of taxes under the provisions of RCW 77.12.203. RCW 77.12.210 outlines procedures for the sale of real property by the department. Sale of lands must be at a public auction to the highest bidder.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The director of the Department of Wildlife is authorized to form a public nonprofit corporation called the Washington Wildlife Heritage Trust. The director is required to appoint a board of not more than 15 members, subject to confirmation by the Wildlife Commission, to administer the trust. Board members are not paid, but are reimbursed for per diem and mileage. Board decisions are final only after approval by the director of the Department of Wildlife.

The duties of the board are: