

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1056

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, April 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to natural area preserves.

Brief Description: Transferring the status of the Elk River Preserve from a natural area preserve to a natural resources conservation area.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Hatfield, Pennington, Doumit, Mielke, Johnson, Buck, Kessler, Sheldon, Mastin, Grant, Thompson, DeBolt, Quall, Boldt and Linville).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 4/1/97, 4/3/97 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Natural area preserves (NAPs) are areas which have retained their natural character, although not necessarily completely natural and undisturbed, or which are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical, or other similar features of scientific or educational value. The state owns 46 NAPs, encompassing 26,000 acres. Public use of natural area preserves generally has been limited to educational and scientific research activities. The Elk River natural area preserve is a 3,400-acre preserve in Grays Harbor County.

Natural resources conservation areas (NRCAs) are areas deemed worthy of conservation for their outstanding scenic and ecological values. The state owns 23 NRCAs, encompassing 47,000 acres. Conservation areas are open for low-impact public use.

Summary of Amended Bill: The property currently designated as the Elk River NAP is transferred from management as a preserve to management as a natural resources conservation area. The Department of Natural Resources must incorporate this legislative direction into the management plan developed for this conservation area. The department must work with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify hunting opportunities compatible with the area's conservation purposes.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The study is deleted and motorized vehicles may be used.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The transfer to conservation area status for this one area solves the hunting and public use questions raised.

Testimony Against: The study is too broad and should be done by the standing committees. Access to private property may be compromised (original bill).

Testified: PRO: Charles T. Hobson; Patrick R. O'Hagan; Rob Kavanaugh; Amy Bell, Department of Natural Resources; Mike Ryherd, WA Wildlife and Recreation Coalition; CON: Diane Carter; Maggie Coon, The Natural Conservancy; James Sterling.