

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2626

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### As Reported by House Committee On:

Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to the creation of a state evergreen recreation pass program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the evergreen recreation pass.

**Sponsors:** Representatives McIntire, Doumit, McDermott, Simpson, Linville, Benson, Kagi, Jarrett, Nixon, Edwards, Ogden and Rockefeller.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/6/02 [DPS].

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to work with affected stakeholder groups and develop a legislative proposal for implementing an Evergreen recreation pass.
- The Evergreen recreation pass would be an optional pass that could be a coordinated method of accessing state recreation sites and would be used in place of access permits by those natural resource agencies.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Doumit, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Eickmeyer, Jackley, McDermott and Upthegrove.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Ericksen, Orcutt and Pearson.

**Staff:** Bill Lynch (786-7092).

### Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Parks and Recreation Commission currently do not charge fees for access to their recreation sites. The Department of Fish and Wildlife charges \$10 for the fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit that is issued in the form of a decal. One of these decals is issued free with the issuance of each annual saltwater, freshwater, combination, small game hunting, big game hunting, and trapping license.

There is a possibility that the Parks and Recreation Commission or the DNR could charge a day-use fee in the future for access to their recreation sites. There is no mechanism to establish a single pass that could be used at all state-owned sites if these other agencies decided to impose day-use fees.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to work with affected stakeholder groups and develop a legislative proposal for implementing an Evergreen recreation pass. The pass would be an optional pass that could be a coordinated method of accessing state recreation sites and would be used in place of access permits by those natural resource agencies.

The task force must evaluate: the feasibility of combining various existing permits and licenses into the Evergreen recreation pass, methods of marketing the pass, types of activities to be included within the pass, potential methods of distributing revenues derived from the pass, dedicating proceeds to maintenance and repair of recreation sites, the impact of this pass on use and access to recreation sites, the need for immunity from recreational liability for the state agencies, methods of enforcing the pass, potential revenue from the pass and the cost of statewide implementation, and other related issues.

The task force must report its findings to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2002.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The original bill established an Evergreen recreation pass and included procedures for purchasing, administering, and distributing proceeds from the pass. The original bill is stricken and replaced by a task force that will make recommendations on the development and implementation of an Evergreen recreation pass.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

**Testimony For (original bill):** People are willing to pay for access to state lands, but there must be a coordinated and comprehensive way to do this. This will avoid how things work under the federal system because it is a simple coordinated pass. State agencies could do coordinated marketing of the recreation pass and their sites. No existing fees need to be changed. It is good to focus on maintenance and repairs. A task force will allow us time to work things out.

(Concerns) It is not clear what the revenues will be for the agencies.

**Testimony Against:** (Original bill) This would require some significant start-up costs.

**Testified:** (In support) Representative McIntire, prime sponsor; Kit Metlen, Department of Natural Resources; Josh Weiss, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Fred Romero and Wayne McLaughlin, Parks and Recreation Commission.

(In support, with concerns) Ed Sonnenschein, National Association of Competitive Mounted Orienteers; and Craig Engelking, Sierra Club and Washington Trails Association.

(Opposed) Eric Anderson, Department of Licensing.