

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1137

As Reported by House Committee On:
Fisheries, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to creating the corps of discovery pass for Lewis and Clark parks.

Brief Description: Creating the corps of discovery pass.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Ericksen, Grant, Armstrong, Dunshee, Cooper, Moeller, Haigh, Lantz and Rockefeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Fisheries, Ecology & Parks: 1/28/03, 2/4/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes creation of a Corps of Discovery Pass in lieu of parking fees to generate revenue at sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail.
- Requires the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to use proceeds from the Corps of Discovery Pass for maintenance and operation of Lewis and Clark Trail parks.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cooper, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hatfield, O'Brien, Pearson and Upthegrove.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

In response to budget reductions in the 2002 Supplemental Operating Budget, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) canceled leases to certain parks owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and operated by the Commission under lease agreements. Four parks located along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, including Chief Timothy, Lyons Ferry, Central Ferry and Crow Butte State Parks, were recently closed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force (Task Force) was created in the 2002 Supplemental Operating Budget (Budget), Chapter 371, Laws of 2002. The Budget directed the Task Force to prepare recommendations for improving the operation of state parks and outdoor recreation programs and to secure adequate funding on a permanent basis to support the needs of state parks and outdoor recreation programs. The Task Force developed several recommendations for the Legislature's consideration, including a legislative proposal to develop a Corps of Discovery Pass (Pass) for sites located along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Summary of Bill:

The Commission may develop a Pass that visitors may purchase in lieu of parking fees charged at designated sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail. The Commission may seek private assistance with marketing and merchandising of the Pass. Proceeds from the Pass must be deposited in the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account and be used for operation and maintenance of state parks located along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) With the Commission recently closing four facilities on the Lewis and Clark Trail, this bill provides a tool to reopen parks and gives the public an opportunity to visit these sites. An estimated 30 million tourists are expected to visit Washington during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. The Pass can be marketed to these out-of-state tourists and generate money for state parks. If the four parks that were recently closed, are not reopened, tourists will have to travel over 200 miles before finding a state park open along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

(With concerns) For the Pass to be successful there needs to be funding for marketing. Fees from the Pass will not cover the costs of reopening the parks, and the Commission would need funding in this year's Supplemental Budget to reopen the parks. Currently, the Army Corps of Engineers is accepting bids from private vendors to operate the four parks referenced in the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Lauren Danner, Lewis and Clark Trail Committee; and Lynn Maier, Washington Public Employees

Association.

(Comments) Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation.

(In support with concerns) Fred Romero and Rita Cooper, Washington State Parks and Receptions Commission.