

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2151

C 114 L 14
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning recreational trails.

Sponsors: House Committee on Environment (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake and Seaquist).

House Committee on Environment
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is charged with managing most of the state's public lands. The DNR manages nearly 3 million acres of uplands and over 2 million acres of aquatic lands. Although each individual land holding is managed by the DNR for a specific benefit or purpose, the concept of multiple use management covers all DNR-managed land.

The idea of "multiple use" means the provision of several uses simultaneously on the same tract of land. Outdoor recreation, in all of its various forms, is one of the multiple uses that the DNR is directed to provide when the recreation does not negatively impact the underlying land management purposes. Many lands managed by the DNR are used for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and motorized vehicle riding.

In implementing the multiple use mandate, the DNR is authorized to plan, construct, and operate recreational areas, trails, and facilities for educational, scientific, or experimental purposes. These activities may be carried out in conjunction with any other public or private agency.

Summary:

The DNR must work with stakeholders to develop and implement an official recreational trail policy consistent with the management mandate of the agency. The policy must ensure that trails cause the least impact to the land, that environmental protections are provided, that the lowest reasonable construction costs are used, and that any volunteers operate under a hold harmless agreement. The initial policy must be adopted by October 31, 2015.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The DNR should use trail standards developed by the United States Forest Service as the primary guidelines for trail construction and maintenance; however, it may develop its own standards if the federal standards are deemed insufficient or impractical. Any non-designated trails must be considered for inclusion on comprehensive recreational management plans so long as they are compliant and consistent with those standards.

The DNR is encouraged to work with local governments to find efficiencies in gaining local permits for the development and maintenance of trails.

Votes on Final Passage:

| | | |
|--------|----|---|
| House | 97 | 1 |
| Senate | 48 | 1 |

Effective: June 12, 2014