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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 2349**

**Brief Description:** Concerning the management of beavers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kretz, Blake, Billig, Short, Hinkle, Uptegrove, Fitzgibbon and McCune.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a permit that allows landowners to trap beavers in areas of the state where they are considered a nuisance and relocate the beavers to properties where the animals may improve the local ecosystem.
- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to use live trapping techniques when trapping nuisance beavers and relocate the beavers to properties owned by requesting landowners.
- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a beaver damage management plan.

**Hearing Date:** 1/18/12

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has the authority to authorize the removal or killing or wildlife that is destroying or injuring property. The ultimate disposition of the removed wildlife is determined by the Director of the Department (Director). The Director may also enter into written agreements with landowners designed to protect the subject property from further wildlife damage.

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*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.*

Private individuals may trap beavers if they hold a state trapping license. All trapping must be conducted in accordance with the trapping seasons established by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

**Summary of Bill:**

Beaver relocation permits.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is required to issue a permit, at no cost to the applicant, which will allow the holder to capture live beavers in areas of the state where large beaver populations are considered a nuisance. The permit also allows the holder to transport the beavers within the state and release the beavers on property owned by the permit holder. The actual capture of the beavers must be performed by an individual with a valid state trapping license.

Beaver relocation permits may be limited by the Department to areas of the state where there is a low probability of released beavers becoming a problem, there is evidence of a historic endemic beaver population, and where conditions exist for the released beavers to improve the riparian area into which they are introduced. Beavers may only be released in eastern Washington, but may be captured anywhere in the state.

The Department may condition beaver relocation permits to maximize the success and minimize the risk of the relocation. Release site conditions that the Department may consider include the gradient of the stream, the adequacy of food sources, the elevation, and the stream geomorphology. In addition, the Department may also condition how the capture and release occurs. This includes establishing the timing of the capture and release, the age of the beavers involved, the number of beavers involved, and the requirements for providing supplemental food and lodging materials.

Department-initiated beaver trapping.

If possible, Department employees must utilize live trapping techniques whenever they initiate the trapping of nuisance beavers. The Department must work with the holders of beaver relocation permits to relocate the trapped beavers to properties that have requested their placement.

Beaver damage management plan.

The Department must work with interested stakeholders to develop a beaver damage management plan by June 30, 2013. The plan must outline a strategy for sustained, statewide efforts to utilize beavers as agents for habitat restoration and water storage. The plan must specifically address population management, damage management, watershed restoration, disease and nuisance management, and public education and outreach.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 13, 2012.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.