
Environment Committee

HB 2273

Brief Description: Concerning public recreational access.

Sponsors: Representatives Manweller and Blake.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Codifies a definition of "public recreational access" made applicable to the Department of Natural Resources.

Hearing Date: 1/28/14

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages nearly three million acres of uplands and over two 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 (RCW 79.10.110). 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 (RCW 79.10.120). Many lands managed by the DNR are used for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and motorized vehicle riding.

In implementing the multiple use mandates, the DNR is authorized to plan, construct, and operate recreational areas, trails, and facilities for educational, scientific, or experimental purposes (RCW 79.10.130). These activities may be carried out in conjunction with any other public or private agency. The DNR may enter into contracts, leases, or other agreements as necessary to implement its various mandates.

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Summary of Bill:

A definition of "public recreational access" is added to the DNR's multiple use mandate and to the statutes that govern the DNR's community forest trust program. The definition includes the opportunity for members of the general public to access a landholding and engage in outdoor recreational opportunities. This access must be appropriate given the physical qualities of the land in question and the values of the local community. The term includes both free and fee-based access to the land and consumptive and non-consumptive activities. The term also includes the actual recreational use of the land and other elements that support that use, such as roads, trails, parking areas, and other infrastructure developments that allow people of various skills and ability to enjoy the access.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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