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# BILL ANALYSIS

## House Bill 1056

### Natural Area Preserves

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**Brief Description:** Requiring that natural area preserves be accessible for public hunting, fishing, and trapping.

**Committee:** Natural Resources

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Hatfield, Pennington, Doumit, Mielke, Johnson, Buck, Kessler, Sheldon, Mastin and Grant

**Background:**

In 1972, the Legislature established the following public policy:

All areas within the state, except those which are expressly dedicated by law for preservation and protection in their natural condition, are subject to alteration by human activity. Natural lands, together with the plants and animals living thereon in natural ecological systems, are valuable for the purposes of scientific research, teaching, as habitats of rare and vanishing species, as places of natural historic and natural interest and scenic beauty, and as living museums of the original heritage of the state.

It is, therefore, the public policy of the state of Washington to secure for the people of present and future generations the benefit of an enduring resource of natural areas by establishing a system of natural area preserves, and to provide for the protection of these natural areas (RCW 79.70.010).

The Legislature defined natural areas and natural area preserves as public or private areas of land or water which have retained their natural character, although not necessarily completely natural and undisturbed, or which are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical or similar features of scientific or educational value. The state owns 46 natural area preserves, totaling approximately 26,200 acres. The Legislature assigned management responsibility for these lands to the Department of Natural Resources and also provided an advisory role for the Natural Heritage Advisory Council. In addition to

these state-owned lands, a number of private property owners have voluntarily registered or dedicated property as natural areas.

Public use of natural area preserves generally has been limited to educational and scientific research activities.

**Summary:**

Natural area preserves must be accessible to the public for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The Fish and Wildlife Commission must regulate and manage these activities.

Prepared by Linda Byers (786-7129)  
House Natural Resources Committee  
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