

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1061

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, March 27, 1997

Title: An act relating to metal detectors in state parks.

Brief Description: Restricting the state parks and recreation commission authority to regulate metal detectors.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Sheldon, Mielke and Grant).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 3/27/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Roach, Snyder, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The state Parks and Recreation Commission allows metal detectors to be used in specified state parks and with restrictions such as: (1) must be within day-use areas as posted; (2) registering with park personnel; (3) not disturbing archeological or historical resources; and (4) limiting the size and depth of excavation.

Sixty-six state parks have areas in which metal detector use is allowed. Twenty-eight swim beaches and all ocean beaches are also open for metal detecting. The commission, in cooperation with the Washington Chapter of the Federation of Metal Detectors, is planning to expand the program in 1997 to include opening 464 new campsites in 11 campgrounds; portions of Joemma Beach State Park; two group camps for special events; 42 acres in Rasar Park; sites along the Chehalis; and five winter closed- campgrounds.

The commission employs two full-time archaeologists to identify historic archaeological resources. A permit is required for any excavation of known historic archaeological sites. These sites are governed by procedures enumerated in statute.

Summary of Bill: By September 1, 1997, the Parks and Recreation Commission must increase the area available for recreational metal detector use by at least 200 acres.

For the following five years, the commission must increase the area available for recreational use by an additional 50 acres or more per year.

The commission must develop a cost-effective plan to identify historic resources in at least one state park that has a military fort on the Puget Sound. By December 1, 1997, the commission must submit a report to the appropriate legislative committee regarding how the plan is implemented and the cost of the plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Metal detecting is compatible with archeological and historic uses of parks. Metal detector groups will volunteer time to help identify archeological sites. Participants find mainly contemporary coins and jewelry. Participants help clean beaches of dangerous material. No additional staff time will be required from Parks.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. Sheldon; Terry Wright, Federation of Metal Detectors; Cath Smith, Washington State Parks.