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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1972**

**Brief Description:** Regarding access to information for outdoor recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dunshee, Blake and Williams.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife to collect information relating to outdoor recreational access on a page of their website that is only accessible to license holders.
- Increases the cost of a Department of Fish and Wildlife vehicle use permit in steps from \$10 to \$30.

**Hearing Date:** 2/10/09

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

**Background:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) offers many different recreational hunting and fishing licenses. A license from the WDFW is generally required prior to taking any game or fish species in the state. Revenue from the sale of recreational licenses are deposited, in most cases, into the State Wildlife Account [Chapter 77.32 RCW].

In addition to issuing licenses that allow for hunting and fishing on most types of ownership in the state, the WDFW also manages land specifically for recreational access. Land managed by the WDFW is open for hunting and fishing as well as for non-consumptive wildlife activities such as bird watching.

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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.*

A person needs to obtain a vehicle use permit issued by the WDFW to enter land managed by the WDFW that has been improved for public access [RCW 77.32.380]. One vehicle use permit is issued free of charge with certain recreational hunting and fishing licenses and with the WDFW's watchable wildlife decal. The watchable wildlife decal is a sticker sold by the WDFW to raise funds for nature-watching activities.

If someone wishes to access land managed by the WDFW but who has not purchased a decal or a license, that person may purchase just a vehicle use permit for \$10.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### Access Information

The WDFW is authorized to develop information relating to land access on its internet website and limit internet access to the information to individuals who have purchased a recreational license from the WDFW. Information contained on the WDFW's website may include information about wildlife areas and access sites, other public and private lands open for public recreation, and information promoting watchable wildlife and nature-based tourism. General information relating to hunting or fishing seasons may not be displayed on the password-protected portion of the website.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) would be responsible for adopting a rule that clarifies which of the WDFW-offered recreational licenses would also grant the purchaser access to the information on the WDFW website. Regardless of decisions made by the Commission, a person who purchases a vehicle use permit must be provided with access to the website's information.

#### Vehicle Use Permit

The cost of a vehicle use permit is increased. The cost is set at \$20 until July 1, 2011. After that, the cost will increase to \$25, and increase to \$30 on July 1, 2013.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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