

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1518

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks

Title: An act relating to the water trail recreation program.

Brief Description: Creating a water trail recreation program.

Sponsors: Representatives Valle, Dunshee, Pruitt, Rust,
J. Kohl, Holm, Jacobsen, Linville and Eide.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 23, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Pruitt, Chair; R. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dunshee; Linville; Sheldon; Thomas; Valle; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Stevens, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Schoesler.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: In January 1993, the State Parks and Recreation Commission designated the state's first official water trail. The trail runs from south Puget Sound into the San Juan Islands. The commission has designated 12 state parks as part of the water trail. In addition, the Department of Natural Resources has approved the use of eight DNR marine recreation sites as part of the same trail.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A state water trail recreation program is created in statute, to be administered by the State Parks and Recreation Commission. The commission is authorized to plan, construct and maintain facilities for water trail activities. The commission may also publish and charge a fee for maps and other forms of public information indicating areas and facilities suitable for water trail activities, and may work with groups who wish to volunteer support for the water trail program.

A Water Trail Advisory Committee is created to advise the commission on matters related to water trails. The advisory committee is to be made up of public members representing water trail users, public members representing the commercial sector, and representatives of state agencies and local government associations.

A water trail permit system is also created, with the fee for an annual permit to be determined by the commission after consultation with the Water Trails Advisory Committee. There are also fines for violations of this act. The permit fees, fines, and revenues from sales of publications are to be deposited into the water trail program account, which the bill creates in the state treasury. Moneys in this account are subject to appropriation and may only be spent by the commission for water trail purposes.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill reorganizes and makes technical corrections to the original bill. The substitute bill clarifies that a person may not participate as a user of the water trail recreation program without first obtaining an annual permit. The substitute bill also expressly allows the State Parks and Recreation Commission to work with individuals or organizations who wish to volunteer their time to support the water trail recreation program.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The users of this water trail recreation program have agreed to pay a fee to support the program. The eventual goal is to have a stopping point every five to eight miles. Water trail users carry everything with them on their watercraft, so they are low impact campers, take up little space, and require few facilities. Users are happy to pay for the program and to pay increases over the years. Users hope to make cooperative agreements with a variety of local governments and private landowners in the future. The Washington Water Trails Association has volunteered to do a stewardship and maintenance program at the camping sites. This bill reflects a trend of users paying for programs and increased use of volunteers. It is good to have an advisory committee for a program like this.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Georgette Valle, prime sponsor; Sandie Nelson and Tom Steinburn, Washington Water Trails Association; Bob Wilder, State Parks and Recreation

Commission; and Ralph Mackey, Washington Environmental Council (all in favor).