

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5403

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Establishing the Washington state horse park.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, A. Anderson, Rasmussen, Prince, Spanel, Morton, Loveland, Swecker, Snyder, Palmer, Owen, Quigley and Roach).

**Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks**  
**House Committee on Natural Resources**

**Background:** The state has expressed interest in the concept of a state horse park since the mid-1980s, when a Department of Agriculture study requested by the Legislature recommended creation of a state-owned and operated equestrian center. The Washington State Horse Council began pursuing development of the concept with the State Parks and Recreation Commission in the late 1980s. In 1990, the commission completed a feasibility study of creating a publicly-owned, year-around equestrian facility. The initial site identified for development was property adjacent to Lewis and Clark State Park in Lewis County.

In 1991, the Legislature appropriated \$200,000 to the commission for planning an equestrian center at Lewis and Clark State Park, and also provided funding to the commission through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to begin acquiring parcels adjacent to the park. In 1992, the original site was found to be unsuitable. A site currently under consideration is a few miles from the original site. Part of the area is in private ownership, and part of the proposed site is in state ownership under the management of the Department of Natural Resources.

**Summary:** The Washington State Horse Park is established, to be located at a site approved by the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Any lands acquired by the commission for the horse park must be purchased through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. It is the intent of the Legislature that the horse park be developed in stages, based on factors such as the availability of funds, equipment, and other materials donated by private sources, the availability and willingness of volunteers to work on park development, and the availability of revenues generated by the park as it is developed and utilized. The Legislature encourages the commission to provide a long-term lease of the selected property at minimal charge to the Washington State Horse Park Authority, with provisions in the lease ensuring public access and use of horse park facilities, provided that the facility remains available primarily for horse-related activities. The Legislature also encourages the county to provide a long-term lease of selected county-owned property for the horse park at a minimal charge.

A private nonprofit corporation called the Washington State Horse Park Authority may be formed to carry out the purposes of this legislation. The authority is responsible for development, promotion, operation, management, and maintenance of the horse park. The

articles of incorporation for the authority provide for a seven-member board of directors appointed by the Governor. One board member represents the interests of the State Parks and Recreation Commission, one board member represents the interests of the county in which the park is located, and five board members represent the diversity of equestrian interests in the state.

The authority may exercise the general powers authorized for a private nonprofit corporation; however, the authority may not issue bonds. The authority is specifically authorized to hire and fire employees, accept gifts and grants, establish and collect fees, insure its obligations and potential liability, enter into cooperative agreements, and grant concessions and leases at the horse park. All debts of the authority are in the name of the authority and are not debts of the state of Washington.

If the authority and state agencies find it mutually beneficial to do so, they may collaborate and cooperate on projects of state interest. The authority must cooperate with 4-H clubs, pony clubs, youth groups, and local parks departments to provide youth recreational activities. The authority also must provide for preferential use of an area of the horse park facility for youth and people with disabilities at nominal cost.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	45	1	
House	95	1	(House amended)
Senate	42	1	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 23, 1995