

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SSB 5179

Title: An act relating to the authority of the parks and recreation commission.

Brief Description: Creating Title 79A RCW, Public Recreational Lands.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke and Jacobsen).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: March 23, 1999

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Bill Lynch, Counsel (786-7092)

Background: Statutes which govern state parks are spread throughout different titles of the code. Some of these statutes contain obsolete provisions or are difficult to understand. Statutes which give certain powers or responsibilities to the Parks and Recreation Commission (commission) or the director are not referenced in the general chapter pertaining to parks and recreation.

When a tract of land of 100 acres or less is bounded on two or more sides by an established state park, the commission may lease, purchase, or condemn the tract of land for park purposes and incorporate it within the adjoining park if the commission determines that the land is desirable for state park purposes. This authority only extends to land located in counties composed entirely of islands.

The commission may direct the Commissioner of Public Lands to withdraw land from a sale. The land withdrawn from a sale becomes under the control of the commission. The commission may exchange the land for land of equal value, but the land which is acquired in the exchange must abut upon a public highway.

The commission is required to designate and preserve certain forest areas throughout the state as natural forests or natural areas for interpretation, study, and preservation purposes. There is no statutory definition for natural forest.–

Summary of Bill: Statutes pertaining to state parks and recreation are placed together into a new title, 79A RCW. Obsolete language is deleted and language is added to provide greater clarity.

The State Parks and Recreation Commission may obtain tracts of land of 100 acres or less bounded on two or more sides by an established state park for state park purposes regardless of which county the land is located. (Section 902)

The commission may exchange land it has obtained from the Commissioner of Public Lands, because it was withdrawn from a sale, for other land of equal value regardless of whether it abuts upon a public highway. (Section 903)

A natural forest is defined as a forest that faithfully represents, or is meant to become representative of, its unaltered state. (Section 101)

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on Substitute bill March 23, 1999.

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