

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2131

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife*

Title: An act relating to the Scatter Creek wildlife area.

Brief Description: Requiring plans for the enhancement of the Scatter Creek wildlife area.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. Meyers, Van Luven, Zellinsky and R. King.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, March 1, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 2131 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 8 members: Representatives R. King, Chair; Morris, Vice Chair; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cole; Haugen; Hochstatter; Orr; and Spanel.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: The Department of Wildlife owns or manages over 800,000 acres of land in the State, with the primary objectives of wildlife and wildlife habitat protection and management. Areas are classified as habitat management sites, mitigation sites, natural areas, and urban sites.

One of the areas managed by the Department of Wildlife is the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, which is just over 800 acres in size and is located on the Grand Mound Prairie south of Olympia. Uses of the area include the release of about 4000 pheasants annually, hunting, hiking and bird-watching, dog training and dog trials, and education. The area historically was managed for public dog training and field trial grounds. Some hunting dog enthusiasts feel that it is one of the only areas in western Washington available for such activity. The area is primarily an oak/prairie habitat which contains a plant species of concern (rigid white-topped aster) and the state candidate threatened western gray squirrel. The area also contains the Brewer house which is currently on the National Historic Register.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Wildlife is directed to develop a multi-use comprehensive plan for the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area that will enhance recreational and educational uses and minimize user conflict. The department is directed to include specific interest groups such as the sporting dog enthusiasts, the Grand Mound-Rochester Park and Recreation District, and bird hunters in the planning and development of the area and facilities. An appropriation of \$45,000 is made for the 1991-1993 biennium for development and implementation of the plan. An expiration date of June 30, 1993 is provided.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill did not specify the members of the public that would be involved in planning and development of the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. The substitute bill identifies specific user groups that shall be involved in planning and development. The original bill states that the Department of Wildlife shall develop plans for the maintenance and enhancement of recreational uses including sporting dog opportunities, while the substitute bill requires that the department recognize other specific values in the plan including historical significance, rare plant species, conservation and education, and other resource values.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: (Testimony received was on HB 1798. HB 2131 was developed in response to concerns expressed in testimony on HB 1798): The Scatter Creek Wildlife Area was permanently dedicated for the purpose of training sporting dogs. A sporting dog training facility is needed. The area is deteriorating due to invasion of scotchbroom, and it needs to be restored. If not for the involvement of the Northwest Field Trial Council, the Brewer property (Scatter Creek 1) would not have been purchased. Dog trials are not incompatible with other resources or with other uses of the area. Historically this has been an economic benefit to the local area.

Testimony Against: (Testimony received was on HB 1798. HB 2131 was developed in response to concerns expressed in testimony on HB 1798): The area is unique, containing rare oak habitat, a rare plant, a threatened wildlife species, and a house on the historic register. Dog trials are incompatible with these resources. There should be no single use of the area directed in statute. The single use

proposed by dog groups will not allow a local park to be built there. Residents in the area have been working with the Department of Wildlife to have multiple use of the area. Taxpayer dollars were used to purchase the area. The proposal to construct the facility is \$142,000. This is special interest legislation. The Scatter Creek area was dedicated for all users of the area. The status quo should be maintained. (Most testimony against is addressed in the substitute bill.)

Witnesses: (Witnesses testified on HB 1798. HB 2131 was developed in response to concerns expressed on HB 1798): Representative Ron Meyers, prime sponsor (in favor); Representative Rose Bowman (opposed); Klaus Mein, Northwest Field Trial Council (in favor); John Munson, Northwest Field Trial Council (in favor); Cornelius Nielsen, Puget Sound English Springer Spaniel Club (in favor); Sylvia Winterowd, Grand Mound-Rochester Park and Recreation District (opposed); John Benedict, Northwest Field Trial Council (in favor), Senator Bob Oke (in favor); Ellis Carlson, resident (opposed); Ron Peregrin, Department of Wildlife (concerns); George Prescott, citizen (in favor); Florence Slingerland, Grand Mound Rochester Park Association (opposed); Elaine Schoelkopf, mail carrier (opposed); Linda Billings, Grand Mound Rochester Park Association (opposed); Jack Davis, Black Hills Audubon Society (opposed); Karen Eby, dog trainer (in favor); and Dale Van Kirk, Chehalis River Hound Club (in favor).