

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1448

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

Title: An act relating to urban wildlife management areas.

Brief Description: Establishing the Union Bay wildlife habitat management area.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jacobsen, Anderson, Rust, Brekke, Prentice, Valle, Phillips, Heavey, Appelwick, Locke, H. Sommers, Belcher, Nelson, Hine, Fraser and Wineberry.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 22, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1448 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 6 members: Representatives R. King, Chair; Morris, Vice Chair; Wilson, Ranking Minority Member; Cole; Orr; and Spanel.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 2 members: Representatives Hochstatter and Padden.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: Several state agencies including the Department of Wildlife, State Parks, and the Department of Natural Resources own or manage properties for conservation and/or recreation. Some of these properties are valuable wildlife habitat. Some are in urban settings. Few state lands in urban areas are managed for unique wildlife values.

Montlake Fill is a popular birding area in the State. It is located at Union Bay in Lake Washington. The fill is part of the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington. There is a large cattail marsh at the edge of Union Bay. There was a refuse dump on this marsh from 1926-1965. In 1971 the dumpsite was covered and graded with up to 12 feet of glacial till and was seeded with grasses. The landowners of the Montlake Fill area include the University of Washington, Seattle City Light, the Department of Natural

Resources, and the city of Seattle. A comprehensive wildlife management plan does not presently exist for the area.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Union Bay cooperative wildlife habitat management area is established at the Union Bay wetland area east of the Lake Washington ship canal. The Department of Wildlife is directed to coordinate a cooperative planning effort for the area, to include all interested property owners and managers within or adjacent to the area as well as other interested parties. The Department of Wildlife and cooperators are directed to identify wildlife resources and educational opportunities of, and management objectives for the area and to develop a plan for co-management. The Department of Wildlife shall provide progress reports to the House Fisheries & Wildlife and the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committees by December 1, 1991 and December 1, 1992. The Department of Wildlife may accept gifts, grants and other funds for the purposes of coordinating the planning effort.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill requires the Department of Wildlife to identify the boundaries of the Union Bay Wildlife Habitat Management Area and to manage the activities on and uses of property located within the area, in consultation with public land managers and under agreement with private landowners. The department is permitted to establish an advisory group to provide input to the management process.

The substitute bill requires the Department of Wildlife to coordinate the development of a management plan for the Union Bay Cooperative Wildlife Habitat Management Area. Cooperators in plan development shall include all interested property owners and managers within or adjacent to Union Bay as well as other interested parties. The cooperators shall delineate the boundaries of the area, identify wildlife resources of the area, set wildlife management objectives for the area, and identify compatible uses in the area. Appropriate environmental education opportunities shall be identified. A provision in the substitute bill allows the Department of Wildlife to accept and solicit grants, gifts, and other funds for the purposes of developing a coordinated management plan for the area.

Both the original bill and the substitute bill require progress reports by the Department of Wildlife to the House Fisheries & Wildlife Committee and the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 20, 1991.

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

Testimony For: The area is a unique, diverse ecosystem and should be protected. The area is slowly degrading and needs management. Purple loosestrife and blackberries are degrading the habitat. It has potential for a number of pilot research and management projects relating to wildlife. The ownership is complex, and a single authority is necessary to manage effectively for wildlife. Current users are in conflict with wildlife. Children can learn about wildlife and wildlife/people interactions here. There is not much opportunity for this kind of interaction in an urban setting. This is consistent with proposed restoration work for Ravenna Creek.

Testimony Against: This may not be consistent with recreational boating interests, and may not be compatible with the Department of Natural Resources' ownership of tidelands.

Witnesses: Representative Ken Jacobsen, prime sponsor (in favor); Fred Bird, Washington Ornithological Society (in favor with concerns: does not want this to be slowed because of the Department of Wildlife bureaucracy, would prefer to see volunteers run it, the Department of Wildlife doesn't have adequate funding, year round access should be maintained); Bob Klug, Northeast District Council (in favor); Connie Sidles, parent (in favor); Kathy Baxter, Laurelhurst Community Club (in favor); Harold Tukey, University of Washington (neutral with concerns: this will not allow the flexibility for cooperation that currently exists, there are already mechanisms in place that allow wildlife and habitat protection, prioritizing wildlife ahead of other uses is incompatible with multiple use mission); Pamela Madsen, Washington Department of Wildlife (in favor); Ann Morgan, Department of Natural Resources (in favor, with concerns: the complex jurisdictional and management situation would lend itself to a study bill to determine who would be appropriate manager of area); Elaine Rose, City of Seattle (in favor with concerns: wishes to make the advisory group mandatory); John Woodring, Northwest Marine Trade Association (neutral with questions: will recreational boaters be effected and will the Department of Natural Resources management of tidelands be effected); and Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society (in favor).