

6575

Sponsor(s): Senator Hargrove

Brief Description: Concerning the designation of certain lands as natural area preserves or natural resource conservation areas.

**SB 6575 - DIGEST**

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 1ST SUB)

Authorizes the department to establish by rule and regulation the criteria for selection, acquisition, management, protection, and use of such natural areas, including: (1) Limiting public access to natural areas consistent with the required protection of critical natural elements. Where appropriate, a buffer zone with a higher level of public access must be created around the environmentally sensitive areas;

(2) Developing a management plan for each designated natural area. The plan must identify the significant resources to be conserved consistent with the purposes of this chapter and identify the areas with potential for low-impact public and environmental educational uses.

Requires the plan to specify the types of management activities and public uses that are permitted, consistent with the preservation purposes of this act. The department must make the plans available for review and comment by the public, the natural heritage advisory council, and other state, tribal, and local agencies, prior to final approval by the commissioner.