

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1889

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to the wild horse coordinated resource management plan.

**Brief Description:** Regarding the wild horse coordinated resource management plan.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Barlow, Hankins, O'Brien, Blake and Ormsby.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/21/07 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources to assist with the implementation of the Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Blake, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Grant, Hailey, Kagi, Lantz, McCoy, Newhouse, Orcutt, Strow and VanDeWege.

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

A coordinated resource management planning process began in 2006 to develop the Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management Plan (Management Plan). The process involved various interests located in Kittitas County, including the Department of Natural Resources, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A coordinated management planning process is a voluntary process allowing resources to be managed over multiple ownerships. The Management Plan proposes to coordinate

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

management of elk, water, and other resources over land owned by the Department of Natural Resources, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Puget Sound Energy, and the Trust for Public Lands.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources is instructed to assist with the implementation of the Management Plan. The two agencies must accomplish on-the-ground actions required under the Management Plan, and provide grant funding to other entities as required for the full implementation of the Management Plan.

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**Appropriation:** The sum of \$245,264 is appropriated from the General Fund for both Fiscal Year 2008 and Fiscal Year 2009.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Many diverse citizens have worked for a long time to develop the Management Plan that covers 62,000 acres of mostly public land in eastern Kittitas County and puts multiple ownerships under common management for the first time. The planning process was the most collaborative process that many stakeholders have ever experienced. The Management Plan participants have worked with state and federal agencies to ensure that livestock grazing would be allowed.

The Management Plan improves natural springs in the area, develops water resources, and maintains livestock grazing opportunities. The Management Plan is beneficial for all species, and will help control the spread of noxious weeds. The Management Plan will also reduce damage to farmers' crops, and reduce claims for crop losses against the state reimbursement program, by managing elk in a way that encourages them to remain in their winter feeding areas and not enter agricultural fields. When cattle are allowed to graze, elk numbers generally increase and the delicate shrub steppe habitat of Kittitas County is conserved.

The Management Plan represents hours of work from the various stakeholders that prepares Kittitas County for its expected population increase. All that is left now is the capital investment in funding the plan's implementation.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Barlow, prime sponsor; Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Kevin Eslinger, Coordinated Resource Management Plan; Russ Stimgkey, Kittitas Farm Bureau and Kittitas Cattlemen's Association; Jim

Huckabay, Big Game Management Roundtable; and Joe Meocliel, Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.