
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5318

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation
(originally sponsored by Senators Poulsen and Jacobsen)

READ FIRST TIME 02/23/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to wildlife conservation in Washington's portion of
2 the Yukon to Yellowstone Rocky mountain ecosystem; adding a new section
3 to chapter 77.12 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington state
6 comprises a great diversity of biota and landscapes. Under widely
7 accepted scientific classifications, there are nine ecoregional areas
8 lying wholly or partially in Washington: Northwest coast, Puget
9 trough, northwest Cascades, west Cascades, east Cascades, Okanogan
10 highlands, Blue mountains, Columbia plateau, and Canadian Rocky
11 mountains. The Canadian Rocky mountains ecoregional area is a vast
12 region of the Rocky mountain chain stretching from the Yukon Territory
13 in Canada into the south central United States, encompassing all or
14 portions of three provinces and seven states. The Selkirk mountains in
15 the northeast portion of the state and the north-flowing Pend Oreille
16 river are the two dominant features of this ecoregion in Washington
17 state, with the Selkirks providing a transition between the rolling
18 Okanogan highlands to the west and the higher Rocky mountain ridges and
19 mountains interlaced with wide valleys to the east.

1 While the portion of this region lying within Washington state is
2 relatively small, it is an important component for conservation
3 initiatives involving the unique biota of this ecoregion. Within the
4 Rocky mountains ecoregional area there are landowners, communities,
5 wildlife management agencies, and wildlife conservation organizations
6 beginning to work together in a coordinated manner to consider this
7 region as a whole. These groups seek to combine science and
8 stewardship to ensure that the world-renowned wilderness, wildlife,
9 native plants, and natural processes of the region continue to function
10 as an interconnected web of life, capable of supporting all of the
11 natural and human communities that reside within it, for now and for
12 future generations. This effort is commonly referred to as the Yukon
13 to Yellowstone conservation initiative.

14 Within the Yukon to Yellowstone ecoregion are hundreds of small
15 communities, and two major metropolitan regions, Calgary and Spokane.
16 As the largest city within the Yukon to Yellowstone region in the
17 United States, the city of Spokane should be recognized as the United
18 States' capital of the Yukon to Yellowstone ecoregion.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW
20 to read as follows:

21 The department shall participate with wildlife management agencies
22 and conservation organizations in other states and provinces,
23 comprising the Canadian Rocky mountains ecoregional area, in the
24 cooperative programs of the Yukon to Yellowstone conservation
25 initiative. Where the Yukon to Yellowstone conservation initiative has
26 identified priority species, habitats, or landscapes lying within
27 Washington state, the department shall actively seek to involve local
28 governments, landowners, and local conservation organizations in the
29 initiative. The department may integrate these activities with its
30 cooperative work with other states and provinces sharing ecoregional
31 areas with Washington state.

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