



2013 Legislative Concept Paper

Clarifying DNR's authority to enter into cooperative agreements

HB1244 (Stanford) SB5634 (Rolfes)

Issue The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) currently has limited authority to enter into cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations to perform activities on state lands. DNR needs statutory authority to enter into cooperative agreements with these entities, and authority to accept donated personal services and materials from volunteers and non-profit organizations for specific projects on state lands.

Without this clear authority, current constraints affect DNR's ability to partner with non-profit and volunteer groups to meet agency land management objectives.



Non-profits and volunteers support projects that:

- Help protect and restore watersheds.
- Enhance habitat.
- Remove invasive non-native vegetation on state lands.

Background The agency's current authority is limited to working with non-profit scientific and educational associations to create special facilities for educational, scientific, conservation, or experimental purposes and in the utilization of DNR-managed state land for watershed purposes.

Non-profit organizations and volunteer groups routinely approach DNR to form partnerships in performing work on state trust lands related to habitat restoration, removing non-native vegetation, improving watershed conditions, designing and maintaining recreational trails, and other beneficial work.

Partnering with these non-profit and volunteer organizations provides a cost-effective way to meet the agency's objectives at a reduced cost, or at no cost.

Proposal Clarify DNR's Authority To:

• Enter into cooperative agreements (which may include conveying funds) with a broader range of non-profit organizations to provide benefits to lands managed by DNR, including:

- Watershed restoration and enhancement projects.
- Enhancing habitat to provide plant and animal species protection.

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- **Removing non-native vegetation.**
- **Other similar projects to provide environmental and land-management benefits.**
- **Accept gifts of personal property and services from volunteers, volunteer organizations, and non-profits to fulfill agency objectives.**

Fiscal Impact Implementing this bill will require no new funding.