
SENATE BILL 5105

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen, Haugen, and McDermott

Read first time 01/14/09. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to the state oak tree; adding a new section to
2 chapter 1.20 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the Garry Oak
5 tree occupies unique and special prairie communities in south Puget
6 Sound and southwestern Washington. These grassy, savannah-like
7 openings occur in gravelly dry soils and are frequently associated with
8 glacial outwash. It is here that rich meadow communities of grasses
9 and wildflowers intermingle with massive oak trees that may be more
10 than three hundred years old. Idaho fescue, Henderson's shooting star,
11 and the extraordinary blue camas create a striking blaze of color in
12 the spring. The yellow prairie violet, the western long-spurred
13 violet, blue-eyed Mary, and the showy yellow balsam root are all common
14 in these unique prairies. Garry Oak meadows and prairies have been
15 important to people since the earliest habitation. Aboriginal people
16 tended the Garry Oak ecosystems, using fire and cultivation as
17 management tools. The edible bulbs of camas and other species were the
18 focus of the plant harvest. European explorers and settlers were

1 attracted to the aesthetic qualities of the oak landscape. Modern
2 residents appreciate the spectacular wildflower shows that the meadows
3 exhibit.

4 Unfortunately, less than five percent of Garry Oak ecosystems in
5 Washington remain in a near-natural state, and the remaining areas are
6 threatened due to habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation due to
7 invasions of exotic species, and development for agricultural,
8 industrial, and urban use. Therefore, recognition of the Garry Oak as
9 the state oak tree is appropriate and will support local efforts to
10 protect Garry Oak groves and to replant and restore Garry Oaks.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 1.20 RCW
12 to read as follows:

13 The Garry Oak, *Quercus Garryana*, is hereby designated the official
14 oak tree of the state of Washington.

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