

SB 21 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

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Meeting Dates: 3/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Fish and Wildlife Commission to develop and adopt by rule an invasive grass pilot program in the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area to increase habitat quality and forage for mule deer and livestock; increase site resistance to annual grass invasion; and increase understanding of the roles that soil microbes, organic matter and nutrients play in affecting resistance to annual grass invasions. Requires rules provide for experimental restoration plots in cattle grazing enclosures within the wildlife area. Directs Commission to prepare and submit a report on pilot program implementation to a committee or interim committee of the Legislature related to natural resources on or before September 15, 2024. Repeals direction to Commission to develop and adopt pilot program on January 2, 2025.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

No subsequent referral

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) owns or manages by agreement nearly 200,000 acres of land set aside for wildlife use and public recreation. The first wildlife area, Summer Lake Wildlife Area, was purchased in 1944. According to ODFW, most state-operated wildlife areas provide either marshes and wetlands for migratory waterfowl, or rangelands where big game animals can seek refuge from harsh winter weather.

The Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area was acquired in 1972 to protect and enhance winter habitat for the upper John Day River, Aldrich Mountains, and eastern Ochoco Mountains mule deer population.

“Invasive species” are plants, animals, and microbes not native to a region. When introduced, the species outcompete native species for available resources, reproduce prolifically and dominate regions and ecosystems. Invasive species often arrive in new areas unaccompanied by their native predators, making them difficult to control.

Senate Bill 21 would direct the Fish and Wildlife Commission to develop an invasive grass pilot program in the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area for specified purposes.