

**RCW 79.70.010 Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to establish a state system of natural area preserves and a means whereby the preservation of these aquatic and land areas can be accomplished.

All areas within the state, except those which are expressly dedicated by law for preservation and protection in their natural condition, are subject to alteration by human activity. Natural lands, together with the plants and animals living thereon in natural ecological systems, are valuable for the purposes of scientific research, teaching, as habitats of rare and vanishing species, as places of natural historic and natural interest and scenic beauty, and as living museums of the original heritage of the state.

It is, therefore, the public policy of the state of Washington to secure for the people of present and future generations the benefit of an enduring resource of natural areas by establishing a system of natural area preserves, and to provide for the protection of these natural areas. [1972 ex.s. c 119 § 1.]