
Ecology & Parks Committee

HB 2333

Brief Description: Concerning volunteer state parks hosts.

Sponsors: Representatives McCune, Hinkle, Shea, Short, Warnick, Johnson and Smith.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the State Parks and Recreation Commission to attempt to recruit and maintain volunteers to serve as park host in all state parks.
- Identifies requirements and responsibilities for park host volunteers.
- Requires the State Parks and Recreation Commission to report to the Legislature biennially.

Hearing Date: 1/19/10

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) may currently utilize volunteers in state parks. Volunteers assist with hosting, perform maintenance projects such as recycling, tree trimming and lawn mowing, and provide assistance in the office or in specialized areas such as interpretation, stewardship, or historic research.

Volunteers also act as hosts. Hosts assist park staff and perform a variety of tasks depending on the park and the type of host assignment. The Commission utilizes camp hosts, Environmental Learning Center hosts, interpretive hosts, marine hosts, and maintenance hosts.

Summary of Bill:

The Commission must attempt to recruit and maintain volunteers to serve as park host in all state parks. The goal for the Commission is to have each park have a volunteer for at least eight hours everyday the park is open. The volunteer park hosts must:

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- solicit voluntary donations from park guests;
- assist with visitor services;
- conduct minor concessions; and
- perform minor maintenance of the park facilities.

The Commission must utilize unmanned donation collection boxes to solicit voluntary donations from park guests in the state parks that do not have volunteer hosts. All donations received from the volunteer park hosts soliciting park guests and the the unmanned donation collection boxes must be deposited into the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account.

The Commission must not charge volunteers for camping, boat moorage, utility hook-ups, or other fees charged for the use of state parks and state parks facilities. However, the Commission may establish minimum hourly commitments necessary for volunteers to qualify for fee waivers.

Volunteers may replace or supplant classified positions as well as eliminate positions in the bargaining unit.

The Commission must adopt rules establishing requirements for a criminal history record information search for volunteer park hosts.

The Commission must report to the Legislature by the end of each odd-numbered year regarding which state parks did not have volunteers present for at least eight hours each open day, as well as a summary of recruiting efforts conducted by the Commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2010.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.