
State Government & Tribal Affairs
Committee

HB 2161

Brief Description: Regarding access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.

Sponsors: Representatives Bailey, Orwall, McCune, Zeiger, Cody, Ladenburg, Dahlquist and Maxwell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires provision of a complimentary Discover Pass to persons to whom the State Parks and Recreation Commission has granted a Disabled Veteran Lifetime Pass.

Hearing Date: 1/9/12

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Discover Pass.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) are charged with managing the public lands of the state. The WDFW owns or manages nearly one million acres of public land for fish and wildlife, habitat conservation, and wildlife-related recreation. The DNR protects and manages 5.6 million acres of state-owned land. State Parks oversees 119 developed parks.

A Discover Pass is generally required for vehicle access on designated recreational areas located on state lands owned or managed by the DNR, the WDFW, and State Parks. The cost is \$30 for an annual pass and \$10 for a day-use permit.

There are a few exceptions to the requirement that a vehicle display a Discover Pass or day-use permit:

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- Purchasers of certain hunting and fishing licenses receive a complimentary vehicle access pass that allows access only to land managed by the WDFW.
- No passes or permits are required when camping at a state park or when parked in a designated 30-minute short term parking area.
- State parks may be made available for access without a Discover Pass or day use permit for up to 12 days a year.
- Individuals purchasing a winter recreation area permit, also known as a Sno-Park pass, are not required to purchase any additional passes or permits to use a Sno-Park.
- A Discover Pass or permit is not required to launch a boat at a state park if the boat launcher has purchased a permit to use boat launch facilities.

Failure to display the Discover Pass or a day-use permit where required carries a penalty of \$99. If an annual Discover Pass is purchased within 15 days after notice of an infraction, the penalty is reduced to \$59.

A complimentary Discover Pass must be provided to volunteers who performed 24 hours of service on agency-sanctioned volunteer projects in a year.

State Parks Passes.

State Parks must grant a variety of access passes to certain individuals at no charge:

(1) Senior Citizen's Pass. A Senior Citizen's Pass entitles the recipient to a 50 percent reduction in campsite rental fees and free admission to any state park. Recipients must be at least 62

years of age and meet certain domiciliary and residency requirements and income thresholds.

(2) Disability Pass. Eligible recipients are entitled to a 50 percent reduction in campsite rental fees and free admission to any state park. A card, decal, or special license plate issued for permanent disability may serve as the pass.

(3) Disabled Veteran Lifetime Pass. Any resident of the state who is a veteran and has a service-connected disability of at least 30 percent is entitled to receive a Disabled Veteran Lifetime

Pass. This pass entitles the holder to free use of any campsite within any state park, free admission to any state park, and exemption from any reservation fees.

(4) Foster Home Camping Pass. Foster parents, when accompanied by the foster child, are entitled to free use of any campsite within any state park and free admission to any state park.

Summary of Bill:

A complimentary Discover Pass must be provided to any person to whom State Parks has provided a Disabled Veteran Lifetime Pass.

The penalty for failure to display a Discover Pass or day-use permit is waived in its entirety if the individual shows that he or she has, or is eligible for, a Disabled Veteran Lifetime Pass.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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