
**Criminal Justice & Corrections
Committee**

HB 1516

Brief Description: Concerning park rangers employed by the parks and recreation commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooper, Delvin, O'Brien, Lovick, Berkey, Hatfield, Simpson, Linville and Anderson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the designation of the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission from limited authority law enforcement agency to general authority law enforcement agency.
- Requires that applicants for park ranger positions be United States citizens and able to read and write the English language.
- Requires park rangers hired after the effective date of the act to complete the basic law enforcement academy course or an equivalency course.

Hearing Date: 2/12/03

Staff: Aaron Anderson (786-7119).

Background:

The Washington Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is charged with enforcing the state laws related to public recreational lands. The PARC is designated as a limited authority Washington law enforcement agency. However, the PARC and employees it designates are vested with police powers to enforce Washington laws. Park rangers go through a training course developed by the PARC, and PARC policy directs rangers to enforce all Washington laws within parks and in areas immediately surrounding parks. Park rangers enforce laws outside of these areas only at the request of another agency.

General authority Washington law enforcement agencies may enforce any traffic or criminal law of the state throughout the territorial boundaries of the state. Such agencies include the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, county sheriff's offices, and

local police departments.

Summary of Bill:

The PARC is designated as a general authority Washington law enforcement agency. The PARC can enforce the traffic and criminal laws of the state throughout the territorial bounds of the state.

Park rangers are granted authority to serve and execute warrants and processes issued by the courts.

All applicants for park ranger positions must be citizens of the United States who can read and write the English language. All officers employed after the effective date of the act must successfully complete the basic law enforcement academy course, or an equivalency course, sponsored by the Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Park rangers are not provided membership in the Washington Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' (LEOFF) retirement system.

Liability arising out of the exercise or alleged exercise of authority by a park ranger rests with the PARC unless the park ranger acts under the direction or control of another agency, or unless the liability is assumed under an agreement between the PARC and another agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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