
**Fisheries, Ecology & Parks
Committee**

HB 1139

Brief Description: Creating the evergreen recreation pass.

Sponsors: Representatives McIntire, Ericksen, Armstrong, Wallace, Dunshee, Cooper, Anderson, O'Brien, Haigh, Kenney, Lantz, Morrell, Rockefeller and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates an Evergreen Recreation Pass to be used in lieu of parking fees at recreation sites managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Specifies the cost of the pass may not exceed \$35.
- Includes provisions for the distribution of revenues from the Pass among state agencies.

Hearing Date: 1/28/03

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) recently implemented a day-use parking fee, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) charges \$10 for the fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) currently does not charge fees for parking at its recreation sites. The United States Forest Service charges for parking at some of its recreation sites. Presently there is no mechanism to establish a single pass that could be used at all state-owned recreation sites.

Public or private landowners who allow members of the public to use lands for outdoor recreation without charging a fee are not liable for unintentional injuries under certain circumstances. The Commission and DFW may issue licenses or permits for statewide use that are not considered a fee for purposes of recreational immunity.

The State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force (Task Force) was created in the

2002 supplemental operating budget (Chapter 371, Laws of 2002). The budget directed the Task Force to prepare recommendations for improving the operation of state parks and outdoor recreation programs and to secure adequate funding on a permanent basis to support the needs of state parks and outdoor recreation programs. The Task Force developed several recommendations for the Legislature's consideration, including a proposal for an Evergreen Recreation Pass (Pass).

Summary of Bill:

The Pass is created as a renewable annual parking permit that can be used in lieu of parking fees charged at recreation sites managed by the Commission, the DNR, and the DFW. The DNR is authorized to charge a fee for parking motor vehicles at designated recreation sites. Purchase of the Pass is optional.

The initial cost of the Pass may not exceed \$35; the cost may be increased based upon the fiscal growth factor. The Department of Licensing must make the Pass available for purchase and include a notice of availability in each notice of license tab renewal.

Agencies participating in the Pass are authorized to enter into agreements with federal agencies and neighboring states to develop a regional recreation pass. Agencies are required to evaluate a proposal to develop a joint state and federal recreation pass by December 1, 2003, and to report their findings to the Legislature.

Agencies may develop premium passes that combine additional licenses and services that may include camping, boat launch and moorage, hunting, and fishing.

The Pass must be displayed so it is visible from outside of the motor vehicle. Passes must be available during any month of the year. Failure to display a pass is a natural resource infraction subject to a \$66 dollar penalty. Penalties may be reduced to \$10 if the registered owner provides proof that an annual parking permit has been purchased within 15 days after the violation.

Revenues collected in 2004 will be distributed 50% to State Parks, and 25% each to the DNR and the DFW. In 2005, revenues from the sale of the Pass will be distributed to agencies based on visitation to agency lands by purchasers of the Pass during the prior year. Visitation will be determined by a survey conducted by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation in 2004 that will be updated every four years. Monies received from the sale of the Pass must be used for operation, maintenance, repair, and equipment for agency recreation sites.

The Pass is a permit issued for statewide use and is not considered a fee for purposes of recreational immunity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2003.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.