

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5200

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 31, 2017

Title: An act relating to allowing spouses to combine volunteer hours for purposes of receiving a complimentary discover pass.

Brief Description: Allowing spouses to combine volunteer hours for purposes of receiving a complimentary discover pass.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Warnick, Fain, Bailey, Brown, Hasegawa and Rolfes.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/24/17, 1/31/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows married spouses to combine hours for purposes of receiving a complimentary Discover Pass for volunteers.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Hawkins, Vice Chair; Van De Wege, Ranking Minority Member; Fortunato and McCoy.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Discover Pass Program in General. During the 2011 regular session, the Legislature established the requirement for an annual Discover Pass or day-use permit for motor vehicle access to recreation lands managed by the State Parks & Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish & Wildlife (agencies).

Discover Pass Exemptions. A Discover Pass or day-use permit is not required in certain circumstances. Examples include the following:

- parking at designated short-term parking areas;

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- entry onto state lands consistent with a written authorization such as a lease or contract;
- accessing Department of Fish and Wildlife lands with a Vehicle Access Pass, which is issued along with certain hunting and fishing licenses; and
- operating on an ungated road managed by the Department of Natural Resources or the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Complementary Volunteer Discover Pass. A volunteer who performs 24 hours of service on agency-sanctioned volunteer projects in a year is entitled to a complimentary Discover Pass. The agencies provide a volunteer with vouchers identifying the number of volunteer hours. After reaching 24 volunteer hours, the volunteer can redeem the vouchers for a Discover Pass.

Summary of Bill: Married spouses who collectively perform 24 hours of volunteer service on agency-sanctioned projects are entitled to receive a single complimentary Discovery Pass.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill helps recognize those who volunteer to work on state lands, and the small fiscal note creates so much more in value to the state. Some married couples just want one pass to share, and this helps promote volunteerism.

OTHER: Supporting those who volunteer is a worthy goal, but there is a need to recognize previous reductions in general fund support for natural resource agencies. There is currently an analysis underway on recreational fee systems, including exemptions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Becker, Prime Sponsor; Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Tod Petersen, Washington Off Highway Vehicle Alliance & Northwest Motorcycle Association.

OTHER: Daniel Farber, State Parks; Alia Griffing, WA Federation of State Employees.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.