

OVCBCHW

Legislative Report

March 31, 2012

Discover Pass

While the Legislature has not completed its work, and a Special Session is all but certain, I want to inform you of something likely to affect all of us. The Discover Pass bill that we have been actively working on for months has passed the legislature. The governor has signed the bill (finally).

There were a few changes in the final bill from the Senate and House versions I have reported to you throughout the session, so I want you to know exactly what passed.

- 1. 2-vehicle transferability for \$30 per year; one-vehicle use of the pass at a time. There would be spaces on the pass to write in two vehicle license numbers, and only those vehicles could use that pass. You could not bring two vehicles into the park at the same time with one pass. This would take place immediately and retroactively for all folks who have already purchased a pass. No refunds for those who have already purchased two passes would be allowed.**
- 2. Flexibility on when the Discover Pass activation starts (will make gifting easier). It will be up to the three agencies to agree on how to do activation for periods different from the sales date. It will take time to come up with specific policies and procedures, so until further notice, the activation time is still the date of sale. (Note that there is currently some time offset with DOL and other sales and that will continue.)**
- 3. Expansion to all of DNR's uplands which would be subject to the pass requirement.**

4. Broadening locations and methods of sale.
5. Provides as an option that the agencies may choose to offer a \$50 fully transferable pass that is called a “Family Discover Pass.” The word “family” is a misnomer, in that the pass could be used by anyone, inside the same household or not. Again, it would only be for one vehicle at a time. Implementation of this provision is also not immediate. The three agencies need to come up with many policies and procedures, and agree to sales price, prior to implementation.
6. Special Events could, at the discretion of the agency, be exempt from the Discover Pass, if they pay other fees to state parks. (This is a complex implementation task for the 3 agencies involved, they are balancing our public service and revenue objectives. The legislation gives discretion, but each agency is still working the details.) It is not clear yet how this will be implemented at the DNR.
7. Expands the existing Opt-Out vehicle donation program to additional vehicles (like snowmobiles, mopeds, and ¾ ton pick-up trucks.)
8. Contains an emergency clause to have it enforced immediately upon the governor’s signature.

Other elements that were part of earlier versions of the bill that did NOT get adopted include:

1. Expanding Disabled Veteran’s free access to WDFW and DNR lands.
2. Directing Hotel/Motel Tax receipts from State Parks lodging and camping to go back to State Parks.
3. Creating a 3-year temporary \$10 RV license surcharge.
4. Wholesaling of the pass.
5. Eliminating requirement to get a Discover Pass if visitor already has a Sno-Park day pass. Thus, there is no change from the existing requirement for a Discover Pass on state recreation lands for those people holding a day Sno-Park permit.

It is also important to note that earlier this week the legislature passed a bill that transfers Discover Pass citation fines to the joint agency Discover Pass account. State Parks receives 84% of these revenues. The fines have been going to counties for court administration.