

[Legislation Aims to Maintain Recreation Access on State Lands With Access Permit](#)

Local News

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OLYMPIA — The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the state departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) today announced they are co-requesting legislation that will reform state land management and maintain public access to state recreation lands. [SB 5622](#) addresses the growing demand for recreation opportunities and the impacts of recreation on natural resources and wildlife by developing a reliable source of funding and improving law enforcement on state lands managed by the agencies. All three agencies have seen sharp declines in their budgets to provide adequate maintenance, improvements, and enforcement for recreation. The Governor's proposed budget removed state General Fund support for recreation on state lands in favor of a user-supported funding approach. "As lawmakers discuss the most drastic budget cuts in state history, we need to align our revenues with our expectations about our quality of life," said [State Senator Kevin Ranker](#) (D-40th), the prime sponsor of the bill, said. "We need to talk about not just how much our outdoor recreation services cost, but also about how much it costs to lose them. Without this legislation, we will witness widespread closure of state parks and other public facilities. I am grateful for the leadership provided by Parks, DNR, and WDFW on this critical issue." A companion bill, [HB 1796](#), has been introduced in the House by Rep. Kevin Van De Wege (D-24th). One of the key components of the bill is the annual \$30 pass that will enable the public to visit state lands managed by all three agencies with just a single pass. "With State Parks moving off General Fund tax support, we need a new way to fund recreation, and a user-pay model seems to be the fairest—those who use parks pay for them," said State Parks Director Don Hoch. "Working together with all three agencies that offer recreation on state lands is a great value for citizens. The public doesn't have to worry about whether they are on lands managed by State Parks, WDFW, or DNR. One permit gets them access."

"State general revenues are no longer a stable source of funding for outdoor recreation on state lands," said WDFW Director Phil Anderson. "This proposal will bring a greater degree of stability to state land maintenance and operation, and will ensure the public's ability to access state lands and waterways for outdoor recreation. We're eager to work with legislators and our fellow natural resource agencies to improve the legislation as we seek sustainable funding for state lands." "DNR plays a significant role in providing recreation opportunities on state trust lands," said Bryan Flint, DNR's Communications and Outreach Director. "Places such as Mount Si, Tahuya State Forest, and Lake Spokane are very popular recreation areas that we manage." The bill, as introduced: **Creates an annual, singular pass**—called the "Discover Pass"—that will enable the public to visit lands managed by Parks, WDFW, and DNR. The pass will cost \$30 per year per vehicle or \$10 for day use. **Improves public safety**, by giving law enforcement officers from each agency the authority to issue natural resource infractions on land managed by any of the agencies. **Provides a free annual pass to volunteers** who donate 40 hours of their time working on volunteer projects sanctioned by the agencies. **Aligns DNR's**

recreational immunity with that of the other state agencies. **Specifies how each agency must spend the revenue** generated by the Discover Pass. Revenue from the sales of the pass will be split among the three agencies in the following manner: DNR and WDFW will each receive 7.5 percent and State Parks will receive 85 percent. Both DNR and WDFW would receive an estimated \$5.5 million per biennium and State Parks would receive \$61 million. Revenues in excess of \$71 million would be distributed evenly among the agencies. The pass proceeds would partially offset reductions in state General Fund support to all three agencies. **Recreation on Washington state lands** State lands managed by DNR, State Parks, and WDFW provide millions of acres of recreation opportunities for citizens of the state and for the millions for visitors who come to Washington to enjoy and experience its exceptional outdoor places.