Hwo Do You Wrap a Discover Pass? (In Outdoor Fun)

Local News

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Posted on : December 1, 2011 at 4:55 am

Olympia, WA - Despite the winter chill, Washingtonians have plenty of reasons to head outdoors during the holiday season. Steelhead are surging up coastal rivers, waterfowl hunting is in full swing from the Skagit Valley to the Columbia Basin, and birders are gearing up around the state for the 112th annual Christmas Bird Count.Those planning to do some holiday shopping between their outdoor adventures can share their appreciation of Washington’s recreational opportunities with the gift of a fishing license, hunting license or a Discover Pass.Although the new licensing year doesn't begin until April 1, a lot of people like to have their license in hand a few months early, said Joe Stohr, deputy director for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)."It's always great to be prepared when the new season arrives," Stohr said. "Besides, hunting and fishing licenses make great holiday gifts."Starting Dec. 1, state fishing and hunting licenses are available for the 2012 season by phone (866-246-9453), online (http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/), and from licensing dealers around the state.A Discover Pass also makes a fine gift, providing access to nearly seven million acres of state-managed recreation lands, including state parks, water-access points, heritage sites, wildlife and natural areas, trails and trailheads.

The annual pass - valid for one year from the issue date - is $35 with transaction and dealer fees if purchased at a license dealer, by phone or on-line. For details on purchasing, see http://discoverpass.wa.gov/ .Licensed hunters and fishers do not need a Discover Pass to access lands managed by WDFW, because they receive a free Vehicle Use Permit with their license.One such area is WDFW’s Oak Creek Wildlife Area about 15 miles northwest of Yakima, where hundreds of hungry elk and big-horn sheep gather each December to feed on alfalfa hay and pellets. Prospective visitors should call ahead (509-653-2390) about feeding times and elk-viewing tours. Rather dig some razor clams? WDFW has tentatively scheduled evening digs at several ocean beaches Dec. 10, 22 and 23, pending the results of marine toxin tests. For updated information, check the department’s website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/ .For more information about fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing available over the next month, see the Weekender Regional Reports posted on WDFW’s website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/weekender/ . These reports are updated throughout the month to provide current information about recreational opportunities around the state.