

## Appendix E: Description of Passes in Washington

### *General Access, Entrance or Standard Amenity Fees*

This section provides a brief description of the standard or basic passes available to the public, what each pass grants, and how individuals can purchase the passes.

Outdoor recreators can purchase passes and permits through a wide variety of platforms, such as online, in-person, or by pay-station (also called an iron ranger), most points of sale sell only state or only federal passes. The only pass vendor that sells all three (3) of the following passes is REI.

The **Discover Pass** is required for motor-vehicle access at recreation sites managed by DNR, State parks, and WDFW. The Discover Pass can be purchased online through WDFW's Wild System; by phone; when renewing a vehicle registration; at an automated state park pay station; or in person at nearly 600 hunting or fishing license vendors, 80+ retail locations, or the following State Parks locations: agency headquarters, regional offices, and some individual state parks when staff is available. Of Annual Discover Passes sold, approximately 30% are sold during vehicle registration or renewal, 30% are sold through the WDFW Wild site, and the remaining 30% are sold in-person (a significant percentage of these passes are sold at a location in North Bend, Washington). The Discover Pass provides two spaces for license plate numbers, and is only valid when displayed in either of those two vehicles. The Legislature set the price of an annual Discover Pass at \$30, but cost to an individual could be \$30, \$32, or \$35, depending on transaction fees charged at the point of purchase. Users also have the option to purchase a 1-day Discover Pass for \$10 in person at many of the locations outlined above or for \$11.50 online from WDFW's Wild System.

#### **Key terms:**

**Motor vehicle access:** Grants motor vehicle parking and operation in areas managed by State Parks, DNR, or WDFW. Example of valid passes: Discover Pass, Vehicle Access Pass, or Sno-Park Pass.

**Expanded Amenity Fee:** Fee charged for "the extras" on federally-managed lands beyond basic entrance or standard amenities. Examples include: campgrounds, boat launches, and guided tours.

**Entrance Fee:** Fee charged to access lands managed by National Park Service or Fish and Wildlife Service. Examples of valid passes: Interagency Pass or Interagency Senior Pass.

**Standard Amenity Fee:** Fee charged for use of Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and Reclamation sites that have a combination of basic amenities, such as picnic tables, trash receptacles, toilets, developed parking, interpretive signage, and/or security. Examples of valid passes: Interagency Pass or Northwest Forest Pass

The Forest Service offers the **Northwest Forest Pass**, an annual, regional pass valid at standard amenity fee sites in USFS Region 6, including National Forest land in both Washington and

Oregon. The Northwest Forest Pass provides two spaces for license plate numbers, and is only valid when displayed in either of those two vehicles<sup>22</sup>. The Northwest Forest Pass price is \$30 and can be purchased online from USGS or Discover your Northwest (a nonprofit dedicated to supporting Northwest public lands), or in person at a local vendor or Forest Service Office. There is also a 1-day equivalent called the National Forest Recreation Day Pass, available for \$5 at the locations outlined above.

The federal **Interagency Pass** covers entrance fees and standard amenity fees nationwide on public lands managed by the following federal agencies: 1) National Park Service, 2) U.S. Forest Service, 3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4) Bureau of Land Management, 5) Bureau of Reclamation, and 6) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (*Interagency Standard Operating Procedures*, 2012). The Interagency Pass provides two signature lines for two individuals who are both considered pass holders, admitting the pass holder and up to 3 additional persons at per-person fee sites (persons 15 years of age and younger are admitted free of charge). The Annual Interagency Pass purchase price is \$80. It can be purchased online through a wide variety of portals (including USGS and Discover your Northwest), as well as in person at many different federal recreation area sites. Each federal agency may have site-specific daily or annual fees.

### *Volunteer Passes*

Each of the above outlined passes— the Discover Pass, Northwest Forest Pass, and Interagency Pass— has its own volunteer program that grants individuals a “free” pass with the completion of a predetermined number of required volunteer hours, though each volunteer program requires varying numbers of hours to qualify for a pass, as outlined below. Additionally, some nonprofit organizations use volunteer passes as incentives for people to participate in work projects.

**Discover Pass:** Complimentary pass provided to volunteers (individuals or married couples) that complete 24 hours of volunteer work on state lands.

**Northwest Forest Pass:** Complimentary pass provided to volunteers that complete 16 hours of volunteer work on National Forest lands.

**Interagency Pass:** Complimentary pass provided to volunteers that complete 250 hours of volunteer work with participating federal agencies.

### *Pass Exceptions*

The two exceptions in which an individual does not need one of the three passes outlined above include:

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<sup>22</sup> This change occurred October 2017. Previously, the Northwest Forest Pass did not include space for any license plates and was a “household” pass.

**Free Days:** Each land management agency (both state and federal) hosts free days during which time visitors do not need to pay fees or display a pass to enter, access, or use trailhead parking lots and amenities. However, free days vary widely from the number hosted by each agency to which days are free. For example, even though all Washington state land management agencies use the Discover Pass, State Parks hosts 12 free days, WDFW hosts 2 free days, and DNR does not host any free days. There is similar variation between each of the six federal agencies that participate in the Interagency Pass program.

**Arriving without a motor vehicle:** If a user arrives at a recreation site without a motor vehicle (via bus, bike, walking, etc.), they do not need to pay a fee at recreation sites managed by Washington state land managers. Similarly, on federal land, individuals who arrive without a motor vehicle do not need a pass, though entrance fees may still apply at certain locations.

### *Overview of Exemptions and Reduced-Fee Programs*

The section below provides an overview of agencies, and the benefits and acquisition process associated with (both state and federal) exempt and reduced-fee pass programs in Washington. Further information can be found in the Holistic Look Document<sup>23</sup>.

## **Disability Programs**

### **Disability Pass** (established in 1977)

**Applicable:** State Parks (<http://parks.state.wa.us/205/Passes>)

**Eligibility:** Washington state residents (living in Washington for a minimum of three consecutive months) qualify who are legally blind, profoundly deaf, developmentally disabled, or who meet the disability definition used by the U.S. Social Security Administration. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission evaluates applications - short-term disabilities are eligible only for the One-Year Disability Pass, otherwise a 5-year pass is issued. It is important to note that disability placards are accepted by State Parks, therefore out-of-state visitors may receive this benefit.

**Provided Benefits:** A Permanent Disability Parking Permit or License Plate, issued by the Washington State Department of Licensing, entitles the beneficiary to a 50% disability discount on camping and moorage and waives the trailer dump, boat launch and day use entry fee.

### **Interagency Access Pass** (established in 2007)

**Applicable:** All Federal Agencies nationwide

**Eligibility:** US citizen or permanent resident with medical determination and documentation of permanent disabilities.

**Provided Benefits:** The Access Pass is a free equivalent to the Interagency Pass, honored nationwide by all participating agencies

## **Military/Veteran**

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<sup>23</sup> Available on the Ruckelshaus Center website.

**Disabled Veterans Pass** (established in 1977)**Applicable:** State Parks

Eligibility: Washington state residents (minimum three consecutive months) with a documented service-connected disability of at least 30%.

Provided Benefits: All benefits of Discover Pass (only on State Parks land), as well as all free camping / moorage, campsite reservations through State Parks central reservations system, watercraft launching, trailer dump and day-use entry. Valid year-round.

**Interagency Annual Pass for Military** (established in 2007)**Applicable:** All Federal Agencies nationwide

Eligibility: Current US military members and the dependents of deployed military in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, as well as most members of the Current US Reserves and National Guard.

Provided Benefits: The Interagency Annual Pass for Military is a free equivalent to the Interagency Pass, honored nationwide by all participating agencies

**Senior/Elder Programs****Off-Season Senior Citizen Pass** (established in 2011)**Applicable:** State Parks

Eligibility: Washington residents aged 62 and over.

Provided Benefits: Pass price is \$75 and provides: free nightly camping and moorage from Oct. 1 – March 31 and Sunday – Thursday in April. An additional \$10/night fee applies at utility sites.

**Senior Citizen Limited Income Pass** (established in 1997)**Applicable:** State Parks

Eligibility: Washington residents aged 62 and over with annual income of \$40,000 or less. Provided Benefits: This pass provides access to State Parks managed lands, a 50% discount on nightly camping and moorage, free watercraft launching, trailer dump and is valid year-round.

**Interagency Senior Pass** (established in 2007)**Applicable:** All Federal Agencies nationwide

Eligibility: U.S. citizens or permanent residents aged 62 and over.

Provided Benefits: The Interagency Senior Pass is a lifetime pass. It is valid at all interagency participating sites. One time cost of \$80 (Annual passes can also be purchased for \$20. Four consecutive annual passes can be exchanged for a lifetime).

**Foster Families****Foster Home Camping Pass** (established in 2008)**Applicable:** State Parks

Eligibility: This benefit is free for foster families. Proof of eligibility requires state residency plus Foster Care ID and Foster Home License. Foster parents or caregivers must be accompanied by the foster child(ren).

Provided Benefits: It provides: free campsites and day-use entry, free use of boat launches and pump-outs. For camping: parents/caregivers pay transaction fees but can otherwise receive the free camping benefit on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Activity Based Passes, Permits, and Fees**

**Annual Natural Investment Permit** (\$80/year), provides motor-vehicle access and use of developed launch site, (alternatively, the public can display a Daily Launch Fee (\$7/day) + daily/annual Discover Pass): online, by mail, or in person at a State Watercraft Launch Park or State Parks Headquarters.

**Sno-Park permits** can be purchased (seasonally) online, by mail, at certain Washington State Park locations, vendors, or at Region 6 U.S. Forest Service offices.

- Annual or daily Sno-Park Permits (either motorized and non-motorized permit) are required between November 1 and March 31 at winter recreation sites managed by State Parks and the USFS (in Washington). Some locations may also require a **Special Groomed Sticker** in addition to a Sno-Park Permit.
- Some DNR winter recreation sites require a Discover Pass (either daily or annual) AND a **Special Groomed Sticker** for certain activities.

A **Vehicle Access Pass (VAP)** is not a standalone pass for purchase, but rather comes with the purchase of most hunting and fishing licenses. Licenses (and subsequently the VAP) can be purchased online through WDFW's WILD system or in-person at retailers such as Cabela's, Walmart, or Safeway.