



www.discoverpass.wa.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

May 12, 2011

Q. How much does the Discover Pass cost?

A. The Discover Pass costs \$30 per vehicle per year or \$10 per vehicle for a day-use pass. Dealer and transaction fees may apply. Dealer fee is \$2 per annual pass or \$.50 for the day pass; transaction fee is 10 percent of the cost of the pass/permit. The annual pass is good for one year from purchase date.

Q. Where will I need a Discover Pass?

A. The pass provides access to state recreation lands and water access sites managed by Washington State Parks (State Parks), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These lands include state parks, water access points, heritage sites, wildlife and natural areas, trails and trailheads.

Q. When will the Discover Pass go into effect?

A. July 1, 2011.

Q. Where can I purchase a daily or annual pass?

- A. You have several options for purchasing a pass:
1. **In person** at any of nearly 600 sporting goods or other retail stores that sell hunting and fishing licenses.
 2. **Online** through WDFW's online recreational licensing system at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>.
 3. **When you renew your vehicle license.** Beginning in fall 2011, you will be able to purchase a pass when renewing a vehicle license through the Washington State Department of Licensing.

Q. How soon will I be able to purchase the Discover Pass?

A. The Discover Pass will be available for purchase prior to July 1, 2011.

Q. Where do I display the Discover Pass?

A. The Discover Pass must be visibly displayed on the front windshield of any motor vehicle.



Q. Who gets the money from the Discover Pass fee?

A. The revenue will be split among the three agencies as follows:

- 84 percent to State Parks
- 8 percent Fish and Wildlife
- 8 percent Department of Natural Resources

Revenue from the Discover Pass is needed to make up the loss of general fund money that had historically been available for recreation on state lands. The *proposed* state budget for the next two years (2011-2013 biennium) has almost no general fund dollars for recreation on state lands.

For State Parks, the loss of general fund money means the agency needs to replace approximately \$61 million to operate the park system. DNR and WDFW each need to replace \$5.5 million in general fund losses to keep recreation lands open.

Q. Will people from out of state need to purchase a pass?

A. Yes.

Q. Can we just purchase one Discover Pass and share it among our vehicles?

A. No. You will need the Discover Pass for each street-legal vehicle you intend to use to access state land.

Q. If I am driving through or parking outside of a designated trailhead or non-exempt campground, will I need to buy a pass?

A. Yes. Anytime you are on state recreation lands managed by WDFW, DNR or State Parks, you will need a Discover Pass.

Q. If I am gathering mushrooms, berries or firewood for my personal use or doing other dispersed recreation activities such as geocaching, driving forest roads, bird watching, etc., do I still need to purchase an access pass?

A. Yes. All street-licensed vehicles will need a Discover Pass to access state recreation lands managed by the agencies, regardless of the type of activity or use.

Q. Can I park my vehicle briefly on state-managed recreation lands without a Discover Pass?

A. Yes. You may park your vehicle for up to 30 minutes without needing the Discover Pass in designated locations.

Q. What is the penalty for not having a Discover Pass or daily pass on my vehicle?

A. The penalty is \$99. This penalty is reduced to \$59 if an individual provides proof of purchase of the Discover Pass to the court within 15 days after the notice of violation.

Q. What if I visit a Washington state recreation land and don't have the Discover Pass or a daily pass?

A. You may go to the nearest retail business that sells hunting and fishing licenses to purchase the pass. For vendor locations, go to www.discoverpass.wa.gov or call toll-free at (866) 320-9933.

Exemptions to the Discover Pass requirement

*Your purchase helps to maintain state recreation lands; however, some uses are exempt from needing a Discover Pass.**

Q. Can volunteers obtain a complimentary Discover Pass?

A. Yes. Volunteers who work 24 hours on agency-approved projects can earn a complimentary annual pass. Each agency must provide vouchers to volunteers, recording the number of hours they worked on each project. Volunteers can redeem the voucher for the annual Discover Pass. The three agencies are currently developing the details of the complimentary Discover Pass, such as where and how volunteers get vouchers, what constitutes an agency-approved project and where people can go to redeem their vouchers.

Q. If I pay for hunting or fishing license, do I also need to purchase a Discover Pass?

A. It depends on the license and which agency manages the land you're accessing.

The Discover Pass is **not required** for holders of certain hunting and fishing licenses on **WDFW recreation sites or lands**. For those individuals, a "vehicle access pass" will be required for vehicle access to WDFW lands. The vehicle access pass is issued free of charge to anyone who purchases a big-game or small-game hunting license; western Washington pheasant permit; trapping license; Watchable Wildlife decal; or saltwater, freshwater or combination recreational fishing license.

For vehicle access to **lands managed by State Parks or DNR**, all hunters or fishers will need to purchase either a daily pass for \$10 or the \$30 annual Discover Pass. As a reminder, there is no hunting on State Parks lands.

Q. Do I need a Discover Pass when I camp at a state park?

A. No. Your camping reservation stub where you have reserved a campsite or your camping fee receipt at a first-come, first-served park will serve as your permit for the duration of your camping stay in the park. If you were to visit other parks in the area, you would need an annual or daily pass. A Discover Pass is required to camp on lands managed by DNR and WDFW since the two agencies do not charge for camping.

Q. Do I need to purchase a Discover Pass for my off-road vehicle (ORV)?

A. See below...

- **ORVs – No.** ORVs that are required to display an ORV tab **will not be required** to have a Discover Pass. Generally, ORVs are non-street legal vehicles such as quads, some dirt bikes and some four-wheel-drive passenger vehicles.
- **Trailers – No.** Trailers do not need an access pass.
- **Vehicles – Yes.** The vehicle that transports a trailer with ORVs will need an access pass. Street-licensed vehicles, such as a dual-sport motorcycle or four-wheel-drive vehicles, will be required to display a pass.

Q. Do I need a Discover Pass if I have a Sno-Park seasonal permit?

A. No. You will not need to purchase a Discover Pass to use a designated Sno-Park between Nov. 1 and March 31 for winter recreation activities. However, your Sno-Park permit may not be used to access other state recreation lands. (For a list of designated Sno-Parks, go to www.parks.wa.gov/winter/trails/)

Q. Will disabled veterans and other State Parks pass holders need to purchase a Discover Pass?

A. Qualified disabled veterans and other pass holders will not need to purchase a Discover Pass for access to Washington state parks, but they will need to purchase the pass for access to lands managed by WDFW and DNR.

Q. What about individuals or parties who have agreements with any of the agencies? Do they need a Discover Pass?

A. No. Those individuals with leases, contracts and easements will not need a Discover Pass, provided that written authorization is specific. For other types of agreements, it will be on a case-by-case basis and specific written authorization will be necessary.

Q. If I purchase a Natural Investment Permit for State Parks watercraft launch sites, do I need to purchase the Discover Pass?

A. No, you will not need a Discover Pass to launch your boat from a State Parks boat launch. You will need the Discover Pass for boat launches managed by DNR and WDFW.

**Please note: Even though the pass is not required in these cases, your purchase helps to maintain, manage and operate state recreation lands. As funding for recreation shifts from tax support to user fees, the responsibility to cover the costs of these exemptions will shift from the general public to visitors. You also may continue to donate to Washington State Parks when you register a vehicle through the Department of Licensing.*

MORE INFORMATION

Q. Will all of the revenue from the Discover Pass be used for recreation on state lands?

A. Revenue will be used for the purpose of operating and maintaining recreation lands and facilities. Legislation states that all revenue received from the sales of the Discover Pass will go into the Recreation Access Pass Account.

Q. How can I be assured that the funds will be used to support recreation?

A. The purpose of the legislation is to provide operating funds in place of the general fund tax dollars no longer available for recreation. The operating philosophy of the legislation is that it is fair to ask those who use state recreation lands to pay for them directly. All of the revenue from the Discover Pass goes toward providing recreation access on state recreation lands.

Q. Won't the cost to enforce the access pass exceed the revenue collected?

A. No. The legislation provides for greater efficiencies by authorizing law enforcement officers from all three agencies to have reciprocal authority on state-owned or managed lands. Many DNR, WDFW and State Parks employees have authority to enforce the pass.

Q. Why do we need another fee when we are already paying for recreation access through taxes to the state?

A. The state budget deficit continues to grow, in large part, because of the recession and resulting decreasing revenue from taxes. The Governor's budget for the 2011-2013 biennium eliminates nearly all funding from the general fund for recreation on state lands. Without the general fund or

funding from the access pass, each of the three agencies would be forced to make sharp reductions in services and, in some cases, to close entire recreation areas.

Q. Why can't volunteers take over managing recreation sites on state lands?

A. Volunteers already play a critical role in helping to keep recreation accessible on state lands by contributing numerous hours of their time. Volunteers supplement the work of paid employees by serving as campground hosts, providing trail and campground maintenance, and helping with improvement projects. They also help with stewardship of natural resources and public facilities by acting as “eyes in the woods,” reporting bad or suspicious behavior to appropriate staff or law enforcement entities

Volunteers contributed more than 300,000 hours in state parks in 2010; 96,000 hours to DNR and 128,500 hours to the WDFW. This level of help from volunteers has helped the natural resource agencies operate at current levels.

But volunteers can't do it all and should not be put in a position to handle many things that the state is obligated to provide, including public safety and visitor protection by law enforcement officers, negotiating and signing contracts and agreements or collecting funds on behalf of an agency or the state. Paid staff are accountable to the public through a commission or executive officer. They provide professional expertise and public service, obtain permits, manage budgets to run public recreation facilities and manage contracts that benefit the public.

For many reasons, including liability, volunteers cannot work on state lands independently of supervision from an agency staff member.

Running a volunteer effort does come with a price tag. For example, it takes staff time to recruit, screen, train, supervise, document and report volunteer efforts. Reporting hours is necessary for a number of reasons, including:

- Volunteer hours qualify as an in-kind matching donation required for many grant applications.
- State agencies are required to pay Labor and Industries industrial insurance premiums on the time volunteers work on state lands.

In addition, some agency staff time is needed to purchase materials and supplies necessary to complete volunteer tasks.

Q. Where can I get more information about the Discover Pass?

A. Learn more at www.discoverpass.wa.gov. Or, write to Licensing@dfw.wa.gov or call toll-free 1-866-320-9933. Additional information will be added to this website as it becomes available. Check back for updates or call toll-free (866) 320-9933.