

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

BILL: SB 1262

INTRODUCER: Senator Harrell

SUBJECT: State Park Fee Discounts

DATE: March 8, 2021

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Brown	Caldwell	MS	Pre-meeting
2. _____	_____	EN	_____
3. _____	_____	AP	_____

I. Summary:

SB 1262 increases the current benefit on state park fees provided to active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces (U.S.A.F.), National Guard, or reserve components of the U.S.A.F. or National Guard. State park fees generated are deposited into the State Park Trust Fund, to support the administration, improvement, and maintenance of state parks. Current law provides a qualifying servicemember or veteran with a 25 percent discount on an annual entrance pass. This bill increases the benefit to that of a lifetime family annual entrance pass at no charge.

A reduction in annual revenue generated for the State Park Trust Fund is estimated to be between \$500,000 to \$600,000.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

Recreation Benefits for Servicemembers and Veterans, Overall

The following discounts on state park fees apply with written documentation to:

- Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces (U.S.A.F.), National Guard, or reserve components, 25-percent discount on annual entrance passes.
- Honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lifetime family annual entrance passes at no charge.

- Surviving spouses and parents of deceased members of the U.S.A.F., National Guard, or reserve components who died in combat, lifetime family annual entrance passes at no charge.¹

A partial or full discount on county park fees applies to:

- Current members of the U.S.A.F., their reserve components, or the National Guard.
- Honorably discharged veterans of the U.S.A.F., a reserve component, or the National Guard, and those veterans with a service-connected disability.
- Surviving spouses and parents of a deceased member of the U.S.A.F, a reserve component, or the National Guard, who died in combat.²

A member of the U.S.A.F. stationed in the state, or a residing family member is considered a resident for purposes of applying for a hunting, fishing, or other recreational license.³ A resident pays reduced fees on licenses, such as paying \$15.50 for an annual freshwater or saltwater fishing license, rather than \$45.50; \$15.50 for an annual hunting license to take game, rather than \$150; and \$46.50 for the option of an annual combination of a hunting, freshwater fishing, and saltwater fishing license (no option is available for a combination license for a nonresident).⁴

Additionally, a licensure exemption is provided for an outdoor hunting, freshwater fishing, or saltwater fishing recreational event designed to foster rehabilitation or enjoyment among disabled veterans or active duty or reserve duty servicemembers, a participating servicemember or veteran, immediate family, and an assistant to the member. This benefit applies to a disabled veteran or an active duty or reserve duty servicemember of the U.S.A.F., the Coast Guard, military reserves, or the Florida National Guard.⁵

An Annual Military Gold Sportsmen's License is available to a resident active or retired member of the U.S.A.F., U.S.A.F. Reserve, the National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard, or the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. An annual military gold sportsman's license costs \$18.50, rather than the \$98.50 charged for the annual gold sportsman's license. The annual military gold sportsman's license authorizes the same activities as the annual gold sportsman's license.⁶ Authorized activities are the taking of freshwater fish, saltwater fish, and game, subject to state and federal law, rules, and regulations. Other eligible activities include those authorized by a management area permit, a muzzle-loading gun season permit, a crossbow season permit, a turkey permit, a Florida waterfowl permit, a deer permit, an archery season permit, a snook permit, and a spiny lobster permit.⁷

Fees for Entrance to State Parks

The Division of Recreation and Parks, Department of Environmental Protection, may charge reasonable fees, rentals, or charges for the use or operation of facilities and concessions in state

¹ Section 258.0145, F.S.

² Section 125.029, F.S.

³ Section 379.101(30)(b)1., F.S.

⁴ Section 379.354(4) and (5), F.S.

⁵ Section 379.353(2)(q), F.S.

⁶ Section 379.354(4)(i) and (j), F.S.

⁷ Section 379.354(4)(i), F.S.

parks.⁸ All fees, rentals, and charges collected are deposited in the State Treasury for the benefit of the State Park Trust Fund (trust fund). Monies collected in the trust fund are to be used for the administration, improvement, and maintenance of state parks and for purchasing and developing land for state park purposes.⁹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1262 increases the current benefit on state park fees provided to active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces (U.S.A.F.), National Guard, or reserve components of the U.S.A.F. or National Guard. Current law provides a qualifying servicemember or veteran with a 25-percent discount on an annual entrance pass. This bill increases the benefit to that of a lifetime family annual entrance pass at no charge.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The bill does not appear to require cities and counties to expend funds or limit their authority to raise revenue or receive state-shared revenues as specified by Article VII, Section 18 of the State Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

⁸ Section 258.014(1), F.S.

⁹ *Id.*

B. Private Sector Impact:

Active duty servicemembers and veterans and their families will pay no annual fee, rather than a 25-percent discounted fee, for entrance to state parks.

C. Government Sector Impact:

In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, Florida State Parks received over \$500,000 in revenue associated with entrance passes for active duty servicemembers and honorably discharged veterans who receive the current 25 percent discount. For the past five years, the average annual revenue collected was \$560,347. Based on this amount, the Department of Environmental Protection (department) estimates an annual reduction of revenue into the State Parks Trust Fund to be between \$500,000 to \$600,000.¹⁰ The department also anticipates an increased workload due to park staff having to issue additional annual passes to this user group.¹¹

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 258.0145 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

¹⁰ Department of Environmental Protection, *2021 Legislative Session, HB 399 (SB 1262)* (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

¹¹ *Id.*