

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINAL BILL ANALYSIS**

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| BILL #: | CS/CS/CS/HB 185 | FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: | | |
| SUBJECT/SHORT TITLE | State Park Fees | 117 | Y's 0 | N's |
| SPONSOR(S): | Government Accountability Committee; Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee; Natural Resources & Public Lands Subcommittee; Lee, Jr.; Albritton and others | GOVERNOR'S ACTION: | Approved | |
| COMPANION BILLS: | CS/CS/SB 64 | | | |

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/CS/CS/HB 185 passed the House on April 26, 2017, and subsequently passed the Senate on April 27, 2017.

The Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) manages 163 parks and 11 state trails covering 800,000 acres, 100 miles of beaches, and more than 1,500 miles of multi-use trails. The state established these areas for the protection and preservation of their natural features or historic significance and for public use and enjoyment.

DRP may charge reasonable fees, rentals, or charges for the use or operation of facilities and concessions in state parks. Entrance fees and camping fees vary among the parks. Individuals may also purchase an annual pass that allows entrance into Florida State Parks in lieu of entrance fees for one year from the month of purchase. Certain individuals may use a variety of discounts and fee waivers to visit Florida State Parks and use the facilities.

The bill provides families operating a licensed family foster home free family annual passes to and a 50 percent discount on base campsite fees at Florida State Parks. The bill also provides families who adopt a special needs child a one-time family annual entrance pass to Florida State Parks at no charge.

Further, the bill requires DRP, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to identify the types of written documentation sufficient to establish eligibility for the discounts. Lastly, the bill requires DRP to continue to partner with DCF to promote fostering and adoption of special needs children with events held each year during National Foster Care Month and National Adoption Month.

The Revenue Estimating Conference estimates that the bill will have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on revenues deposited into the State Park Trust Fund.

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 23, 2017, ch. 2017-27, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2017.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

PRESENT SITUATION

The Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) manages 163 parks and 11 state trails covering 800,000 acres, 100 miles of beaches, and more than 1,500 miles of multi-use trails.¹ The state established these areas for the protection and preservation of their natural features or historic significance and for public use and enjoyment.²

DRP may charge reasonable fees, rentals, or charges for the use or operation of facilities and concessions in state parks.³ These fees must be deposited in the State Park Trust Fund.⁴ DRP may use these funds to administer, improve, maintain, acquire, and develop lands for state park purposes.⁵

Entrance fees and camping fees vary among the parks. The Director of DRP must recommend standard admission fees and other fees taking into consideration user demand, location of the park, cost of managing and operating the park, the types of facilities available, season, and natural and resource values of the park.⁶ User fees may not become effective until DRP publishes them in a statewide news release.⁷ If requested, DRP must hold a public hearing to review the proposed fees before they become effective.⁸

DRP waives entrance fees for:

- Children under six;
- Patients of Florida State Mental Institutions and clients of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Children and Families (DCF), and other similar institutions that are fully government funded when such patients or clients are part of an organized group or program under the sponsorship and supervision of their respective institutions or parent agencies;
- Florida school groups accompanied by one or more teachers and bearing a letter from the school principal, professor, or other appropriate official, certifying that the park visit is related to a specific school curriculum and is for educational purposes rather than a purely recreational outing; and
- DRP employees and families.⁹

Individuals may purchase an annual pass that allows entrance into Florida State Parks, in lieu of entrance fees, for one year from the month of purchase.¹⁰ DRP honors annual passes at all state parks, except for Skyway Fishing Pier State Park where they are valid for a 33 percent discount.¹¹ Individual annual passes cost \$60 while family passes cost \$120.¹² Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components may

¹ DEP, *Division of Recreation and Parks*, <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/parks.htm> (last visited February 9, 2017).

² Rule 62D-2.013(1), F.A.C.

³ Section 258.014(1), F.S.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Rule 62D-2.014(2)(c), F.A.C.

⁷ Rule 62D-2.014(2)(d), F.A.C.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Rule 62D-2.014(2)(b)1. – 4., F.A.C.

¹⁰ Florida State Parks, *Annual Pass Information*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/content/annual-pass-information#aboutannualpasses> (last visited February 9, 2017).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.* Family annual passes cover the entrance of up to eight people in a group, except at Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, and Skyway Fishing Pier State Park where the family pass is good for admission of up to two people.

receive a 25 percent discount on annual passes.¹³ Honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities; surviving spouses and parents of deceased members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components who have fallen in combat; and surviving spouse and parents of a law enforcement officer or a firefighter who has died in the line of duty may receive lifetime family annual passes at no charge.¹⁴

Florida citizens over 65 and Florida citizens possessing a current social security disability award certificate or a 100 percent disability award certificate from the federal government may receive a camping permit that entitles them to a 50 percent discount on camping fees at Florida State Parks.¹⁵

During 2013, 2014, and 2015, DEP provided 15,000 annual passes to foster families free of charge.¹⁶ Other states, such as Oregon and Washington, also provide discounts for state park entrance and camping fees for foster children and families.¹⁷

In fiscal year 2015-2016, DEP collected \$3.8 million from annual pass sales and \$19 million from campsite fees.¹⁸

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The bill provides families operating a family foster home licensed by DCF free family annual passes to Florida State Parks and a 50 percent discount on base campsite fees at Florida State Parks. The bill also provides families who adopt a special needs child a one-time family annual entrance pass to Florida State Parks at no charge.

For purposes of the bill, a “special needs child” is:

- A child whose permanent custody has been awarded to DCF or to a licensed child-placing agency;
- A child who has established significant emotional ties with his or her foster parents or is not likely to be adopted because he or she is eight years of age or older; developmentally disabled; physically or emotionally handicapped; of black or racially mixed parentage; or a member of a sibling group of any age, provided two or more members of a sibling group remain together for purposes of adoption; or
- A child for whom a reasonable but unsuccessful effort has been made to place the child without providing a maintenance subsidy, except when the child is being adopted by the child’s foster parents or relative caregivers.¹⁹

The bill requires DRP, in consultation with DCF, to identify the types of documentation sufficient to establish eligibility for the discounts and to establish a procedure for obtaining the discounts.

¹³ Section 258.0145(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Sections 258.0145(2) – (4), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 258.016, F.S.; r. 62D-2.014(1)(b)5., F.A.C.

¹⁶ Florida Department of Children and Families, *DCF, DEP Partner to Give Thousands of Free State Park Passes to Foster Parents*, <http://www.myflfamilies.com/press-release/dcf-dep-partner-give-thousands-free-state-park-passes-foster-parents> (last visited February 10, 2017); Florida Department of Children and Families, *First Lady Ann Scott Highlights DCF/DEP Partnership that Provides State Park Passes to Foster and Adoptive Children and Families*, <http://www.myflfamilies.com/press-release/first-lady-ann-scott-highlights-dcfdep-partnership-provides-state-park-passes-foster> (last visited February 10, 2017); Florida Department of Children and Families, *DCF and DEP Partner to Provide State Park Passes to Foster Families*, <http://www.myflfamilies.com/press-release/dcf-and-dep-partner-provide-state-park-passes-foster-families> (last visited February 10, 2017).

¹⁷ Oregon State Parks, *Special Access Pass for Foster, Guardian & Adoptive Foster Parents of Oregon Foster Children*, <http://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=v.page&id=20> (last visited February 10, 2017); Fostering Together, <http://fosteringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/State-Park-Camping-Pass.pdf> (last visited February 10, 2017).

¹⁸ DEP, Agency Analysis of 2017 SB 64, p. 4 (December 9, 2016).

¹⁹ Section 409.166(2)(a), F.S.

Lastly, the bill requires DRP to continue to partner with DCF to promote fostering and adoption of special needs children with events held each year during National Foster Care Month and National Adoption Month.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

Based on its calculations, the Revenue Estimating Conference estimated that the bill will have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on revenues deposited into the State Park Trust Fund.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill will likely have a positive economic impact on families operating a licensed family foster home by providing free family annual passes and a waiver of base camping fees and families who adopt a special needs child by providing a one-time family annual entrance pass.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.