

**STATE
FISCAL IMPACT**

Drafting Number: LLS 15-0021
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Navarro

Date: January 22, 2015
Bill Status: House SVMA
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BILL TOPIC: VETERANS FREE ADMISSION STATE PARKS

Fiscal Impact Summary*	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017
State Revenue		
Cash Funds	Reduction in fees.	
State Expenditures	Increase in workload.	
FTE Position Change		
Appropriation Required: None.		

* This summary shows changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year.

Summary of Legislation

This bill requires the Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to promulgate rules that grant free admission to any state park or recreation area for military veterans. The rules may require a veteran to show certain types of military identification for free park admission.

Background

Colorado's 43 state parks had nearly 12 million visitors in FY 2013-14. Daily park admission ranges from \$7 to \$9 per vehicle. Colorado is home to approximately 400,000 veterans who would be eligible for the free admission.

The PWC provided veterans free access to state parks for one day through rule which was added to statute by Senate Bill 11-024. Vehicles with a disabled veteran license plate are currently granted free daily admission any day the park is open and a disabled veteran is eligible to apply for a Columbine park pass at a discounted cost of \$14. The most recent data available shows that 1,230 Columbine passes were purchased by disabled veterans for a total of \$17,220. The DNR does not track park visitor demographics on a regular basis.

State Revenue

This bill is expected to reduce cash fund revenue from park admission fees to the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund in the DNR beginning in FY 2015-16. The fiscal note assumes that disabled veterans who currently purchase Columbine passes will no longer do so thereby eliminating that revenue. Because there is no information available to estimate the number of individuals who currently pay a fee to visit a park who would be eligible for free entrance under this bill, the total amount of revenue loss cannot be determined. Veterans who would not have visited a park but for the free admission do not represent a loss in revenue.

TABOR Impact

This bill reduces state revenue from fees, which will reduce the amount required to be refunded under TABOR. TABOR refunds are paid from the General Fund.

State Expenditures

An increase in visitors tends to increase the need for park maintenance. This bill will increase workload for park maintenance beginning in FY 2015-16. Additional staffing may be required at parks with higher visitor counts in areas such as Denver and Colorado Springs, but the DNR is expected to have sufficient appropriations to meet this increased demand. Should the bill result in a significant increase in park visitation and a corresponding increase in maintenance costs, the DNR may request additional funding through the annual budget process.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect August 5, 2015, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 6, 2015, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Law

Natural Resources

Military and Veteran and Affairs