



Stockbridge-Munsee Community

Tribal Veterans Service Office

203 W. Main St.
Bowler, WI 54416

Telephone: (715)793-4036 • Fax: (715)793-4039

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National Park Fees

Update 02: S.327/H.R.4930 | Wounded Veterans Recreation Act

The Senate approved a bill 22 JUN to grant all veterans with service-connected disabilities free lifetime entry to America's 419 national park sites. The Wounded Veterans Recreation Act (S.327), introduced 24 JUN 2019 by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH] was passed to the House on 24 JUN for consideration. It amends the current eligibility standards for national park passes which would result in granting them to millions more U.S. veterans. Now, veterans must have a 100% permanent disability to receive free lifetime entry. If approved by the House, the bill would grant a National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass to any veteran with a disability rating through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

According to a recent report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4.7 million veterans, or 25% of the total vets in the U.S., had a service-connected disability in 2019. About 2.09 million had a disability rating of 60% or higher, the report shows. It did not specify how many veterans were 100% disabled. For years, veterans and experts have praised experiences in nature as therapy for those suffering from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. "Recreation in our national parks and public lands can be a valuable healing tool for veterans living with physical and emotional wounds as a result of their service," said Sen. Jon Tester, D-Montana. "I'll continue fighting to make sure our legislation crosses the finish line in Congress."

Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA) introduced the H.R.4930 in the House 30 OCT 2019 which was referred to the Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry on 15 NOV with no further action. "National parks can connect our veterans with nature and increase their spiritual, mental and physical well-being," Ruiz said at the time. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Nikki Wentling | June 24, 2020++]