



Governor Jim Justice

Director Brett W. McMillion

December 1, 2024

West Virginia Legislature  
Joint Committee on Government and Finance  
The Honorable Craig Blair, Chairman  
The Honorable Roger Hanshaw, Chairman  
State Capitol Complex  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East.  
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Chairman Blair and Chairman Hanshaw:

Pursuant to West Virginia Code §20-5-24, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Section respectfully submits a status report on the development of a comprehensive plan that encourages the use state parks and state forests by veterans of this state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brett W. McMillion".

Brett W. McMillion

BWM/wlg  
Attachment

December 2024

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation Section  
Report to the  
Joint Committee on Government and Finance

Prepared by the  
Parks and Recreation Section  
of the  
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

## **Veterans Incentive Plan Report FY 2024**

Pursuant to West Virginia Code §20-5-24 (effective June 7, 2024.), the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Section, conducted a thorough review of all existing Veteran focused discounts and incentives in place within the state parks system in order to develop a comprehensive incentive plan for all United States and West Virginia Veterans of the United States armed forces. Included is the FY 2024 data compiled from program use, available opportunities, and other benefits currently available to veterans within the West Virginia Park System.

Veteran focused programs and discounts on services play a crucial role in supporting and honoring military veterans. These initiatives are designed to provide a variety of benefits and incentives to veterans, with the goal of enhancing their experiences and expanding participation throughout the West Virginia State Parks and Recreation system. Expansion, refinement, and promotion of the plan through collaboration is the next step planned by the state parks system.

The importance of discounts is recognized by the West Virginia State Parks system.

- **Recognition and Appreciation:** Discounts can serve as a form of material recognition and appreciation for veterans' service and sacrifice while helping to encourage an inclusive experience within the state parks system.
- **Financial Support:** Discounts on goods and services reduce the financial burden on veterans and their families, making it easier for them to participate in activities within the state parks system.
- **Encourages Engagement:** By reducing the financial burden, discounts encourage veterans to engage in a variety of activities and programs leading to increased participation in both free and discounted activities offered by the state parks system.

Enhancing participation of existing opportunities is a valuable resource to improving veteran's experiences within the West Virginia State Parks system.

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Promoting no cost activities, veterans' programs and discounts through an awareness campaign can increase participation by informing veterans of available benefits throughout the West Virginia State Parks system.
- **Collaboration:** Collaboration between government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations can create unique opportunities for veterans to participate in programs in West Virginia State Parks through tailored programs and discounts.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing feedback mechanisms to seek input from veterans can help improve existing programs.

Veterans' programs and discounts within the state parks system play a vital role in enhancing veteran's lifestyle and experiences within West Virginia. By increasing participation and enjoyment of the varied activities and services offered in state parks, these initiatives can contribute to both the physical and mental well-being of veterans within the state.

## 2024 FY Report Data

This report highlights the use of programs and discounts designed to support veterans and promote their active participation in programs, activities and amenities within the West Virginia State Parks system.

The following no charge services and activities are available for veterans to participate in.

- Entry to all state parks, state forests, and state rail trails.
- Parking.
- Naturalist led interpretative programming.
- Access to hiking and biking trails.
- Access to nature centers.
- Use of game courts.
- Non-reservable picnic tables.

The following are active discounts for active military and veterans

- 50% discount off lodging for reservations booked during the month of November.
- 10% discount off lodging and camping available year round
- 15% discount off golf greens fees available year round
- 15% discount off restaurant meals available year round
- 10% discount off spa services available year round

Program Incentives and Report: The following information details the use of discounts and programs by both West Virginia and United States veterans. This information includes lodging (lodge rooms, cabins and campsites) and other discounts.

- Total discounts used by veterans for FY 2024 was \$87,000.00
  - West Virginia residents: \$28,500.00
  - Non-Residents: \$58,500.00
  - 46 of 50 states had residents who participated in this program
- Participants of this program represent 7% of total overnight accommodations revenue