

Solano Veterans Scene – November, 2017

Free access to state parks and recreation areas for honorably discharged Vets
By Ted Puntillo, Director of Veterans Services for Solano County, CA

The State of California offers special benefits for its military service members and veterans, including the Distinguished Veteran Pass, a no-fee lifetime pass that entitles users to the use of all basic facilities – including day use, boating and camping – in California state parks at no charge. The pass works at all California State Parks, including Calaveras Big Trees, Emerald Bay, Trinidad State Beach, Sonoma Coast State Park, Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Hearst Castle, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, Bodie, Grover Hot Springs State Park, Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve and many, many more.

Honorably discharged war veterans who are residents of California with an overall combined rating at 50 percent or greater service-connected disability, or were held as prisoners of war by forces hostile to the United States are eligible to receive the Distinguished Veteran Pass to California State Parks. The pass is not valid for group use or sites, special events, commercial use, additional vehicles or supplemental fees and cannot be used in conjunction with any other pass and/or discount. Admittance to parks and recreation areas is subject to available space.

Veterans can apply for the pass by visiting the State of California's website at www.Ca.Gov and typing "Distinguished Veteran Pass" into the search bar at the top of the page. Navigate to the Distinguished Veteran Pass Application and complete the form. Applicants must attach proof of their state issued ID card, honorable discharge from service paperwork, proof of California residency and proof of either disability, prisoner of war or medal of honor recipient documentation. For more information on the parks pass, call the Park Pass sales office at (800) 777-0369 or by email at PassInfo@Parks.Ca.Gov.

The Solano County Department of Veteran Services can assist veterans with the Distinguished Veteran Pass application, as well as completing the Department of Motor Vehicles Veteran Verification Form. The veteran driver's license identification classification makes it even easier for veterans to gain access to the Distinguished Veteran Pass and other state and federal benefit programs. Call or visit our office today to get started. Our team is ready to help you and your family navigate the process of gaining access to the veteran benefit programs you've earned and deserve because of your service to our country.

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran's Services for Solano County. Reach him at (707) 784-6590 or TEPuntillo@SolanoCounty.com. The Solano County Veteran's Services Office, 675 Texas St. in Fairfield, is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.