

ASSEMBLY, No. 2133

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JUNE 3, 1996

By Assemblymen ASSELTA, AUGUSTINE and  
Assemblywoman Wright

1 AN ACT concerning State parks and forests and supplementing  
2 P.L.1983, c.324 (C.13:1L-1 et seq.).

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. a. The department may utilize volunteers to: (1) assist State  
8 Park Rangers and other personnel of the department in staffing,  
9 operating, patrolling, and monitoring State parks and forests and  
10 associated structures and facilities; and (2) assist with maintenance and  
11 improvement activities and projects at State parks and forests.

12 b. A park volunteer shall not be vested with law enforcement  
13 authority, be deemed to be a law enforcement officer, or be authorized  
14 to carry a firearm, but may receive such training in public safety,  
15 resource protection, environmental education and interpretation,  
16 recreation supervision, and other subject matter areas pertinent to the  
17 volunteer's duties and responsibilities as may be deemed appropriate  
18 by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

19 c. The commissioner may enter into an agreement with any  
20 qualified nonprofit organization to supply a group of park volunteers  
21 from the membership of that organization for the purposes of this act.

22 d. A park volunteer shall be deemed to be a State employee for  
23 purposes of the "New Jersey Tort Claims Act," N.J.S.59:1-1 et seq.

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25 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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30 This bill would authorize the Department of Environmental  
31 Protection (DEP) to utilize volunteers to: (1) assist State Park  
32 Rangers and other DEP personnel in staffing, operating, patrolling,  
33 and monitoring State parks and forests and associated structures and  
34 facilities; and (2) assist with maintenance and improvement activities  
35 and projects at State parks and forests. Under the bill, a park  
36 volunteer would not be vested with law enforcement authority, be

1 deemed to be a law enforcement officer, or be authorized to carry a  
2 firearm, but may receive such training in public safety, resource  
3 protection, environmental education and interpretation, recreation  
4 supervision, and other subject matter areas pertinent to the volunteer's  
5 duties and responsibilities as may be deemed appropriate by the  
6 Commissioner of Environmental Protection. A park volunteer would  
7 be deemed to be a State employee for purposes of the "New Jersey  
8 Tort Claims Act," N.J.S.59:1-1 et seq.

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13 Authorizes use of volunteers to monitor State parks and forests.