



Voluntary Youth Fishing License

PFBC voluntary youth fishing license and vouchers hold the key to the future of fishing!

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) voted at its January 23rd quarterly meeting to create a voluntary \$1 youth fishing license and to dedicate the revenue generated from it to programs to increase youth fishing participation.

According to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, 367,000 children and young adults ages 6 to 15 fished in Pennsylvania in 2010. The youth license is purely voluntary, and is not required for kids to fish. If just 25 percent of those 367,000 children were to purchase a voluntary \$1 license, it would result in more than \$550,000 in revenue for the Commission to invest in youth programs.

So why spend \$2.70 for a "free permit"? That doesn't make any sense!

Well, in fact, it not only makes sense, it makes "cents" and even more importantly dollars for the PA Fish and Boat Commission to fund the recruiting, training and teaching of our youth in the ways of fishing.

This is an investment towards igniting a spark in youth that could lead to a burning desire to choose fishing as a favorite activity for a lifetime of challenges, relaxation, traditions, friendships, family time and most importantly, fun!

There are few investments which can guarantee a yield of \$5 for every \$1 invested. Think if the stock market or your bank's savings accounts were that predictable. Yet, that's exactly what happens when the \$1 dollar purchase

price of each voluntary youth license is received and documented. The PA Fish and Boat Commission, through a federal reimbursement program will receive \$5 for every \$1 permit sold.

This magic happens through the federal taxes collected on the manufacture of fishing related equipment. The taxes are paid out to the states by the US Fish and Wildlife Service using a formula that in this case will return \$5 for every voluntary permit sold.

Why not just offer a free license and collect \$5, you say? Well, we checked and the only way this is allowed is if a fee is collected. A dollar is the minimum reasonable amount to collect. The remaining costs that total \$2.70 are the issuing agents' fee of \$1.00 and \$0.70 surcharge that is required to use the Automated License System which is what makes it possible for someone to buy this license at all of the same stores and locations where regular fishing licenses

are sold.

The Commission has committed to dedicating the proceeds of voluntary youth licenses back into youth programs. Depending on the popularity of this program, significant funds can be produced that will be used for teaching kids and their families how to fish, where to fish and how to select and use their gear properly. There will be opportunities to spread the word into schools, civic groups and neighborhoods in ways never before possible.

Wouldn't you like to be a part of giving a young person a gift for life... the desire and ability to enjoy Pennsylvania's aquatic resources and experience the thrill of catching a fish? Can you think of any other situations where a \$2.70 investment will provide guaranteed 5 to 1 return?

The potential market for voluntary youth license sales goes beyond the youth anglers and their family and friends. Clubs like the PFSC, organizations, businesses, individuals and others who are interested in promoting youth angling could purchase quantities of voluntary youth license vouchers to distribute to children.

Once a voluntary youth license is purchased or a youth license voucher is redeemed, the individual will be assigned a unique customer identification number (CID). Having unique CIDs allows the PFBC to analyze license purchasing patterns and trends, tailor messages and programs, and correspond directly with customers.

Think about your own youth and the youth of tomorrow...make an investment in the future of fishing!



Director Arway enjoying a day on the ice on Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, Centre County

Photo credit: Ken Hunter