§ 11-1307. Fishing promotion program.

The commissioner shall develop and implement a fishing promotion program. The commissioner shall, in conjunction with the commissioner of economic development and the commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation, develop and implement a program which will encourage residents and out-of-state fishermen to utilize New York state's fishing opportunities. Such program shall include, but not be limited to:

1. working with conservation organizations, local sportmen's clubs, retail stores, and county chambers to develop and conduct educational fishing clinics for children and adults to teach angling techniques for both fresh and salt water fishing and to provide information about stocking programs that will increase the odds of a successful and safe fishing experience;

2. conducting public outreach, including working with local community and youth organizations, tourism promotion agencies and local governments, to develop programs in conjunction with the two free fishing days annually per department region provided by the legislature, such as educational seminars, day-long fishing festivals, and tackle and rod loaner programs, which will encourage individuals to take up the sport of fishing;

3. making available to the fishing public, via both brochures and the agency's website, the following information:

a. Public fishing sections of streams, ponds, and lakes;

b. Public access points for streams, ponds, and lakes;

c. Handicapped access points for all water bodies; and

d. The location of state lands, including forests, parks, wildlife management areas, trails, campsites by type, ski areas, hatcheries, and environmental education centers and camps;

4. posting fishing reports, including current fishing conditions statewide, on the department's website;

5. developing and implementing a "learn-to-fish" and "instructional" passbook and stamp program. a. The department shall make available, wherever licenses are sold, a "learn-to-fish" passbook and stamps to children under sixteen years of age. Such stamps shall include various types of fish indigenous to New York state and shall also include with the distribution of the "learn-to-fish" passbook one "learn-to-fish" stamp. A child under sixteen years of age may collect stamps and when the "learn-to-fish" passbook is complete shall return such completed "learn-to-fish" passbook to the department via mail and the department shall issue a patch, to be determined by the commissioner, to "learn-to-fish" passbook holders who have participated in and completed the "learn-to-fish" passbook program created pursuant to this subdivision.

b. A licensee shall also be issued an "instructional passbook" and may place a "learn-to-fish" stamp previously issued to a child under sixteen in his or her "instructional passbook" whenever he or she teaches a person under sixteen years of age how to fish. Once that licensee has earned fifty "learn-to-fish" stamps in his or her "instructional passbook", that person shall return such completed "instructional passbook" to the department via mail and the department shall issue a free fishing license for the season following that in which he or she gets their fiftieth "learn-to-fish" stamp. The department shall include in the "instructional passbook" information relating to the instruction of fishing techniques to children, and shall also include current fishing regulations in the "instructional passbook".