



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Spring 2023

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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It's been a busy year so far and I wanted to share some highlights and photos that have been shared with me. I'd love to share more photos of students, instructors, and classes, so please remember to take a few photos and email them to me.

1. Cordell Gray stepped down from the Steering Group after helping us immensely with updating the hunter ed policy manual and field day lesson plan. Melissa Hendrickson stepped up to be the new Interior Steering Group representative. Here's a little bio that Melissa shared with me: Growing up outside of Fairbanks, hunting and other outdoor activities have always been a part of my life. In raising my own children, I have expanded my horizons to include new activities, including archery, which led me to become a volunteer instructor, especially in bow ed. I look forward to helping out and learning more as a Steering Group member.



2. Instructors Ellen Hannan, Sean McRae, Shane Nixon, and Mary Hailey offered a hunter ed and bow ed class in the rain in early April on POW and shared some fun photos.



Juneau School Field Day

DID YOU KNOW?

Only 20 states require hunter education with an in-person component.



3. Instructors Paul Houser and Angel Romero flew to Good News Bay to certify 11 hunter ed students. In locations without organized ranges, instructors have to get creative with the field course and range set-up.



4. Instructors Fred Moore, Andrew Scrivo, and Clayton Ellsworth certified 19 students on a snowy day in Seward.





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Instructor of the Year Awards

Volunteer instructors are the backbone of the HIT Program. As a group, volunteer instructors possess a vast wealth of information which has proven to be invaluable in passing on the knowledge and skills of the outdoors. The HIT Program would like to recognize the following volunteer instructors for making a significant contribution to the HIT Program and considerably advancing the cause of safe/ethical hunting.



Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Timothy Booth of Anchorage

In the fall of 2021 and 2022, Timothy taught 25 hunter ed classes which certified 371 students. He was a go-to instructor for the Anchorage area and could be counted on to step in if a class needed an additional instructor. Timothy's enthusiasm for teaching and the HIT Program are reflected in his actions.

Outstanding Educator of the Year Ryan Hastings of Ft. Wainwright

Since 2016, Ryan has taught 10 bowhunter ed, 1 crossbow ed, and 22 hunter ed classes which certified 373 students. Ryan is originally from a small town in Washington state. The main reason that Ryan volunteers is to have the opportunity to give back to the community and to pass on his hunting experience to new hunters, in the hope that it will help them be good stewards of the land, resources, and to be safe hunters.



Rural Instructor of the Year Steve Shiell of Valdez

Since 2004, Steve has taught 16 bowhunter ed and 19 hunter ed classes which certified 176 students. He's been the lead Valdez instructor for the past 18 years making sure that certification classes happen in Valdez. He schedules the class dates and facilities, teaches the class, and helps teach and mentor new instructors.

Lifetime Achievement Award Ernst Mueller of Juneau

Since 2005, Ernie has taught 56 hunter ed classes which certified 2,459 students. He helps instruct the school hunter ed courses and the public classes as well. On top of instructing hunter ed, he also helps train new RSO's and new instructors that teach other shooting sports educational opportunities.



Lifetime Achievement Award James Sheridan of Anchorage

Since 2005, Jim has taught 28 hunter ed classes which certified 893 students. When Jim gets called to instruct at the last minute, he typically says yes if he's not busy training/working with his dog. Jim can usually be found on the field course sharing his lifetime of hunting knowledge and experience.

[IHEA Instructor Resource Site](https://www.ihia-USA.org/)

<https://www.ihia-USA.org/>

<https://www.expertvoice.com/ihia/>

[HIT Program Site](https://www.huntereducation.alaska.gov/)

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**Lifetime Achievement Award
George Pearson of North Pole**
Since 2003, George has taught 53 bow ed classes which certified 549 students. According to the Interior Regional Coordinator, “I can always count on George when I am looking for a last minute bow ed instructor.”

Legacy Award Daniel Jeffery of Palmer

Since 2007, Dan has taught 28 bow ed, 27 hunter ed, and 12 muzzleloader ed classes which certified 910 students. Dan’s nomination prompted the Steering Group to develop the Legacy award to “recognize a current or past instructor who has left a lasting legacy in their community, passed on their hunting/ firearms knowledge, and contributed to the success of the HIT Program for many years. They exemplify the spirit of the HIT Program and share it with fellow instructors and the students.”



Welcome to Our New Volunteer Instructors

We wish to extend a warm welcome to all new volunteer instructors who have joined us since the publication of our last newsletter. Congratulations and welcome aboard!

Hunter Education:

Anchorage: Alexander Roy, Robin Stralka, Stephen Stralka, Pavla Tyson

Bethel: Christopher Tulik

Dutch Harbor: Jeremiah Baum

Eagle River: Christine Bearden

Haines: Cheryl Stickler

Juneau: Sadie Wright

Napakiak: Emmitt Nicori

Palmer: Lee Brian, Sophie Reid

Petersburg: Jacob Slaven

Sitka: Sheldon Turner

Twin Hills: Robert Voorhees

Bowhunter Education:

Anchorage: Arianne Asay, John Calder, Robin Stralka, Stephen Stralka

Eagle River: Alex Hedman, Eric Mauro

Juneau: John Burick

Palmer: Cody Jacobson, Nate McDonald

Crossbow Education:

Anchorage: Timothy Booth

Palmer: Justin Patterson

Wasilla: Michael Poplin

Muzzleloader Education:

Anchorage: August Asay, Ben Matthews

Palmer: Cody Jacobson

Wasilla: Michael Poplin

National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) Update

The Alaska NASP virtual tournament ran from Dec 2022-Feb 2023. The Bullseye Tournament had 337 archers participate from 18 different schools. Alaska also recognized 117 Academic Archers this year! This program encourages students to keep their grades up through incentives and recognition, while participating in NASP.

If you would like to learn more about bringing NASP into your community school(s) or the Academic Archer program, please contact the Alaska NASP Coordinator Maria Bakic at 267-2534 or maria.bakic@alaska.gov.



**Kake Elementary School
is the 2022-2023 NASP
Alaska State Champion
in the Elementary School
division**

HIT Program Steering Group

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Instructor Notes

Above & Beyond Recipients

We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" this spring. Thanks to the Alaska Wild Sheep Foundation for providing Cabela's gift certificates to help us recognize our Above & Beyond recipients. We'll continue to recognize 1-4 extraordinary volunteer instructors each quarter, so please keep an eye out for co-instructors who go "above and beyond" in the next few months and send HIT Program staff an email.



Josh Heinbaugh-Fairbanks

Josh has been an instructor since the spring of 2016 and has lived in various locations around the state. This year he's stepped up and already taught four hunter ed classes which certified 35 students. Thanks Josh!

Laura & Sophie Reid-Palmer

Laura has been a hunter ed instructor since the fall of 2020 and Sophie became an apprentice hunter ed instructor in February 2023. They taught 3 classes already this year which certified 36 students, and are signed up to instruct a BOW hunter ed class in June. It's great to see families teaching together!

Instructor Shirts & Name Tags



The start of our busy season for classes is upon us. If the closet shrunk your instructor shirt over the winter, or you lost your instructor name tag, please contact Anna so she can mail you a new one.

anna.petersen@alaska.gov or 907-267-2187

Virtual IHEA-USA Conference for Instructors

This year's IHEA-USA Annual Conference will be held in Boise, Iowa on June 26th-29th. If you are an IHEA-USA member, you can register to attend virtually for FREE. Visit www.ihea-usa.org for more information about the event or to become a member (\$20/year).

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Newly certified
apprentice instructor
Sophie Reid assists
Paul Houser with
teaching a hunter ed
class in Wasilla