



Alaska's Hunter Information & Training Program News

ADF&G
HIT PROGRAM
Fall 2013

Coordinator's Update - Jerry Soukup

If you are a basic hunter education instructor, I'm sure you've looked over the extra materials we've sent with this newsletter mailout. This is a major transition period and I would like to explain what this means to you as an instructor. This has been a long, thought out process, all with the intent of providing the very best educational product to our students. Over the past few years, the HIT Steering Group has been an invaluable resource in assisting in the development and editing of our new study manual.

The primary reason for introducing a new study manual was to ensure that our Independent Study and Traditional Hunter Education curriculums were in complete alignment with our online course. Up until now, that has not been the case. The new student manual has a few more chapters than our old version, yet the new Chapter One, "Introduction to Hunter Education, is only two pages long. You will notice that subject matter that was previously crammed into our old Chapter 1, "Firearms Safety" is now better placed under chapters such as "Basic Hunting Skills" or "Be a Safe Hunter."

I believe that after you've spent some time with the new manual, you will find that there is a better flow and connection of subject matter. The new student manual obviously offers expanded information to the student, yet the core material that you currently teach will not change.

New lesson plans for the Independent Study and Traditional courses have been provided to you. This will ensure that your teaching will follow in sequence with the new chapters. You will also notice that there is a new student workbook that is still required to be completed prior to attending class. Its cover has the brown bear photo on it to avoid any confusion with the student manual which still has our popular bull moose on the cover. The new workbook is longer in content, but flows easily with the material in the study manual. You will still have an instructor version of the workbook that contains all the correct answers. That is located in the back of your lesson plan binder.

Our current basic hunter education test and answer key will not change. Please note the answer key at the very back of your binder.

As I stated earlier, even though there is additional, quality material in the new study manual, we feel the core subject areas you've been teaching from the old manual are still valid, as is the current test.

Your new set of lesson plans are designed in the same format as the old ones. It will be easy to direct the student to a specific page in their study manual or workbook that corresponds to a subject area you are teaching. The new study manual does include some new areas of information, for example, "Types of Elevated Stands" or "Fall-Arrest Systems." Please understand that most young people take a hunter education class once in their lifetime. Also, many Alaskan hunters do hunt in the lower 48, so our course should include safety concerns that they may encounter during their lifetime of hunting.

The new manuals and workbooks will soon be in the hands of students, as our current supplies are very low. As an instructor, be aware that you may have a few classes with old and new manuals/workbooks in your class. This is fine, since our core course has not changed and you should teach the same material. You will note the flow of material has changed a bit with the new manual containing eight chapters. There are a few important topics that have been added, e.g., "Cold Water Immersion." I would suggest keeping both of your Independent Study Lesson plans handy during this transition.

As the new study manual, workbook, and lesson plans grow on you, please feel free to provide any feedback or edits you may suggest for the future. Every few years we go to reprint and are always open to any improvement to our educational resources.

The Steering Group and HIT Staff feel we have a great new product that will serve our students for many years to come. We will also have the confidence, that regardless of which delivery method a student chooses, they will all be working with the same curriculum.

I want to thank you all, in advance, for your willingness to work through this transition and to get accustomed to the new lesson plans, student manual, and workbook. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, don't hesitate to call any HIT staff.

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Administrative Reminders:

- Instructors, please remind your students to write neatly when filling out their temporary certificates or if you are filling them out, then be sure to copy the information neatly and accurately. Any error will cause delays in getting the cards mailed out or result in them being returned to me due to incorrect addresses, and also may cause me to reissue a card with incorrect information.
- For Online Field Days; in the rare event a student shows up that is not on your roster and does not have a Field Day Qualifier Certificate, but says they completed the online course, you may let them complete the field day. But DO NOT issue them a temporary certificate or HIT student graduate certificate. Send everything to me with a note and I will confirm whether they have actually completed the Online portion—thanks for your help on this!

Gail 267-2187



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Regional Planning Meetings— Mark Your Calendars!

Each year between Oct-Dec, the HIT Staff makes an effort to get around to the various regions of the state to plan next year's course schedule. With 2014 only a few months away, I'd like to get the dates out to you so you can plan to attend. These meetings are critical to our success as an organization. They provide a great opportunity to share course statistics from the current year and to personally thank each of you for the hours you've donated to our program and the State of Alaska. Top volunteers in each area will also be recognized, and of course, there will be food provided. These meetings also provide an opportunity for you to meet other instructors in your region, share ideas and concerns, and get answers to any questions you may have.

Another key agenda item at each of these meetings, is to discuss and develop a statewide, course schedule for 2014. The public needs this information and it assists you in making long range plans for the year. We like to get the statewide schedule posted online and on flyers before the new year. We really want and need your input, because without you, we have no program.

If you reside in more remote areas of the state, we still are requesting your input. I apologize for not being able to get to each rural community for planning purposes, yet the classes and dates you choose for 2014 are also critical to our statewide schedule. You can email or contact Gail Volt or myself, with your plans for 2014. Please consider offering traditional or independent study courses, as well as, online field days for your community. The statewide schedule will then be posted on our website providing plenty of time for the public, our "customers" to plan accordingly.

Please plan to join us at these scheduling meetings for 2014 classes. There will be prizes, awards, food, and more!

Fairbanks: (Indoor Shooting Range, 1501 College Road)
Saturday, Nov 9th, 4-7 pm; Instructor Planning Meeting and AVHEIA meeting/potluck

Mat-Su Valley: (Grouse Ridge, Wasilla)
Tuesday, Dec. 3rd, 5-9 pm

Anchorage: (Rabbit Creek Shooting Park); Wednesday,
Dec. 4th, 5-9 pm.

Kenai Peninsula: (Snowshoe Gun Club, Soldotna); Thursday,
Dec 5th, 5-9 pm.

Southeast Alaska Planning Meetings

Frank Zmuda—SE HIT Representative
907-586-4101

It is that time of year again, when we sit down together to plan/project future HIT courses for each of your communities during the next 12+ months. This is a busy time of year for all, but these meetings are important to the HIT program, you, and your towns. That is why HIT makes the effort to meet with as many volunteer instructors as possible to plan out the training year, to accommodate your personal calendars, and still provide for the training needs of the local population.

These meetings, with food & drinks provided, also give us a relaxed chance to personally thank each of you for volunteering and to listen and discuss program issues. This year there are big changes; mostly material format (new manuals & workbooks, lesson plans, etc.) The basic material is the same and the way you teach may ultimately be modified a little due to chapter flow, but this should be a smooth transition. The students are being presented with a whole new format/look which is much closer to what is seen in our Online Hunter Education Course.

Please look over the tentative schedule below and **discuss with fellow volunteers in your area** to determine if the dates will work for the majority.

I will also try to get to Hoonah & Gustavus, but at this time please project and provide me with HIT course(s) for your communities for 2014.

Please reply regardless of your availability for the anticipated meeting or with more functional dates. It is important for me to know if you can attend. Also, provide me with some dates you would be interested in conducting HE classes. Again, it would be of great benefit for everyone to try to make the meetings. I hope to see you all there.

Wrangell: Thursday, Oct 24th, 6:00 pm (PD)

Juneau: Saturday, Oct 26th, 6:00 pm (JHESC)

Ketchikan : Wednesday, Oct 30th, 6:00 pm (ADFG)
Oct 30-31 & Nov 01: HEI Training (Baum & Shoemaker)

Sitka: Wednesday, Nov 6th, 6:00 pm (ADFG)
Nov 06-08: HEI Training (Ferguson)

Skagway: Wednesday, Nov 13th, 6:00 pm (PD)

Nov 13-15: HEI Training (Leggett & Miller)

POW-Craig: Wednesday, Nov 20th, 6:00 pm (ADFG)
Nov 20-22: HEI Training (Seibel & Rubio) and Deer Celebration events.

Petersburg: Wednesday, Dec 04th, 6:00 pm (ADFG)
Dec 04-06: HEI Training (Litister)



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HIT Success in Rural Alaska One Village at a Time

Ginamaria Smith

In New Stuyahok, the senior class planned a hunting and berry picking trip in September for their Subsistence class. Before they could participate in the hunt, their teacher Justin Gumlickpuk decided that they needed to get their Hunter Education certifications. The students completed the workbooks in class and then I headed out to teach the required Field Day.

Within an hour of arriving, we started their School Field Day. Six students and two teachers participated in the course. There were varying degrees of firearm knowledge in the class; one student had never handled a firearm and another student harvested a moose the week before. While going through the firearm handling portion with the non-functional firearms, it was interesting to discuss with the students which action types were commonly used in New Stuyahok. We then headed out to a gravel pit just outside town to complete the shooting proficiency. The students all did a fantastic job safely carrying the .22's out into the field and demonstrating their marksmanship skills. The rain and slight wind didn't deter anyone, and we ended the shooting proficiency surrounded by two rainbows.

Back at school we set-up the Field Course and started with the Zones of Fire exercise. Since school was just getting out, we had an audience of younger kids that followed us around to see what we were doing. The Hunter Orange demonstration seemed to be the biggest eye-opener since the students saw the Hunter Orange shirt as soon as we exited the building, but it took them until we were nine yards away to see the camouflage shirt.

We ended the day with paperwork and handing out the orange vests. Two of the students promptly put on their vests, and I saw them later that evening riding around on their 4-wheeler, still wearing the vests. During the visit I also completed New Instructor Training with the two teachers so that we have two certified Hunter Education Instructors in New Stuyahok. They plan to make the Hunter Education certification a regular part of their Subsistence class.

Unfortunately the class didn't harvest any animals on their hunt, but the Hunter Education class seems to have left a lasting impression on the students. They did harvest quite a few berries though!



2013 INSTRUCTORS OF THE YEAR

It's not too early to start thinking about who you would like to see as our top volunteers for 2013. Included in this newsletter mail out, you should have received the nomination form to submit a fellow instructor that you feel has gone above and beyond in support of HIT classes and other outreach efforts and programs.

Remember that we select a top volunteer in all three disciplines; Basic Hunter Ed, Bowhunter, and Muzzleloader. We also consider nominations for the HIT Lifetime Achievement Award and Rural Instructor of the Year. Also understand that it's not just about how many classes one's taught; take a close look at all nine questions on the form and be thorough in your answers. Talk with other friends and family members of your nominee. The deadline to submit is January 10, 2014 so start early. We will again offer a gift card to one lucky nominator, drawn randomly from all nominations.

Welcome to our New Instructors!

Basic Hunter Education

Douglas: Darren Snyder

North Pole: Jason Wilson

New Stuyahok: Mickia Walcott and Justin Gumlickpuk

Muzzleloader:

North Pole: Jason Wilson

HIT Steering Group

Andy Finke, (Rural Alaska) bdaf@ptialaska.net

Orin Carpenter, Secretary (Southcentral) ocarpen@ptialaska.net

Judy Johnson, (Interior) jj4@alaska.net

Ellen Hannan, (Southeast) Ehannan32@gmail.com

Tom Kron, Chairman (Southcentral) tm.kron@acsalaska.net



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Instructor's Corner

"Putting More Ethical Hunters in the Field"

Email: jerry.soukup@alaska.gov

On the web at:

www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



Volunteer Appreciation in Southeast, Alaska

I just wanted to let you all know that Jim & Heidi Agner have retired from Law Enforcement and are moving to Montana. Jim has been with the Hunter Education program for years, just how many, I don't know, but for as long as I can remember. They were both active members of the community. They were both very active in the scouting program, leaders in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Jim was the Scout Master for years.

Jim was an excellent Hunter Education Instructor; we all valued his participation in the program. Jim always made himself available to help out. He was very relaxed in his delivery; his "foot stomping technique" was a big hit with the kids. He has more firearms knowledge and firearms safety credentials than Larry Potterfield. I wish now that I had put him in for the "Instructor of the Year" award.

Thank you,
Brent Akers
Petersburg HIT program

Alaska Volunteer Hunter
Education Instructor
Association (AVHEIA)
Jim Low (907) 457-2637
<avheia@eagle.ptialaska.net>

I would like to thank all that were involved in setting up the fantastic trip to view the bears at McNeil River. My trip was scheduled for July 25th through 28th, with a departure date for McNeil on the 24th, but after talking with the pilot on the 21st, I was told that if I got to Homer on the 23rd I could go out with Tony the supervisor for McNeil who was going out on that day. Needless to say, I got to Homer on the 23rd!



The flight was great and the landing was smooth and we arrived about 4:30 in the afternoon. I met Tom who is in charge out there and after dumping my gear in camp, he took Tony and me across the lagoon to the main trail to the falls. We hiked out to the falls and were able to see about 30 bears that first evening. There were several other people already there since they had left camp earlier in the day accompanied by Robin the other ADF&G employee there. Over the next several days I was able to view a whole lot of bears. It was truly an interesting experience.

I was amazed at the amount of injuries that most of the bears have sustained from fighting among themselves. They had fresh cuts and tears in their hides and plenty of old scars and wounds. Tom explained that this was typical of male brown bears that fought over fish and females. Each bear had his or her own fishing spot and arguments took place when someone else tried to encroach. Some bears, notably large ones, were thief bears and rarely fished for themselves, choosing rather to steal fish from other bears who caught them. Some bears had figured out how to keep their fish from being stolen but others seemed to lose every fish they caught to the thieves.

It was a tremendous experience that I will never forget but some things were hard to get used to. Going through bear country totally unarmed except for a pocket knife (though the ADF&G employees carried shotguns) was unnerving! And making a lot of noise while hiking through the woods, clapping my hands and yelling "Hey Bear" totally went against the grain, since I have spent most of my life quietly sneaking through the woods in pursuit of game, but all in all it was a tremendous experience! The ADF&G guys out there, Robin, Tom, and Tony really were great and treated us as one of their own. These guys are really dedicated professionals who go out of their way to ensure that all visitors have a truly great experience. They keep the camp in ship shape condition and I was impressed with the place.

Again, I thank the HIT Staff, Steering Group and everybody involved for giving me the opportunity to experience this tremendous place. PS: The weather was great too, with temperatures in the 70s and no rain. The breeze kept the mosquitoes away.

Ed Bosco,
2012 Muzzleloader Instructor of the Year

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