

Hunter Information & Training Program News



Fall 2017

Instructor Notes

Welcome to New Steering Group Members

The HIT Program's Steering Group has proven to be a great advisory resource in advancing HIT Program goals and objectives. These members have consistently served both the volunteer instructors from around the state and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Jim Plosay (Southeast)
Juneau
jrplosay@gci.net



Jim has been a volunteer with the HIT Program since 2003. He teaches hunter education classes in the Juneau area. He has served on Juneau's Hank Harmon Rifle Range Board of Directors and the Juneau Rifle and Pistol Club Board. His experience instructing and being involved on other advisory groups will be beneficial while representing Southeast volunteer instructors.

Stacey Bradley (Southcentral)
Wasilla
staceybradleyak@yahoo.com



Stacey is new to the HIT Program and became certified as a hunter education and bowhunter education volunteer instructor in 2016. She taught 12 classes in just under a year and is extremely enthusiastic about passing on firearm safety, ethics, and our hunter heritage to the next generation. We feel that Stacey's newness to the HIT Program will allow her to bring new perspectives and ideas to the table.

Howard Delo (Southcentral)
Big Lake
hodelo@mtaonline.net



Howard has been involved with the HIT Program as a hunter education instructor since 1991, a muzzleloader education instructor since 1999, and a bowhunter education instructor since 2003. He is very passionate about the importance of safety when hunting with firearms and archery equipment. He was recognized as the HIT Program Muzzleloader Education Instructor of the Year in 2006. His current and past volunteer experiences will be beneficial while representing Southcentral volunteer instructors.

HIT Staff Contact Information

Anchorage

Gina Smith 267-2196
Kirk Lingofelt 267-2373
Tracy Smith 267-2534
Marc Much 267-2241
Cindy Palmatier 267-2187
Fax: 267-2323

Fairbanks

Bob Hunter 459-7375
Tom Halverson 459-7211
Fax: 459-7332

Juneau

Jeff Jemison 586-4101
Fax: 586-4107



A wet muzzleloader ed class on Kodiak. Thanks for sharing Andy Finke.

Alaska Volunteer Hunter
Education Instructor
Association (AVHEIA)
Jim Low 378-5897
akjimlow@mac.com



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Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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DID YOU KNOW?

A bill entitled "Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act of 2017" has been introduced to Congress. This bill would clarify how funds could be used by states for hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, as well as how funds could be used for shooting range development, construction, and maintenance.



As always fall flew by, suddenly I blinked and it's November! Fall is such a busy time for everyone, as we all try to balance work, family obligations, and hunting. I was lucky enough to harvest my first caribou on the Denali Highway this year and am thankful

for the multitude of opportunities we have in Alaska. The hunt was extra special for me since I was able to use a .30-06 rifle given to me by my Dad years ago. The rifle has been tucked away in my gun safe since the firearms I carry in Alaska are typically synthetic and stainless steel due to wet hunting conditions. This memento from my Dad reminded me of how lucky I was to have a mentor



like him to get me into hunting, shooting, and being outdoors. I'm sure every person reading this newsletter can also think of a mentor or two who helped inspire your love of hunting and the outdoors. As classroom stories and paperwork get turned in after each class, it also makes me appreciate how much our students receive from each of you while instructing certification courses. The four or eight hours you spend with a student during a hunter ed course could help instill a lifetime of ethical behavior choices and a love of hunting.

In addition to teaching classes, I'd like to thank Bruce Bowler of Juneau, Paul Houser of Palmer, and Martha Peck of Anchorage who played an instrumental role on the HIT Program Steering Group for the past two years. They helped review and update the online bowhunter education course and lesson plan, and assisted with the development of the Alaska crossbow education course. The years of teaching experience, expertise, and enthusiasm they brought to the Steering Group greatly assisted the HIT Program in ensuring well thought out course offerings.

To further recognize volunteer instructors who have made significant contributions to the HIT Program, nominations are needed for the **2017 Instructor of the Year Awards**. We want to recognize those instructors who have gone above and beyond to advance the cause of safe and ethical hunting. The nomination form has been emailed to each instructor and an electronic copy is available online at www.huntereducation.alaska.gov (located on the Volunteer Instructors page). Please take the time to nominate one of your co-instructors who has given extraordinary service to the HIT Program. Feel free to contact HIT Program staff for teaching statistics and contact information. Try to gather information about your nominee from their co-instructors, significant others, and friends. Nominations must be postmarked by January 15, 2018 so you have some time to help ensure a fellow instructor is recognized for their dedication and willingness to share their passion with others.



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McNeil River Visit

Dennis Degnan

2016 HIT Program Outstanding Educator of the Year



What a great retirement gift for me this year. It was an honor and privilege receiving the 2016 HIT Program Outstanding Educator of the Year. As part of the award, I received a coveted McNeil River State Game Sanctuary bear viewing permit. For those unfamiliar with this permit, ADF&G issues 185 permits to this site each year. One of the

biologists visiting there compared McNeil River to Brook Falls, another bear viewing site, as a Nordstrom store compared with Walmart. It is a highly prized permit since only ten visitors are allowed to visit the reserve at a time. It was a long drive from Fairbanks to Homer, but with the help of a Louie L'Amour audio book, the trip went fast. I arrived the day before the flight, which was scheduled for noon the next day. I checked out the lagoon fishing, town features, and had a pizza at "Starvin' Marvin's". This was the last meal for the next four days that didn't come out of a bag. I flew with six other individuals on "Northwind Aviation", a private float plane service, for the one and a half hour flight across Cook Inlet to McNeil River. Our group consisted of members not only from Alaska, but also Wisconsin, Japan, and Germany. Upon arrival, we were greeted by sanctuary staff Ed Weiss, Tom Griffin, and Beth Rosenberg. They gave us a tour of the camp and time to set up our tents before sharing how the camp has run for fifty years without a negative human-bear encounter, and how we



should work together to ensure we weren't the first. The first day out in the field, accompanied by two staff members carrying shotguns, was a two-mile walk along marshes, islands, and the McNeil River bank. In ten hours, we spotted 47 bears, with several of them being family groups.

After fifty years of groups viewing at the sanctuary, the bears seemed to go about their main business of catching "zombie" chum salmon below the falls while the cubs remained satisfied to wrestle on the shore or curl up with each other, without being affected by the "odd bipods" sitting on portable padded chairs snapping pictures. We had bears come within ten feet of us, being aware, but indifferent to our camera clicking. Once back at camp, we cooked dinner and took turns using the sauna before hitting our tents for the night. The last night at McNeil River, I was awoken by a cub bawling in the early morning. After a walk on the neighboring spit, we found out that a wolf had walked through.



I'm not sure if the two incidents were related, but I wish I had crawled out of my tent to check it out. There was never a time when visitors could be without their camera for those "Kodak" moments. The four days went too fast before we had to, once again, climb in the float plane for the flight back to Homer. I plan to return in two years, this time with my wife if we are fortunate to win a permit.

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!

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Hunter Education:

Atka: William Dushkin, Connor McManus, Wayne McManus

Anchorage: Dennis Chiu, Martin Farris, Elizabeth Manning, Liam McFadden, John Pepe, Connie Pratt, Andrew Slattery

Dillingham: Charles Becker, Alison Eskelin, Jonathan Jenssen-Dyazuk, Joseph Wittkop

Eagle River: Jason Crowther, Benjamin Sutton

Fairbanks: Justin Burrows, Shawn Osborn

Ft. Wainwright: Clayton Brewer

Healy: David Lundgren

King Salmon: Chris Peterson

Kodiak: Steven Aker, Kathryn Blondin

Manokotak: Noel Bowe, Leesia O'Sullivan

McGrath: Jonathan Barton

Mekoryuk: Devin Thurston

New Stuyahok: Benjamin Griesse, Robin Jones

North Pole: John Reid

Palmer: Scott Work

Togiak: Jerry Jones

Valdez: Scott Henderson

Wasilla: Gabriel Hennemann

Bowhunter Education:

Atka: Connor McManus, Wayne McManus

Anchorage: Cooper Baldwin, Kevin McGaha, Michael Miller

Big Lake: Louis Landers

Eagle River: Jason Crowther

Haines: Bradley Wheeler

Fairbanks: Tom Halverson

Soldotna: Matt Conner, Marianne Hoosier

Thorne Bay: Roy McRae

Muzzleloader Education:

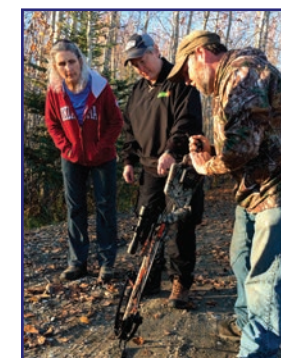
Fairbanks: Art Casserberg, Shawn Osborn

Glennallen: Alysia White, Thomas White

North Pole: Thomas Conner

Crossbow Ed Instructor Training

The first 42 crossbow ed instructors were certified this fall. Current HIT Program volunteer instructors attended trainings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. Due to interest, an additional training will be conducted in Wasilla in November. These instructors completed the new online crossbow ed student course and attended a two-night instructor training. The instructor trainings covered crossbow ed course policies, the field day lesson plan, and assisted instructors in becoming familiar with crossbows through hands-on activities. Since Alaska and



Barb Terry explaining the safety mechanism



Kirk overseeing the shooting line

the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) worked together with the online course provider Kalkomey to develop the online course, NBEF sent Executive Director Marilyn Bentz and Board Member Barb Terry with TenPoint Crossbows to assist with these first instructor trainings. The trainings went extremely well and provided additional information to finish the development of the student online course and field day. The online course will be made available to the public on January 1, 2018 and the first online field days will be held in various locations beginning in late March. Additional crossbow ed instructor trainings will be conducted each year, so if you are interested in becoming an instructor, please contact HIT Program staff.



Marilyn, Barb, Kirk, & Gina



IHEA Instructor Resource Site

www.ihea.com

Login: instructor Password: gohunt

Alaska HIT Program Site

www.huntereducation.alaska.gov

Login: huntered Password: heinstructor



HIT Steering Group

Lyle Shelnut (Interior) lylenutscars@yahoo.com

Andy Finke (Rural Alaska) bdaf@ptialaska.net

Stacey Bradley (Southcentral) staceybradleyak@yahoo.com

Howard Delo (Southcentral) hodelo@mtaonline.net

Jim Plosay (Southeast) jrplosay@gci.net