



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Spring 2015

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Spruce Grouse is the most hunted small game species in Alaska.

April and May are a great time of year to view Spruce Grouse as the males perform elaborate courtship behaviors that include strutting, fluffing of feathers, and vocal sounds.

To learn more about Spruce Grouse or other Alaskan grouse and ptarmigan species, visit the ADF&G Small Game Hunting website (go to www.adfg.alaska.gov and type Small Game Hunting into the search engine).



Spring has been busy with classes, instructor trainings, and travel. I spent a week in Des Moines, Iowa attending the 2015 International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA) Conference. The annual conference brings together hunter education officials with industry and conservation partners dedicated to the future of hunting and shooting worldwide. Steve Lanford, the 2014 Alaska Hunter Ed Instructor of the Year also attended with me.



Alabama, Alaska, & Arizona in the business meeting

During the annual Business meeting, we received the 2014 Hunter Ed Program Profile (included with newsletter). This Profile contains data from every state and will help to give you an idea of how many people were reached by Hunter Ed Programs nationwide in 2014. I thought it was pretty amazing to learn that there are over 54,000 active instructors in the US!

During the Range Day we were given the chance to demo the Scholastic Pistol Program and the Scholastic Rifle Program (a new program starting this fall) which are programs sponsored by the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF). SSSF also sponsors the Scholastic Clay Target Program which is already a success in Alaska. All of these shooting programs are designed to teach the safe and responsible handling and use of firearms, provide a supportive team-based environment, and introduce young shooters to a lifelong sport. The Pistol Program uses .22 and 9mm pistols, while the Rifle Program uses .22 rifles for speed shooting on steel targets. Both programs were really fun and I can definitely see where kids in Alaska could get involved in these national programs. If you are interested in learning more about these programs and the possibility of bringing them into your community visit: www.sssfonline.org.



Hands-on demo of the Scholastic Pistol Program



Meeting the authors of the new book about hunting incidents Blood on the Leaves

The really exciting news this year is that Alaska bid on and was unanimously chosen as the host for the 2018 IHEA-USA Conference! We are tentatively planning on June 18th-22nd, 2018 in Anchorage. This is a great opportunity to highlight our program and state, and it will also give more of you a chance to attend the Conference and meet other State coordinators and volunteers. As we begin to plan the Conference we will definitely be asking for your ideas, input, and assistance.

It was refreshing to spend time with other state administrators, volunteer instructors, and people who share the same passion of teaching others to be safe, ethical hunters and shooters that we do.



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2014 HIT Instructor of the Year Awards

The Steering Group chose the following volunteers from the nominations submitted by co-instructors:

Basic Hunter Education Instructor of the Year

Steve Lanford of Fairbanks



Steve Lanford has been a Hunter Ed instructor since 1998 and has instructed 105 classes for the HIT Program. He taught classes in a number of different villages in Interior Alaska and has been actively involved in the Alaska Youth Hunter Education Challenge over the years. Steve has been “a voice” to many people on hunter education issues and always tries to recruit new volunteer instructors. He always volunteers with a smile and can be counted on to provide his expertise even on short notice requests.

2014 HIT Outstanding Educator of the Year

Lyle Shelnut of Fairbanks

Lyle Shelnut has been a volunteer instructor since 2012 and instructs all three course disciplines. In 2014 Lyle taught 7 Hunter Ed, 4 Bowhunter Ed, and 2 Muzzleloader Ed classes. Lyle can always be counted on to keep the class exciting, safe, and “alive”. He interacts with students of all ages very well and classes with Lyle are never dull. Lyle always promotes the HIT Program and is a role model for all Interior volunteer instructors.



Lifetime Achievement Award

Judy Johnson of North Pole



Judy Johnson has been a volunteer for the HIT Program since 2002 and instructs all three course disciplines. She has instructed 197 classes and been an active member of the HIT Steering Group and AIM-COMM. Judy has spent a lifetime promoting firearm safety as well as the sport of hunting. She has spent countless hours as a volunteer making a huge impact on the lives of men, women, and children alike. In 2006 Judy received the NRA Marion P. Hammer Woman of Distinction Award for her dedication and outstanding contributions to hunter education and the shooting sports.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Jim Low of Fairbanks

Jim Low has been a volunteer for the HIT Program since 1989 and instructs all three course disciplines. He has been the driving force behind AVHEIA (Alaska Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor Association) and assists with the Alaska Youth Hunter Education Challenge. Jim spent over 20 years with the State Troopers and provides valuable information about hunting regulations and legalities to students and other instructors. He takes pride in mentoring new instructors to ensure HIT Program core values are maintained, and is always a strong advocate of instilling firearm safety and ethical hunting in the students.



IHEA Instructor Resource Site

www.ihea.com



Alaska HIT Program Site
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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Rural Instructor of the Year

Fred Moore of Seward



Fred Moore has been a volunteer for the HIT Program since 1999 and instructs Hunter Ed and Muzzleloader Ed. He provides opportunities to adults and young people, who live away from the larger cities on the southcentral road system, to attend HIT classes. Fred not only teaches the classes but he organizes, schedules, arranges

the locations, and acts as the point of contact for students to sign-up. His commitment to firearm safety and our hunting heritage are always evident in his teachings and willingness to instruct classes.

Apprentice Instructor of the Year

Kateri Houser of Palmer

Kateri Houser became a volunteer Apprentice Instructor in 2013 and taught 11 Hunter Ed classes in 2014 (the most classes taught by any instructor in the Mat-Su Valley). She encourages friends and peers to earn their Hunter Ed certification, particularly females. Her co-instructors all say that she is quite mature and teaches like a well-seasoned instructor. Kateri



regularly volunteers to step in and help when a class needs a last minute instructor. AVHEIA (Alaska Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor Association) contributed an Educational Scholarship to Kateri for receiving the 2014 Apprentice of the Year Award. In the fall, Kateri will attend Wyoming Catholic College to study liberal arts.

Welcome to Our New Instructors

Basic Hunter Education:

Anchorage: Pamela Lestenkof, Steven Perrins, Chuck Taggart, Bill Tyra, Vatoua Yang

Aniak: Bruce Richardson

Chugiak: Greg Vernon

Cordova: Milo Burcham, Ardy Hanson, Andrew Morse, Melissa Staples

Fairbanks: Daniel Wetzel

Palmer: Regg Simon

Port Alsworth: Travis Lons

Sterling: Alicia McLelland

Talkeetna: Christopher Campbell

Togiak: Monty Randolph

Wasilla: Delray Hobbs

Bowhunter Education:

Anchorage: Zachary Armstrong, Thomas Cobaugh, Scott Cunfer, Marc Much, Chuck Taggart, Bill Tyra, Jason Weigl

Chugiak: Greg Vernon

Eagle River: Michael Yaniec

Homer: Stefan Martusheff

Palmer: Marlin Dubetz, Paul Houser, Regg Simon

Sterling: Michael Bernard

Talkeetna: David Kreutzer

Muzzleloader Education:

Anchorage: Chuck Taggart, Bill Tyra, Jason Weigl

Palmer: Scott Work

We are always looking to recruit new volunteer instructors. If you know of anyone interested, have them visit the website (www.huntereducation.alaska.gov) and fill-out the application. Once we receive their application then we'll contact them about attending instructor training. The HIT Program covers travel costs to attend the training or if there are enough interested instructors in an area then we'll send HIT Staff to conduct a training.

HIT Steering Group

Steve Shiell (Rural Alaska) sshiell@pwscc.edu

Ed Bosco (Southcentral) edbosco@gci.net

Rick Sterling (Interior) alaskawindfall@alaska.net

Ted Sandhofer (Southeast) Chairman cedarpond@gci.net

Fred Voss (Southcentral) Secretary fvoss2@gmail.com

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Instructor Notes

Cordova Instructor Training

Lee Rogers and Ginamaria Smith conducted a Hunter Ed Instructor Training in Cordova in April. They got to see the facilities where the Hunter Ed course is conducted on a yearly basis, plus meet some of the long-time volunteer instructors. The Cordova course is taught at the Cordova School, where they not only have a great space for the classroom portion, but also for completing the shooting proficiency. The facility is set-up for using pellet guns since the High School Rifle team used to shoot there.



The field course is taught at the Cordova Trap & Gun Club.

The instructors have a fantastic field course set-up that includes trails through the woods, multiple silhouette animals including a flying goose, a canoe for handling firearms in a boat, and obstacles for the students to cross. Long-time volunteer instructors Jerry Bendzak, Rich Groff, and Jon Syder

showed the new instructors how to complete the shooting proficiency at their range and also ran them through the field course. Everyone was a good sport even though it was pouring rain and windy during the entire visit :)

After the instructor training was complete, everyone got together at Charlotte & Lance Westing's house (Charlotte is the Area Biologist and they are both Hunter Ed instructors) for dinner and socializing! The instructor training was a great opportunity for Lee and Ginamaria to meet long-time and new volunteers, and they thoroughly enjoyed their brief visit to Cordova.



**They grow things bigger in
Cordova apparently!**

Keep an Eye Out

Every year each state is asked to submit the number of Hunting Incidents (with firearms) and Treestand Incidents that occur in Alaska to IHEA-USA. The number of incidents are then tracked over the years. Please keep an eye on your local newspaper and tv channels for any incidents. If you see one, you can email the link to dfg.dwc.hitprogram@alaska.gov or mail the newspaper clipping to the Anchorage office.

HIT Staff

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