



Alaska's Hunter Information & Training Program News

ADF&G
HIT PROGRAM
Summer 2013

Coordinator's Update - Jerry Soukup

Summer in Alaska brings on a number of activities and opportunities available to our youth around the state. It is a busy time of the year for the HIT Program and for you, the volunteers, that assist in many of these successful outreach programs.

We had amazing weather for our two weeks of Outdoor Youth Days here in Anchorage, along with Potter Marsh Days, two CSI Camp sessions at Rabbit Creek Shooting Park, and assisting with the State Scholastic Clays Target Program (SCTP) State Shoot at Grouse Ridge Shooting Club in Wasilla.

The Interior was again busy with their continued success of Conservation Camps that provide a vast array of outdoor educational activities for youth of all ages. The annual Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) held in Fairbanks, kept Joe Nava and his volunteer core very busy, as well.

We are in the final stages before we'll see new study manuals and workbooks for our Basic Hunter Education courses. Final edits on the workbook and ongoing communication with Kalkomey and our Steering Group will result in a great educational resource for our program and its students. We see little to no change in how you would actually teach an Independent Study or Traditional course, except for some page number changes in the current Instructor Lesson Plans. Look for the new materials by early fall.

I'm sure it comes as no surprise to any of you, that our PR funding has been on the rise with another boost coming for FY14. Along with solid growth of HIT courses to more rural areas, has come the expansion and growth of popular programs such as the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), the Scholastic Clays Target Program (SCTP), and the latest program designed for the classroom, Explore Bowhunting. Additional funding for personnel to run with these program is at the top of our list of priorities. But, to commit to additional personnel positions takes a consistent funding source and PR funding has had substantial swings in both directions.

The next priority and area of need has come from the HIT program's close connection and coordination with the state's shooting ranges. At both, the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park and the Indoor Range in Fairbanks, lies a serious need for quality storage and maintenance facilities to meet the needs of our statewide resources. We have hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in range equipment, supplies, tools, firearms, ammunition, clay targets, trap throwers, training materials, and classroom resources. The plan is to establish a separate grant and build funds with HIT excess during the next two fiscal years to ensure these needs are met. These facilities upgrades will have a significant impact to the success of many programs and be seen for many years to come.

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Public Approval of Hunting Highest Since 1995

NEWTON, Conn. — The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) reports that a new survey shows 79% of the American public approve of hunting. This marks the highest level of support for hunting since 1995, according to data compiled by Responsive Management, an independent research firm.

The nationwide scientific survey showed the public's approval of hunting rose five points in the past year, up from 74 percent in 2011. The survey, conducted in February 2013 using random digit dialing and supplemental cellular telephone sampling, was the fifth in a series of similar surveys by Responsive Management to track trends in public approval of hunting since 1995. Support for hunting has remained generally consistent during this time; 73% in 1995, 78% in 2006, 74% in 2011, and a peak of 79% in 2013. Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, is still looking at survey results to better understand why approval has increased. Said Duda, "Approval of hunting among Americans is fairly stable and bounces between 73 and 79 percent. The reasons for this increase are still unclear, but it is probably related to the increase in hunting and shooting participation. Added Duda, "Since 2006, hunting participation has increased by 9 percent while shooting participation has increased 18 percent since 2009. Other studies we have conducted on public opinion on hunting, show that the strongest correlation for approval of hunting is knowing a hunter, over and above demographic variables or anything else. With the increased number of hunters in the field and sport shooters at the range, it is possible that this is being reflected in the uptick in support for hunting."

One thousand Americans 18 years old and older were surveyed to achieve a sampling error of plus or minus 3.00 percentage points. More than half (52%) of those surveyed strongly approved of hunting. At the other end of the spectrum, 12 percent of Americans disapprove of hunting. Another 8 percent neither approve nor disapprove (total does not equal 100% due to rounding).



NSSF Study Shows Lower - Than Expected Rates of Hunting Among Recent Hunter Education Graduates

FERNANDINA BEACH, FLORIDA—Filled classrooms at Hunter Safety courses are a good thing, but perhaps more important is the number of students that actually participate in hunting after they graduate. A recent survey, funded by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and conducted by Southwick Associates, focused on participation levels of students in the years immediately following their graduations for hunter education class. The survey revealed that a significant percentage of hunter education students do not buy a license after graduating.

Twelve state wildlife agencies supplied data for the survey, which profiled the subsequent hunting license buying habits of hunter education graduates from 2006-2011.

- Just 67.7 percent of graduates over the six-year period purchased at least one license
- While some graduates took hunter education with no intention of hunting, others needed assistance to make the leap to become an avid hunter
- After six years, only 44 percent of graduates still bought licenses
- Graduates from highly urbanized areas showed the greatest percentage of graduates who never purchased a license
- People graduating in warmer months represented the greatest percentage of graduates who never purchases a license
- In most states, graduates between the ages of 16 to 24 were less likely to buy a license six years after graduating, which showed the transient nature of young people. This held true for college students and those in the military.

“This shows us that simply encouraging people to obtain their hunter safety certificate is not enough,” said Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts surveys such as HunterSurvey.com, ShooterSurvey.com, and AnglerSurvey.com. “The hunting community needs ways to encourage new graduates to buy a license and go hunting. Whether that means more programs for state agencies to get people out hunting, private industry intervention, or simply more hunters taking their neighbor’s kid into the woods, remains to be seen.”

It is the belief of the National Shooting Sports Foundation that the results for this study will help the hunting community determine where intervention is needed to maintain hunting participation among newer hunters. Southwick Associates helps the outdoor industry, management agencies and non-profit organizations understand the size of markets, sales and participation trends and the economic aspects of hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation and conservation issues.

Shotgun Coaches Needed this Fall

With the continued growth and success of the shotgun shooting sports, comes an increased need for new coaches. The Mat-Su Valley now recognizes the shotgun sports as a letter sport in their high schools. There is a push for the same recognition in the Anchorage School District.

If you are interested in become a new coach, contact **Lee Rogers at 267-2373**. Tentative dates for the ADF&G Youth Coaches Course are Tuesday-Thursday, September 3-5, 2013 at Rabbit Creek Shooting Park. Candidates must attend all three nights with each session running from 6-9 pm.



Welcome to our New Instructors!

Basic Hunter Education

Fairbanks: Mimi Thomas, Branden Forst, and Thomas Narow

North Pole: Ken Swank

Aniak: Tim Abbot

Bowhunter:

Fairbanks: Lyle Shelnut

North Pole: Shane Arnold

Eielson: Raul Salazar

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“National Archery in the Schools” 2012-13

This past school year marked the 8th year of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) in Alaska. For the 2012-13 school year, there were nearly 4,600 boys and girls across Alaska participating. We will easily hit the 20,000 mark for students that have experienced this sport since our first year started with only 10 pilot schools. This year, we expanded the program by 16 schools, for a total of over 120 schools that have received training since the inception of NASP back in 2006. NASP was developed for youth in grades 4 thru 12 and designed to be taught “in school” as part of the Physical Education curriculum.

April 1st marked the end of the 2013 Alaska State NASP Tournament. This tournament was conducted as a “virtual” tournament allowing archers from all regions of the state a chance to participate without having to leave their home schools. From the 31 schools in Alaska that participated, there were 255 girls and 336 boys for a total of 591 archers registered for the tournament.

While we had some great scores entered from a number of schools around the state, Delta/Greely Schools took the honors of High Overall Boy and Girl for the tournament. Brandon Schmidt and Angela Hannan both shot a very impressive score of 296 from a possible 300! It is also worthy to note



that Angela’s sister Rachael Hannon also shot a score of 296 but was unable to participate in a shoot off as per NASP rules, so Angela was determined the winner. Southeast Island School district won 1st place in the High School and Middle School team divisions and 2nd place in the Elementary division. Delta/Greely again won 2nd place in the High School and Middle School divisions. Gladys Jung Elementary from Bethel won 1st place, Elementary division.

Several Alaskan archers and teams from the tournament also qualified to participate in the NASP National Tournament, held May 10-11, 2013 in Louisville Kentucky. Forty nine archers from Alaska attended.

If you know of a school that may be interested in the NASP Program, or upcoming training sessions for teachers, or would like more information, please have them get in touch with me at <kirk.lingofelt@alaska.gov> or call 907-267-2534.



Level 1, Rifle Coach Training Course

A Level 1, Coaches Training Course, sponsored by CMP, USA Shooting, the NRA, and the University of Alaska, will be offered in Anchorage on October 4-6, 2013. **Class times for each of the days will be:**

Friday, Oct 4th (5:45-9:00 pm), Saturday, Oct 5th (8:30 am-5:00 pm) and Sunday, Oct 6th (8:30 am—5:00 pm). We are working with the Anchorage School District to locate a classroom and indoor range to conduct this training.

Two outstanding coaches from UAF will be teaching the course, Randy Pitney and Dan Jordan, assisted by Bruce Bowler. This is a rare deal considering that Randy and Dan are two world-class rifle instructors and coaches, with eight National Championships between them.

The goal is to attract Hunter Education Instructors, Boy Scout Leaders, 4-H, and JROTC shooting sports leaders, plus school rifle coaches from around the state. Hunter Ed Instructors are encouraged to attend to expand their rifle instructing capabilities and experience.

This course will NOT be repeated again, any time soon in Alaska. The course fee is \$400, but a Friends of the NRA Grant will allow us to charge only \$150. The HIT Program will cover the course fee for any active HIT volunteer. The class is limited to 20 students, so if interested contact me early.

This course is recognized nationally by the US Olympic Training Center (USA Shooting), NRA, Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), Boy Scouts, and 4-H Shooting Sports.

POC: Bruce Bowler, Juneau <bruce.bowler@alaska.gov>



Nome: Snowy, HE Field Day in May!

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers in Nome: **Brian Marvin, James Sears and Letty Hughes.**

We also had some rural success with recent instructor training, shotgun clinic and Hunter Ed certifications in Barrow. Thanks to **Bob Hunter and Larry Hannesson** for making the trip up to the North Slope. We expect to add NASP in Barrow this next school year. Another timely Hunter Ed class was recently held in Mountain Village, where a recent firearms tragedy occurred in the home, involving very young children.

Dan Downing and Wes Erickson volunteered to make the trip out to work with kids from Alakanuk and Mountain Village. Spring graduation and prom cut into our expected student numbers, but a clear impact was made on the few students who did attend.



Instructor's Corner

**“Putting More Ethical Hunters
in the Field”**

Email: jerry.soukup@alaska.gov

On the web at:

www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



A Father's Advice

If a sportsman true you'd be
Listen carefully to me. . .

Never, never let your gun
Pointed be at anyone.
That it may unloaded be
Matters not the least to me.

When a hedge or fence you cross
Though of time it cause a loss
From your gun the cartridge take
For the greater safety's sake.

If twixt you and neighboring gun
Bird shall fly or beast may run
Let this maxim ere be thine
"Follow not across the line."

Stops and beaters oft unseen
Lurk behind some leafy screen.
Calm and steady always be
"Never shoot where you can't see."

You may kill or you may miss
But at all times think this:
"All the pheasants ever bred
Won't repay for one man dead."

"Early Instruction"

By Carl Kauba c. 1902

Submitted by Bruce Bowler, Juneau

**Alaska Volunteer Hunter
Education Instructor**

Association (AVHEIA)

Jim Low (907) 457-2637

<avheia@eagle.ptialaska.net>

**“Deep in the Heart...the Tradition Continues”
April 3-6, 2013**

“Deep in the Heart...the Tradition Continues.” For four days in San Antonio, Texas the annual IHEA-USA Conference conducted business and had presentations to help us all improve our Hunter Education programs and individual skills. The Texas guys and gals certainly made us all feel welcome from the opening ceremony that included the posting of the colors by the Buffalo Soldiers, Patriotic Opener and National Anthem by the Gateway Brass Quintet; USAF Band of the West, to the closing banquet and auction on Saturday evening. It was a job well done!

For me it was a privilege to attend. Thank you for the nomination and for choosing me to attend. The days were packed with interesting speakers and helpful presentations. There was time for interaction between Hunter Education staff and other volunteer instructors from other states, Canada and Mexico. I was proud to say I was from Alaska and even more so after hearing what challenges, successes and programs others have. I saw just how our program here in Alaska stacks up with others. I can honestly say we are on the cutting edge with a good mix of technology with online classes and traditional classes. We are excelling in offering continuing education for youngsters and adults. I believe we are near the top of the heap. We did hear some interesting ideas to help us tweak and expand our reach in bringing Hunter Education to the length and breadth of our vast state.

The Conference also gave us a good mix of work and Southern hospitality. We were able to visit the Alamo, a trip to the National Shooting complex with an opportunity to shoot sporting clays and some of the latest archery and air guns (my personal favorite was shooting long bows at pizza sized foam disks tossed like sporting clays)! A wild game dinner put on by the Texas Game Wardens was outstanding and the opportunity to talk with Jim and Eva Shockey was another treat.

It was refreshing to spend time in instruction, fun and fellowship with others **who share the same passion as we do...teaching others to be safe, ethical hunters and shooters.**

Thanks again! Fred Voss (2012 Volunteer HE Instructor of the Year)

22nd Annual Edition of “Hunters Handbook”

The new, 2013 Hunters Handbook, published once a year, is again being included in each student packet. These should also be handed out to each Online Hunter Ed student since they do not receive a packet of materials. The entry form for the IHEA Annual Heritage Hunt appears in the magazine between pages 68-69. Encourage each of your students to fill those out and mail them in; it could mean a free gift or even a hunt for student and volunteer instructor! The deadline to submit the form is 2/15/2014. Instructors can also enter at www.huntershandbook.com.

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