



Hunter Information & Training Program News

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Summer 2016

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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DID YOU KNOW?

September is Tree Stand Safety Awareness Month.

- **Nearly 1 in 10 falls result in death.**
- **The average fall height is 16.97 feet.**
- **In 2015, there were an estimated 5,600 injuries and 11 fatalities involving tree stands.**



Cordova instructor training

The arrival of fall is bittersweet every year. Fall is my favorite season since it involves pumpkins, caramel apples, and Halloween! I'm always excited to trade in the hiking boots and fishing poles for camouflage clothing and a bow/shotgun/rifle, however I'm not ready for the shorter days and rain that usually accompanies fall. As always summer flew by, and the HIT Program was involved in a multitude of activities throughout the state. Between certification courses, clinics, youth shooting leagues, and outreach events, the HIT Program taught thousands of people about firearm safety, wildlife conservation, and the shooting sports. With a quarter of the year still to go, the HIT Program has already conducted 103 hunter education courses, 60 bowhunter education courses, and 13 muzzleloader education courses.

Due to interest across the state, I traveled to Cordova, Dillingham, Glennallen, and Juneau to train new volunteer instructors. These trainings always give me a chance to meet our new instructors and get feedback from completely new point of views. The new instructors are enthusiastic about teaching firearms safety and it's always so much fun to see their "Aha!" moments as we walk through the hunter education field course or the bowhunter education blood trailing proficiency. The new instructors can easily see the importance of time with the volunteer instructors and why the HIT Program so strongly advocates for the in-person, hands-on portion of certification courses. Every community has a uniqueness



Juneau instructor training

that can be incorporated into a certification course. For instance, in areas like Cordova and Juneau, where it rains a lot every year, conducting the blood trailing proficiency can be challenging due to the rain washing the fake blood away. This would also be true during a real hunt, and so instructors can incorporate searching for other clues to find the animal in their blood trailing exercise (scratches from hooves, bent brush, blood under large leaves).



Juneau instructor training

Best of luck in your fall hunting endeavors! I look forward to hearing your stories and seeing your photos.



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Kirk Lingofelt Statewide Hunter Education Coordinator



I grew up in a single parent home in Ohio and while I always had a fishing pole in my hand, hunting opportunities were virtually nonexistent (no one to show me how to do it properly) so I did not start my hunting career until 1990. After earning a degree in Recreation and Wildlife Management, I moved to

Alaska in 1989 shortly after the Exxon Valdez oil spill to work at a private non-profit Salmon Hatchery Program in Prince William Sound. I spent the next 9 years in the bush living on two separate islands and the mainland between Whittier and Valdez raising salmon for commercial and sport fisheries throughout the region, all while living in what I considered a fishing and hunting heaven.

In 1998 I moved to Anchorage and pursued employment with ADF&G but there was not much going on hatchery wise. I saw the job announcement with the department for the Hunter Information and Training Program's new Mobile Shooting Sports Trailer. This position really interested me so I applied and was hired in March of 1999 as part of the HIT Program. I knew right away that I had found a new home and was very excited to be part of the HIT family.



Since my hire over 17 years ago I held the same position with HIT as the Mobile Shooting Sports Coordinator until my recent hire as the Statewide Hunter Education Coordinator (HIT Project Assistant).

During my time with the Mobile Shooting Sports Trailer

I was very fortunate to get to travel to many regions of the state delivering all sorts of clinics and certification courses from Barrow to Ketchikan and many, many places in-between. Those travels also allowed me to meet many of our instructors around the state as well as department staff in the various regional offices. I must say that throughout all my travels for this position it has been a pleasure to meet and work with each and every one of you that has assisted me during my travels.



Since my personal interests are so closely related to my job I am actively involved with youth shooting sports and promoting outdoor recreation for all. My wife Dana and I enjoy our time on the rivers and lakes in the summer down on the Kenai Peninsula and are always ready for a hunting adventure in the fall wherever that may take us.

It is my hope to pick up where Lee Rogers left off and continue to provide you all with the training and support you need as you help deliver these great courses that no doubt have made many folks safer in and out of the field.

Hunter Education Program Profile

The 2016 Hunter Education Program Profile (data from 2015) is included with this newsletter. This Profile contains data from every state and will help to give you an idea of how many people were reached by Hunter Education programs nationwide in 2015. The International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) puts this document together.

I'm always amazed by the number of states that don't have a live fire requirement in their certification courses. The shooting proficiency and field course are usually the top two student favorites based on the student surveys.



IHEA Instructor Resource Site
www.ihea.com

Alaska HIT Program Site
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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Welcome to Our New Instructors

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

Hunter Education:

Copper Center: Josh Heinbaugh, Patti Miller

Juneau: Drew Gruening, Mark Stopha

Sitka: Jack Greenhalgh

Bowhunter Education:

Cordova: Milo Burcham, Nick Docken, Andy

Morse

Juneau: Richard Ely, Jeff Jemison, Jess Lujan, Kellie Nightlinger, Drew Gruening

Ketchikan: Bob Albright

Sitka: Jack Greenhalgh

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 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 we'll send HIT Staff to conduct a training.



The first Bowhunter Ed students certified in Cordova

Updated Names for Certification Classes

To alleviate some of the confusion for both students and instructors, we've updated the names for the certification classes. These names also help to match our certification class names up with other states' nomenclature.

Hunter Education:

Traditional = Removed

This lesson plan will be available upon request for schools, scouting groups, etc. that want to plan a more lengthy course.

Independent Study = Instructor-led course

The student completes the workbook at home and then attends an 8-hour course taught by instructors.

Online = Online course + field day

The student completes the online course and then attends a 4-5 hour field day taught by instructors. This change separates our course from "online only" courses conducted by other states.

Bowhunter Education:

Today's Bowhunter (Independent Study) = Instructor-led course

The student completes the chapter reviews in the manual and then attends an 8-hour course taught by instructors.

Online = Online course + field day

The student completes the online course and then attends a 4-hour field day taught by instructors. This change separates our course from "online only" courses conducted by other states.

Muzzleloader Education:

Today's Muzzleloader = Instructor-led course

The student completes the chapter reviews in the manual and then attends an 8-hour course taught by instructors.

Online = Online course + field day

The student completes the online course and then attends a 4-hour field day taught by instructors. This change separates our course from "online only" courses conducted by other states.

HIT Steering Group

Rick Sterling (Interior) alaskawindfall@alaska.net

Steve Shiell (Rural Alaska) sshiell@pwsc.edu

Paul Houser (Southcentral) houserfam9@yahoo.com

Martha Peck (Southcentral) martha.a.peck@gmail.com

Bruce Bowler (Southeast) cozylog@alaska.net

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Instructor Notes

Steering Group Members Needed

On November 1, 2016 there will be two open seats on the HIT Program's Volunteer Steering Group. The openings will be from our Interior and Rural Alaskan regions and each seat is a two-year term. Rick Sterling (Interior) and Steve Shiell (Rural) have been a tremendous asset to the Steering Group over the past two years.

The duties of the Steering Group are as follows:

- Advise HIT Program Coordinator and staff on a wide range of issues pertaining to hunting and firearms safety
- Establish/maintain open communication between volunteer instructors and HIT staff
- Periodically monitor and review program goals, objectives, and policies
- Provide ongoing recommendations on program curriculum (study manual, workbook, test, and lesson plans)
- Provide input to improve the Volunteer Instructor Incentive Program
- Represent instructors and program participants
- Attend at least three meetings per year (two teleconferences and one in-person (Jan/Feb in Anchorage))

To apply, submit a one-page letter of interest that describes your background and addresses how your membership on the Steering Group would benefit the HIT Program.

Letters can be emailed, faxed, or mailed to Gina by September 19, 2016.

If you have any questions about being on the Steering Group, feel free to contact a current member.

Rick Sterling (Interior) alaskawindfall@alaska.net

Steve Shiell (Rural Alaska) sshiell@pwscc.edu

Paul Houser (Southcentral) houserfam9@yahoo.com

Martha Peck (Southcentral) martha.a.peck@gmail.com

Bruce Bowler (Southeast) cozylog@alaska.net

The HIT Steering Group has proven to be a great advisory resource in advancing HIT Program goals and objectives. The members have consistently served both the volunteer instructors from around the state and ADF&G, and we look forward to continuing with this tradition.

If you have any questions about the application process or the Steering Group, feel free to call 267-2196 or email ginamaria.smith@alaska.gov.

HIT Staff Contact Information

Anchorage

Gina Smith 267-2196
Kirk Lingofelt 267-2373
Marc Much 267-2241
Gail Volt 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



Congrats to volunteer instructor Levi Lewellyn (Fairbanks) on his 40-mile herd caribou.

Alaska Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor Association (AVHEIA)
Jim Low 378-5897
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