



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Summer 2022

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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It's been a busy summer for the HIT Program around the state and I wanted to share some photo highlights.



Anchorage School District Migrant Education hunter ed class



Steve Lanford teaching an Intro to Firearms class in Fairbanks at the BOW Blitz



Nome bowhunter ed class



Getting kids excited about archery at Potter Marsh Discovery Day



Shotgun shooting at Outdoor Youth Days Camp

We'd love to share more photos with your fellow instructors. Photos can be emailed to ginamaria.smith@alaska.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Alaska, there are the following youth hunt opportunities:

- 5 drawing hunts (2 for caribou, 3 for moose)
- 1 registration hunt (for mountain goats in Southeast)
- Kodiak deer hunt (general season)
- Youth sheep hunts (general season-occur everywhere there is a general season sheep hunt that opens on Aug. 10)
- Small game hunts (Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge near Juneau, near Skilak Lake on the Kenai, and Hatcher Pass near Wasilla/Palmer).

***All Youth must complete hunter education to participate in these hunts.



Success! Hunter Ed graduate Rosie Burke with her first caribou!



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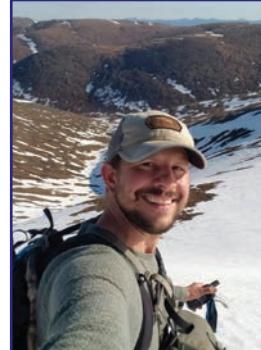
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Tim Bembenic: New Interior Outreach & Education Tech



I was born in a rural town in western Pennsylvania where I grew up avidly hunting and fishing with family and friends. My family owns and operates a catering business and we have always been very passionate about giving back to the community via fundraisers, benefit dinners, and donations to those in need. For me, these early experiences cultivated strong values and a passion for the outdoors and community outreach. I graduated from Penn State with a BA in Letters, Arts, and Sciences and completed coursework in Wildlife Technology, Geosciences, and Social Sciences.

After graduation, I worked a seasonal fisheries position with Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association in Moose Pass, and I absolutely fell in love with the landscape, people, and robust natural resources of Alaska. I returned to Pennsylvania to be closer to my family but realized that I could not shake Alaska from my mind. I returned to Alaska in 2017 and worked for the same non-profit, and ultimately decided that I'd like to work in wildlife management. I spent three years working for USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services at Anchorage International Airport. Due to few advancement opportunities, I accepted a seasonal position with ADF&G with the Small Game Program in Fairbanks which I greatly enjoyed. Following the field season, I accepted a Wildlife Technician III/IV position in Glennallen where I was able to hone my interpersonal and teaching skills. Working for ADF&G has helped me learn to understand the public, as well as the research and



management of the resources that we all share. Combining my eclectic work experience with a passion for working with people, I was more than excited to accept my new role with the Hunter Information and Training Program where I'll be coordinating BOW events here in the Interior. I'm eagerly looking forward to working with, and learning from, each of you soon. I greatly appreciate your dedication to instructing and sharing your knowledge to help preserve our outdoor heritage.

I can be reached at (907) 459-7376 or tim.bembenic@alaska.gov.



SAVE THE DATE: Annual Instructor Meetings

The annual instructor meetings are a great way to meet other instructors, share your hunting stories, provide feedback to HIT Program staff, and help plan the 2023 schedule. Dinner will be provided! It's also a chance for us to thank you for your outstanding efforts and volunteer hours in 2022. Please take the time to attend these meetings if you're available.

- **November 8th** at Snowshoe Gun Club (Soldotna)
- **November 17th** at Juneau Indoor Range
- **November 20th** at Fairbanks Indoor Range
- **December 6th** at Anchor Lutheran School (Anchorage)
- **December 8th** at Grouse Ridge (Wasilla)
- **Tuesday, November 29th-Rural Areas Meeting** (Telephone/Zoom)

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Motivations Matter-Why Students Take Hunter Education

This information is from a report by Southwick Associates called “Boosting Hunting Participation Among Hunter Education Graduates.”

The motivations to take hunter ed vary. Treating all students the same means we will connect with some students while overlooking others. The temptation is to teach to the average student, but this student may not actually exist. To help understand what students want from hunter ed, graduates were segmented into four unique personas based on their motivations for taking hunter ed.

Locavores-38%

The largest segment, these students are motivated to take hunter ed to begin hunting for their own food. They want to be self-reliant and harvest sustainable, often local and organic meat. They are less likely to see hunting as a tradition and a lifestyle. You can connect with these students by sharing how you care for your meat and food items that can be made with wild game.

Legacy Hunters-30%

What most will think of when they think of hunter ed students. These students are generally from hunting families or communities and take the course to satisfy legal requirements. Connections can be made by sharing species-specific hunting techniques and more about hunting rules and laws in Alaska.

Curious Students-19%

The least interested in hunting, this segment takes the course more out of curiosity than an immediate desire to hunt. These students often include parents and others wanting to accompany a student through the program, and often support new hunters. You can share more information about hands-on firearm field training and information about local shooting ranges.

Reactivators-13%

People with prior hunting experience who need to take the course to begin hunting again. Their experience may be limited to following hunters one or two times when very young, but interest was planted at that time. Connections can be made by sharing how to care for their harvest and Alaska hunting techniques.

Steering Group Members Needed-Interior & Rural

On November 1, 2022 there will be two open seats on the HIT Program’s Volunteer Steering Group. The openings will be from our Interior and Rural regions and each seat is a two-year term. Cordell Gray (Interior) and Andy Finke (Rural) have been a tremendous asset to the Steering Group over the past two years.

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

Letters can be emailed or mailed to Gina by September 15, 2022.

HIT Program Steering Group

Cordell Gray (Interior) cords180@yahoo.com

Andy Finke (Rural) bdaf49@gmail.com

Joe Brewer (SC) jabinalaska@gmail.com

Jeremy Lemons (SC) jeramylemons@icloud.com

Ellen Hannan (SE) ehannan32@gmail.com

Ted Sandhofer (SE) cedarpond@gci.net

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Instructor Notes



Above & Beyond Recipients

We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" this spring. Thanks to the Alaska Wild Sheep Foundation for providing Cabela's gift certificates to help us recognize our Above & Beyond recipients. We'll continue to recognize 1-4 extraordinary volunteer instructors each quarter, so please keep an eye out for co-instructors who go "above and beyond" in the next few months and send HIT Program staff a nomination email.

Art Casserberg (Fairbanks)

Art has been an instructor for the HIT Program for the past 5 years and in that time has become trained to teach all four certification class disciplines. He's an instructor that Tom can call on in a pinch, and his flexibility and willingness to help is greatly appreciated. This summer he taught 1 hunter ed, 1 muzzleloader ed, and 3 bowhunter ed classes.

Amy Pinney (Juneau)

Amy was certified as a bowhunter ed instructor in 2018 and a hunter ed instructor in 2022. She's helped with both hunter ed and bowhunter ed field days this summer, and is helping Daniel recruit new volunteer instructors in the Juneau area.



Regg Simon (Palmer)

Regg has been an instructor since 2015. He taught 3 bowhunter classes this summer and is signed up to teach more. He even drove in from the Valley to teach two classes in Anchorage which was a huge help!

John Western (Anchorage)



John has been the "Swiss Army Knife" of instructors this summer by teaching a bowhunter ed class, crossbow ed class, and helping out with two hunter ed classes for the Alaska Military Youth Academy and the Anchorage School District Migrant Education class. He also volunteered at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park Range Clean-Up Day.

Thank you to all 162 instructors who have taught at least one class this year!

HIT Staff

Contact Information

Anchorage:

Gina Smith 267-2196
Kirk Lingofelt 267-2373
Maria Bakic 267-2241
Katelyn Zonneville 267-2534

Anna Petersen 267-2187

Fairbanks:

Tom Halverson 459-7211
Tim Bembenic 459-7376

Juneau:

Daniel Gutierrez 465-4345



**Hunter Ed graduate
Tommy Galyon with his
first ptarmigan!**