



# Alaska's Hunter Information & Training Program News

**ADF&G**  
**HIT PROGRAM**  
**Winter 2014**

## Coordinator's Farewell - Jerry Soukup

Well, it's been an amazing ten years with the Department of Fish & Game and more importantly, the Hunter Information & Training Program. I could never overstate how much I appreciate all the support and effort each of you has provided to our program over the past decade. I'm confident that we've shared the same passion for teaching our youth about firearms safety, responsible and ethical hunting, and that's made our efforts all the more rewarding and productive. The education provided by our Bowhunter and Muzzleloader volunteers have been equally impressive. Even the most seasoned archer or muzzleloader hunter has gained some knowledge and insight from the instruction you've provided. Your efforts have provided some great hunting opportunities to many hunters in the popular "Weapons Restricted" hunt areas. I also want to thank the various members of the HIT Steering Group over the past 10 years. Together, we have provided a solid base for program policy, standardization of teaching methods, and quality assessment for each of our course disciplines. Please note our three new Steering Group members (page 2). Be sure to take the time to contact them as they prepare for our annual meeting in early 2014. The agenda is built based on concerns and ideas from around the state, so take the time to let your voices be heard.

Working cooperatively with the Steering Group has also been a dedicated, statewide HIT Staff. I would like to thank all of them for their commitment, advice, and guidance as we took on challenges over the years. Some of my best memories over the past 10 years were related to our outreach programs, many of them held at our shooting range facilities. I'd like to pass on our appreciation for the commitment displayed by range staff around the state, who make our facilities a safe and professional location to visit. I hope you get the chance to be involved with our outreach programs to include: Youth Shotgun Leagues, Outdoor Youth Days, Youth Hunter Ed Challenge, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Small Game Hunts, National Archery in the Schools, and Explore Bowhunting. Taking a look at the 2013 graph below, it clearly shows the impact you've had on thousands of new hunters. The volunteer hours, nearly 7,000 total from all instructors statewide, is truly an impressive show of support to our program and the state of Alaska. I hope that our trails cross again, maybe on a fishing bank, calling in some ducks, or shooting some sporting clays targets. It's been an honor and pleasure to be part of the Hunter Information & Training Program. I wish you all the best in 2014 and beyond!

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### 2013 Summary of Classes

Discipline	Classes	Enrolled	Pass	Fail	Incomplete	Female
Bowhunter Ed	94	1,045	1,010	35	-	108
Basic Hunter Ed	185	2,581	2,450	101	30	776
Muzzleloader Ed	23	174	173	-	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>3,633</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>901</b>

### Volunteer Instructor Hours

Discipline	Classes	Preparation	Classroom	Field	Live Fire	Tot Hours
Bowhunter Ed	94	341	562	126	366	1,396
Basic Hunter Ed	185	1,587	1,788	656	947	4,977
Muzzleloader Ed	23	100	178	2	143	423
<b>Totals</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>6,796</b>



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I enjoy statistics and find it interesting to gather all

kinds of pertinent data on the students who are taking our online courses. So here's an annual summary (through December 22nd) of 2013 for our three course disciplines from Kalkomey Enterprise, Incorporated.

### Basic Hunter Education:

The popularity of the online option for our basic hunter ed course has grown with 1,032 completing the Field Day Qualifier Examination. Of those students, 80% were male and 20% female. Kalkomey also reported that 67% of these online students were over the age of 18, so with 33% under 18, it appears many parents still want their younger kids in a more traditional setting with a study manual and workbook. The most active months for online course completions were August—October. That still leaves us that “hunting season” mentality when people react to getting certified.

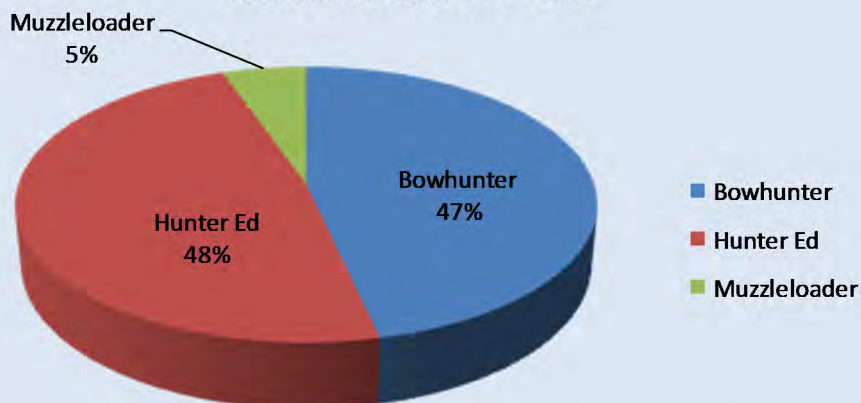
### Bowhunter Education:

We continued to see strong support by our bowhunters with 999 completing the online course in 2013. Of all bowhunters certified for the year, a record high of 77% of them chose the online delivery method. Ninety one percent of our online bowhunter students were male and 94% were over the age of 18. The largest represented age group for these students was 26-35. The most active months for taking the online course were July-August, with also April being a strong month. I'm assuming spring fever and the earlier bowhunting opportunities on the Dalton Highway had some impact on those stats.

### Muzzleloader Education:

Our seasoned muzzleloader students, coming primarily from the 46-55 age group, accounted for 116 online course completions. Of that group, 98% were over the age of 18, no real surprise. The report also stated that 97% of our muzzleloader students were male, so it appears we have some recruiting to do for female muzzleloader shooters. The most active months for taking the online course were Oct-Nov. I assume most are trying to get certified before the winter draw application deadline.

### Online Student Active - 2013

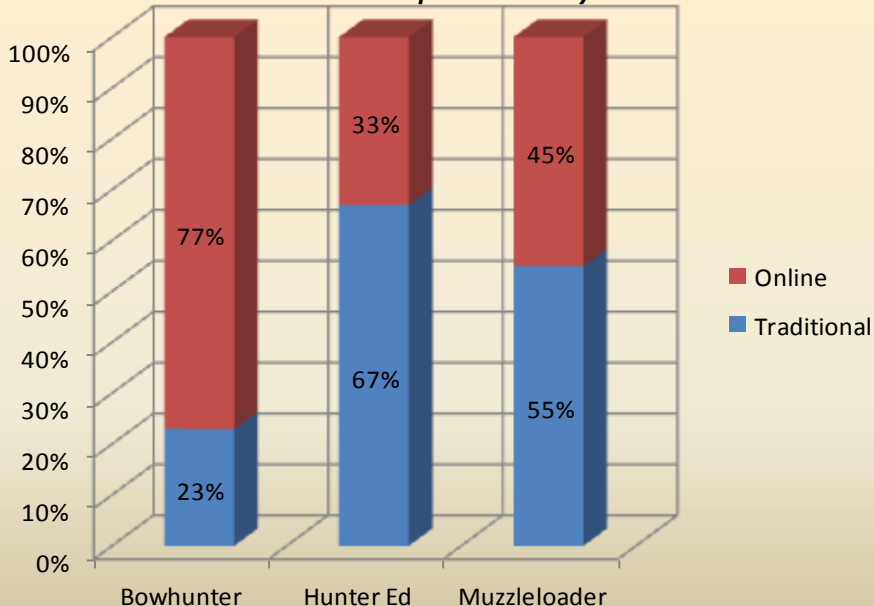


Percentage breakdown of all students that took an Alaskan Online Course through Kalkomey (not all have completed a field day)

### 2013 Total Student Breakdown

Discipline	Enrolled	Trad/Ind Study	Online
Bowhunter	1,045	242	803
Hunter Ed	2,581	1,726	855
Muzzleloader	174	95	79
Totals	3,800	2,063	1,737

### Online vs Independent Study



This graph accounts for all students that enrolled and attended an HIT class in 2013, either as an Independent/Traditional Student or as an Online Student attending a mandatory Field Day. These percentages do not include students that have only completed an online course and are waiting to or have signed up for a future Field Day.



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### Instructor of the Year Award Pays Off on Kodiak Island

I just wanted to tell you about my 1<sup>st</sup> deer with my **"Rural Instructor of the Year Muzzleloader."**

I didn't get a chance to go until the 10<sup>th</sup>



of November. A friend of mine from Anchorage and I rode four wheelers back into a valley about 4.5 miles. When we got to the top of a ridge and could see farther south we could see some weather coming our way. We sat there for about 10 minutes deciding if we should continue on or not. We were about to get on the bikes and turn back when I looked down in the valley and spotted a buck about 300 yards away. I was trying to figure out a way to put a stalk on this deer when I thought "I have a deer call in my pocket, what am I doing?" I sat down in some brush above an alder patch and started to call. The buck responded immediately and started my way. It pretty much came to me on a string. When it paused broadside at 30 yards, I figured that was good enough. The shot was good and it ran about 20 yards to another alder patch. With a short downhill drag we were able to field dress and photograph a great little Sitka Blacktail. It also was in a spot where we could drive the ATV right to the site, so it made the "pack out" as easy as it can get.

So thanks for my new hunting weapon, I will keep trying to put it to good use.

**Andy Finke** (2012 Rural Volunteer Instructor of the Year and current HIT Steering Group Member)

### Welcome to our New Instructors!

#### Basic Hunter Education:

Anchorage: John Fleming, Bruce Laughlin, Robert Palmquist, Wesley Wilson

Fairbanks: Shane Shepard

Ft. Wainwright: Stefan Lockton

Girdwood: Guy Wade

Kenai: Dylan Hooper

Ketchikan: Jeff Shoemaker

Nikiski: Jesse Bjorkman

Palmer: Johnathan Halfacre, Kateri Houser

Petersburg: Cody Litster

Skagway: Ray Leggett

Soldotna: Ken Felchle, William Parker, Joseph Trefren

Wasilla: Jeremiah Frye, Damon Hampel

#### Bowhunter Education:

JBER: Jaron Cappon

Palmer: Erin Shepard

Soldotna: Mike Dehlbom

Wasilla: Jonathan Galler

#### Basic & Bowhunter Education:

Palmer: Greg Shepard

Valdez: Jacob Hamilton

#### Basic & Muzzleloader Education:

Fairbanks: Vicki Taylor

### 500 Hour Volunteer Instructor Nametags: (Congrats!)

Juneau: Stuart Robards

Wasilla: Mike Sain

### 2013 INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS:

**LAST CHANCE!!** As a reminder, we select a top volunteer in all three disciplines; Basic Hunter Education, Bowhunter, and Muzzleloader. We also consider nominations for the HIT Lifetime Achievement Award and Rural Instructor of the Year. Take the time to talk with friends and family members of your nominee. Deadline to submit is January 10, 2014

We will again offer a \$100 gift card to one lucky nominator, drawn randomly from all nominations.

The form is on the HIT Website (Volunteer Instructor side-bar link) and was also sent to each of you with your fall newsletter.

### HIT Steering Group

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### Recoil Reduction Strategies—James Swan Article from “Outdoor Hub”

### Instructor's Corner

The kick you get out of hunting and shooting your rifle or shotgun should be the enjoyment of shooting, not the recoil. If a rifle or a shotgun unleashes a strong recoil each time you pull the trigger, it can affect your accuracy and reduce the enjoyment of shooting as well as bruise your shoulder. It may even discourage a new shooter from learning to use firearms.

Recoil is the result of the gases created from the explosion of gunpowder that propels the bullet. The explosion in the chamber causes the bullet to go in one direction, while the recoil is what happens when the gases flow backwards in the chamber as the bullet leaves the barrel. To reduce recoil, normal solutions include increasing the weight of the gun, providing some padding on the stock, and reducing the force of the gaseous explosion.

Aside from a shoulder pad on your vest or jacket, there are a number of additional recoil reducing pads on the market that are fairly inexpensive. As the pad compresses under the recoil, it turns the sharp jab into more of a push. Some are worn on your shoulder. Others are mounted on the stock of the shotgun or rifle. Some new guns come with recoil pads already on the stock. Others come separately and are installed on the butt by a gunsmith, or someone else who knows how to insure the pad will not affect your accuracy. Thick, spongy recoil pads obviously do a better job of absorbing the impact than thin hard ones, but there is a price. As the recoil pad compresses, it permits the comb of the stock to move rearward along the cheekbone, sometimes resulting in a black eye or bloody nose. One way to prevent this is to have your gunstock custom fitted by cutting the stock to a certain length as well as adding a recoil pad. The gun will feel like an extension of your arms. The fitting will also improve your scores.

Why have your stock fitted? If you paid a thousand dollars for a suit, you'd want it fitted wouldn't you? One thirty-second of an inch can throw you off at least four feet at 40 yards. Another recoil reduction aid is a **muzzle brake**—a ventilated steel tube bored a little larger than the groove diameter of the barrel that is screwed into the end of the barrel. A brake adds a couple of inches of length to the barrel. There is no change in a rifle's ballistics with a muzzle brake. It works by releasing gas sideways. Accubrake, Magna-brake, Recoil Reducer, and BOSS are some popular muzzle brakes. They all claim a 40-50 % reduction in recoil.

There are two considerations with a muzzle brake. The first is adapting your rifle to handle the brake, which is going to cost a couple bucks, and requires a gunsmith to make the adaptations. The second is noise. Venting the gas sideways as it leaves the barrel is going to mean a louder report. You should always wear ear protection when shooting anyways, and if you're using a muzzle brake, you should use the best you can afford at all times for your ears' sake.

Reducing the powder in a shell also results in recoil reduction, but it also can affect trajectory and power. **Remington Managed Recoil ammunition** has changed my shooting. A Remington Managed Recoil 7mm Magnum cartridge with a 140-grain load performs the same as regular loads out to 200 yards with half the recoil. The key is a new specialized bullet. No need to lengthen the stock, change the weight of the gun, or shell out any money for gunsmiths. Federal also makes low-recoil loads for rifles and shotguns.

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