



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Winter 2015

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Federal Duck Stamp will cost \$25 instead of \$15 this year. The price hasn't changed since 1991.

Since 1934, it has raised more than \$750 million and paid for conserving more than 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat.

The Federal Duck Stamp has been called one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated and is a highly effective way to conserve America's natural resources.



2015-2016 Federal Duck Stamp

While completing the 2014 Yearly Review, all that I can say is "Wow!!" It is so impressive to look back at the number of classes taught, students certified, and instructor hours volunteered. The HIT Program is fortunate to have so many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer instructors who can be counted on year after year to help ensure that Alaskans have the skills and knowledge to enjoy the outdoors in a safe and responsible manner. The numbers below clearly demonstrate the impact that you've had on thousands of new hunters and their families.

Here is a brief synopsis of the stats from 2014.

Class Type	Number of Classes	Certified Students	Volunteer Instructor Hours
Hunter Ed	177	2,468	5,116
Bowhunter Ed	86	1,036	1,415
Muzzleloader Ed	25	180	406
Totals:	288	3,684	6,937

- 47% of Hunter Ed classes were Online Field Days and 53% were Full Day classes
- 81% of Bow Ed classes were Online Field Days and 19% were Full Day classes
- 52% of MZ Ed classes were Online Field Days and 48% were Full Day classes

Class Type	# of Instructors that Taught at Least 1 Class	Name of Instructor
Hunter Ed	219	Steve Lanford (Fairbanks) taught 13 classes
Bowhunter Ed	100	Mike Robbins (Anchorage) taught 12 classes
Muzzleloader Ed	31	Carl Edmiston & Bill Sobolesky (Anchorage) taught 4 classes each

- 42 new Volunteer Hunter Ed. Instructors were certified
- 20 new Volunteer Bow Ed. Instructors were certified
- 7 new Volunteer Muzzleloader Ed Instructors were certified

HIT Certification courses were taught in **43 different cities and villages** during 2014.

Anaktuvuk Pass, Anchorage, Aniak, Birchwood, Cantwell, Clear AFB, Cordova, Craig, Delta Junction, Eagle River, Eielson AFB, Fairbanks, Ft Wainwright, Fort Yukon, Ft. Greely, Gakona Junction, Galena, Glacier View, Glennallen, Gustavus, Haines, Healy, Homer, Juneau, Kake, Ketchikan, Kiana, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Lake Minchumina, New Stuyahok, Nikiski, Nome, Palmer, Petersburg, Prudhoe Bay, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Thorne Bay, Tok, Valdez, Wasilla



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HIT Steering Group Meeting Summary

February 13-14, 2015

Submitted by Fred Voss (Secretary)

Items Brought Up by Instructors

1. Some of the non-functional firearms are too heavy for some students to carry for long periods of time during the Field Course. **Suggestions:** using the wooden field guns, decommissioned pellet rifles from ADF&G, and ensuring that smaller students carry bolt-action and break action since lighter.

Policy decision: If the physical size of children limits their ability to safely handle the firearms for the shooting portion of the class or if they have trouble keeping focused when they have a firearm in their hands, the lead instructor needs to address this immediately. Some students just aren't physically ready to participate in Hunter Ed and can be asked to take the class at a later date. Safety first!

2. Should instructors have students check targets after completing each shooting position or check targets after completing all three shooting positions. **Policy decision:** Have students check targets after completing all three shooting positions as it is more time efficient.

3. What positive ways can an instructor work with a parent/grandparent of a student who may be having a negative effect on their child's shooting? **Suggestions:** Have the parent partner with somebody else if they're also taking the class. Ask the parent to "help" assist with keeping the opposite end of the shooting line safe.

4. An instructor recommended that we eliminate the standing, kneeling, and sitting "practice rounds" in the Hunter Ed. shooting proficiency. The idea would be to just have the proficiency shoot of five shots thus saving time and saving ammo. **Policy decision:** The current system of shooting 20 rounds per student will be upheld. Reasons include:

-The percentage of students who have had little or no experience in shooting a firearm was very high.

Even though some may know how to load and pull the trigger, many people do not know the proper shooting positions.

-Exit surveys of students overwhelmingly praise the shooting portion of the class as being "the best part" of the class. These same students want their practice targets and test targets to show Mom and Dad and hang on the refrigerator.

-The shooting of the firearms using all three positions is a great teaching tool to show students how the size of their groups get smaller as they progress from the standing to kneeling to the sitting position.

-Teaching the proper shooting positions is really an ethical issue as we strive to teach the students to take the best possible shot.

-The HIT program has budgeted for enough ammunition so that all students have the opportunity to have the shooting proficiency and practice as part of their firearms training.

5. Proper equipment for the Bowhunter Ed qualifying shoot was discussed. Many students don't come with a quiver. We talked about whether a quiver should be a mandatory piece of equipment for the shoot. **Policy decision:** Carrying a quiver isn't mandatory, it will stay a recommended piece of equipment for the shooting proficiency. We decided to use this as a teachable moment to remind the archers that a quiver is the safest way to carry arrows. Therefore we will have quivers available in the teaching kits for those who forget.

6. The Online Hunter Ed Class field day seems to be rushed at only 4 hours. **Policy decision:** The class will be scheduled for 4-5 hours instead.

Hunter Ed Policy Manual Update

The Hunter Ed Instructor Policy Manual was updated. Any major changes will be emailed/mailed out to instructors and a copy of the new Policy Manual will be available online.

IHEA Instructor Resource Site
www.ihea.com



Alaska HIT Program Site
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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HIT Steering Group Meeting Summary continued

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

2014 HIT Outstanding Educator of the Year

Lyle Shelnut of Fairbanks

Lifetime Achievement Award

Judy Johnson of North Pole

Lifetime Achievement Award

Jim Low of Fairbanks

Rural Instructor of the Year

Fred Moore of Seward

Apprentice Instructor of the Year

Kateri Houser of Palmer

We will include detailed information about each Awardee and their contributions to the HIT Program in the Spring newsletter.

Point of Interest

The HIT Program is going to put in a bid to host the 2018 International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) Annual Conference. This Conference normally draws 200 plus delegates from the lower 48, Canada, Mexico and other countries. If Alaska is chosen, the Conference would probably be held in Anchorage at the end of June or beginning of July 2018.

Training Aids

A "Survival Bandana" will replace the Outsmart Survival Guides in the student packets since the Outsmarts are no longer available. The bandana has been Alaskanized from the bandana created by the Minnesota DNR.

A good point to bring up during Hunter Ed. classes while discussing and demonstrating shooting positions is about the use of shooting sticks/staffs. Shooting sticks aid a hunter in making a more accurate and ethical shot. There

are a variety of shooting sticks available for purchase or you can talk to your students about making use of sticks or trees to rest on.

Student Attendance

Many traditional full-day Hunter Ed. classes in Southcentral and Fairbanks deal with students who are "no-shows" or cancel at the last minute. It may have a lot to do with the students not having the workbook finished. The HIT staff will continue to try and develop ways to limit the number of "no-shows".

2014 AIM-COMM Outstanding Contribution to Hunter Education Award



Dennis Degnan of Fairbanks was awarded the 2014 AIM-COMM Outstanding Contribution to Hunter Education Award. Dennis has been a Hunter Ed. instructor since 2006, a Muzzleloader Ed. instructor since 2007, and a Bowhunter Ed. instructor since 2010.

In 2014 Dennis taught 5 Hunter Ed. classes and 4 Bowhunter Ed. classes. Dennis always catches the students' attention early in the class when he introduces himself and why Hunter Ed/firearm safety is important to him. When Dennis was young, his brother accidentally shot him in the head after having a .22 rifle hangfire, and his brother wasn't following the Rules of Firearm Handling Safety.

Welcome to Our New Instructors

Basic Hunter Education:

Fairbanks: Scott Lanier

Salcha: Timothy France

Bowhunter Education:

Juneau: Michael Whisenant, Jason Boyer

HIT Steering Group

Steve Shiell (Rural Alaska) sshiell@pwscc.edu

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Fred Voss (Southcentral) Secretary fvoss2@gmail.com

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Instructor Notes

Hmong Hunter Education Class

Fred Voss



“Pastor, do you think any of your members would be interested in a Hunter Education class?” Those few words opened up a door of opportunity for one of the first Hmong Hunter Education classes held here in Anchorage. Pastor Pao Moua from Faith Lutheran Hmong Church gathered together a group of people who were eager to learn and become certified.

Anchorage is home to approximately 5,000 Hmong who have come to Alaska from Laos, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries. They come from a rich heritage of hunting and gathering. It was natural for them to want to continue this in Alaska. This was an excellent opportunity to teach hunter ethics, responsibility, and to prepare them to hunt in Alaska.

Since we had no materials written in their native language, Pastor Moua suggested that the group work through the workbook together in the weeks before the class.

It was a very productive time together as parents, children, and friends worked together translating the English into their native tongue and completing their workbooks. The classroom portion was held at their church and the range day was a beautiful day at Rabbit Creek Shooting Park where the smiles tell the story of a day of fun and many more to come!



2014 Prois Award Winner



Congratulations to **Christine Cunningham** of Kenai for winning the 2014 Prois Award. This national award is given out annually by Prois to a female hunter who exemplifies the company's principals including determination, a passion for the hunt, and involvement in conservation management and community. Christine had to submit an essay and a video to compete for this prestigious award.

Christine has been a Hunter Ed. instructor since 2010 and is involved in local women and youth shooting events hosted by SCI, Delta Waterfowl, and the NRA. She is also the author of the book Women Hunting Alaska.

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