

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

HUNTER EDUCATION ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

State: Alaska

Grant Title: Hunter Information and Training (HIT Program)

Grant #: AKW-2 HIT Section 4C FY2015

Start Date: July 1, 2014 Ending Date: June 30, 2015

Project Leader/Contact: Ginamaria Smith

3,366 Students Trained (1511) _____ (cost if available): _____ (4c)

Students certified under an approved basic hunter education course, including costs of maintaining a staff of instructors and training for basic hunter education. Report number of students in age/gender/race/disabled categories in narrative below, as determined by instructor.

3,366 Students Live-Firing (1513) _____ (cost if available): _____ (4c)

Students completing live-firing exercises as part of the basic approved hunter education course. Report number of students in age/gender/race/disabled categories in narrative below, as determined by instructor.

1,316 Advanced Student Training (1515) _____ (cost) (4c) *Advanced or adult students completing seminars or specialty courses beyond the beginning or basic course requirements. Report number of students in age/gender/race/disabled categories in narrative below, as determined by instructor.*

6,219 Volunteer Hours of Effort (1521) Cost (if available): _____ (4c)

Hours contributed by volunteers and any associated costs of coordination/administration. Report number of hours, with total in-kind value of contribution and how in-kind value was calculated and recorded in narrative below.

73 Volunteers Trained (1523) Cost (if available): _____ (4c)

Volunteers trained during the reporting year. Report number of volunteers in age/gender/race/disabled categories in narrative below, as determined by instructor.

_____ New Ranges Constructed _____ (Section 4c or 10?) (1561)

Ranges developed with WR Section 4c funds during the reporting year. Report number of ranges and cost, with summary in narrative below.

_____ Ranges Operated and Maintained _____ (Section 4c or 10?) (1562)

Report number of ranges and associated costs, with summary in narrative below.

3 Educational Facility Capital Development (1563) _____ (cost if available): (4c)

Classrooms, education centers, etc. developed and/or maintained during the reporting year. Report number of facilities and cost, with summary in narrative below.

N/A New Range Construction _____ (Section 4c or 10?) (1571)

Ranges developed with WR Section 10 funds during the reporting year. Report number of ranges and cost with summary in narrative below.

N/A Ranges Operated and Maintained _____ (Section 4c or 10?) (1572)

Report number of ranges and associated costs, with summary in narrative below.

N/A Other Section 10 Enhancements (1573) _____ (cost if available):

Report number of enhancements (e.g., projects) and associated costs, with summary in narrative below.

8 HE Coordination and Administration (1581) \$633,553.01 (HIT Personnel: 5 staff in

Anchorage, 2 in Fairbanks, and 1 part-time in Juneau + 9 ADF&G staff extra time)

Planning, budgeting, needs assessments, reporting and those items that could not be assigned to a category above. Report cost and summarize in narrative below.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATED TO PROPOSED OBJECTIVES:

Project Objectives:

Objective 1: Maintain an annual needs assessment for the HIT program.

Objective 2: Expand the reach of the HIT Program to better serve all Alaskans with appropriate curriculum and facilities, including those beyond the population centers of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau

Objective 3: Maintain open lines of communication and recognition between staff and volunteer instructors, and implement practical and consistent instructor policies and agreements.

Objective 4: Meet and expand the need for mandatory HE and BE training throughout Alaska and ensure intra-jurisdictional certification reciprocity through standardized curriculum, testing, and passing requirements.

Objective 5: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and ensure ongoing planning and coordination of the HIT program, and seek opportunities to refine and improve it with development of additional training aids and opportunities.

Project activities and accomplishments:

The following are job activities and accomplishments for the report period. The numbers correspond to activities listed in the annual work plan and described under the objectives in the project statement.

1c. Assess the needs of staff, instructors, students, and public regarding hunter education.

Accomplishments:

-Bi-monthly HIT staff teleconference meetings keep everyone informed of any issues statewide. Attendees include HIT Staff in Anchorage, Fairbanks, & Juneau as well as the three state shooting range managers, and other ADF&G staff as necessary.

-The HIT Steering Group, a five-member volunteer advisory group is effectively addressing volunteer instructor concerns and keeping lines of communication open. The group met in Anchorage in February, and has multiple teleconference and email conversations throughout the year. The Steering Group assisted ADF&G staff in choosing instructor incentives and awards.

-Annual planning meetings are conducted once a year throughout the various regions of the state. These meetings help ADF&G staff to assess instructor's needs, community needs, and form a plan for the following year's courses. The meetings also allow ADF&G staff to have face-to-face time with the instructors and hear any ideas/issues given by the volunteer instructors.

-Course reports are turned in after each class and provide an opportunity for the instructors to provide feedback on the class, co-instructors, and any student concerns.

Many of the course reports are dropped off with ADF&G staff in-person which allows for more face-to-face time with instructors.

-After each class, students are provided with surveys where they can provide feedback on the program, volunteer instructors, and course curriculum. This feedback is constructively shared with our volunteer instructors and is taken into account as we continue to develop our certification courses.

-HIT Staff work very closely with other ADF&G staff in the Information Centers across the state. The Information Center staff deal directly with the public on a daily basis, and this relationship allows us to assess the public's needs regarding hunter education.

-HIT Staff provide an informational booth at the following events in order to interact and encourage discussion with the public.

- Alaska State Fair (250 people)
- Great Alaskan Sportsman Show (15,000 people)
- Mat-Su Valley Sportsman Show (2,500 people)
- Potter Marsh Discovery Days (750 people)

1d. Develop, with a timeline, measures to evaluate progress of HIT efforts.

Accomplishments:

-Certified 2,186 Hunter Ed. students, 1,010 Bowhunter Ed. students, and 170 Muzzleloader Ed. students. These numbers included 911 female students and 218 Alaska Natives, which are target groups that we are striving to reach out to.

-The HIT Program taught classes in 41 different communities around the state. A number of these classes were initiated because of an interest from the School District or the Native Corporation.

-Increased our recruitment of rural schools teachers, Troopers, and Village Public Safety Officers as volunteer instructors.

-The Department of Public Safety (DPS) provides details and feedback on our efforts in the classroom through the Hunting Incident Report. This information is also passed on to the National Incident Database maintained by the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA).

1e. Assess Hunter Information & Training facility needs in Alaska.

Accomplishments:

-Plans for maintenance/storage buildings at the Anchorage and Fairbanks range facilities are developing. Special grant funding was sequestered in FY14 and also in FY15 to provide the funding for these facilities. The facilities will store the large investment that we have in range equipment, vehicles, ammunition, clay targets/machines, and other training materials.

2a. Recruit and retain HE instructors with broad backgrounds.

Accomplishments:

-Certified 73 volunteer instructors statewide from 23 different cities/villages. We are able to increase the number of classes offered statewide because of the help of our new instructors.

-27 Bowhunter Ed. Instructors were certified throughout the state. The Alaska Board of Game passed the follow regulation, "Beginning July 1, 2016, all big game hunters using archery will be required to have successfully completed a department approved certification course." Currently Bowhunter Ed. courses are only required if the hunt is restricted to archery only. We are able to increase the number of Bowhunter Ed. classes offered to meet this need with the help of our new instructors.

2b. Use of the Mobile Shooting Sports Trailer to provide HIT opportunities to students in remote, road accessible locations.

Accomplishments:

-The Mobile Shooting Sports Program clinic series offered 21 sessions to over 350 participants. Most of them were connected to the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program.

-Clinics offered included: Basic Hunter Ed., Sighting In Day, Waterfowl Hunting, Field Dressing, Shotgun Basics, Small Game Hunting, Archery, Upland Game Hunting, Firearm Cleaning, Big Game Hunting, Rifle Shooting Basics, Sheep Hunting, Bear Hunting, Handguns, and Bear Safety.

-The Mobile Shooting Sports Trailer and its interactive Laser Shot System were available to thousands of visitors from around the state at the Alaska State Fair, Great Alaskan Sportsman Show, and the Mat-Su Valley Sportsman Show.

2c. Provide training opportunities to Alaskans in areas lacking road access.

Accomplishments:

-Training of volunteer instructors from rural areas of the state is continuing. Applicants are flown to Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau to attend the 2-day instructor training course or HIT Staff flew to communities off the road-system to conduct the 2-day instructor training. Notable locations for FY15 included St. Paul Island and Cordova.

-The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and USA Youth Education in Shooting Sports (USAYESS) continue to grow in Alaska. Many of the new teams are located in remote communities accessed only by boat or plane. More than 90 young shooters from around the state competed in trap, skeet, and sporting clays at the Alaska SCTP-YESS 2015 State Championship held at the Birchwood Shooting Park.

2d. Maintain and monitor Alaska's curriculum for use in teaching hunter education.

Accomplishments:

-The Hunter Ed. instructor policy manual was updated to keep our instructors informed and current with the updated Hunter Ed curriculums.

-An increase in online students from all three certification disciplines (Hunter, Bowhunter, Muzzleloader) has allowed us to increase the number of Online Field Days offered throughout the state. Feedback from students participating in the web-based class and field day has been very positive. The online course coordinated with Kalkomey Enterprise allows us to reach students easily and monitor where an Online Field Day should be scheduled based on student needs.

2e. Interact and collaborate with other agencies and organizations.

Accomplishments:

-The Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska (OHFA) continues to be the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's non-profit partner and assist us in recruitment and retention efforts for youth and women in the areas of hunting and the shooting sports.

-HIT Staff and its volunteers, with financial support from OHFA support a number of successful programs including the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program, Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) & USA Youth Education in Shooting Sports (USAYESS), National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), Explore Bowhunting, and Outdoor Youth Days/Camps

-Other positive interactions and collaborations include the Safari Club International, National Rifle Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, Alaska Bowhunters Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Alaska Waterfowl Association.

3a. Work with staff, the HIT Steering Group, and volunteers to maintain consistent, honest, and open communication.

Accomplishments:

-The annual instructor meetings offer a face-to-face meeting opportunity with our volunteers throughout the state. These meetings provide an opportunity for HIT Staff to say "thank you" and also involve the instructors in the yearly planning process.

-A quarterly newsletter is mailed out to every active instructor statewide. The newsletter contains information about policy changes, pertinent class information, and also stories of activities/classes/workshops that highlight some of the HIT programs statewide.

-Email with all instructors statewide has been our most effective method in staying in contact with volunteer instructors. With the size and remoteness of Alaska, it is a challenge to meet all instructors even once a year.

-The HIT Steering Group meets at least 3 times per year, either in person or by teleconference to discuss upcoming changes to the program and ensure that the volunteer instructors have a voice regarding policy and curriculum changes.

3b. Continue to search out new and exciting instructor recognition and incentive ideas.

Accomplishments:

-Each year the top volunteer instructors are recognized by statewide awards. The volunteer instructors are nominated by other volunteers and the HIT Steering Group helps HIT Staff choose the top volunteer instructors. This year's recipients included Steve Lanford as Hunter Ed. Instructor of the Year, Lyle Shelnut as Outstanding Educator of

the Year, Judy Johnson & Jim Low as Lifetime Achievement Awards, Fred Moore as Rural Instructor of the Year, and Kateri Houser as Apprentice Instructor of the Year. We added two additional awards this year as well-the Outstanding Educator of the Year and Apprentice Instructor of the Year.

-5 year and 10 year pins are given to instructors recognizing their years of service. A 500 hour pin and 1,000 hour pin is also given to instructors that have volunteered that many hours for the HIT Program. These pins are presented at the annual meetings so that all instructors get a chance to see other instructors' accomplishments

3c. Ensure consistency and appropriateness of instructor policies and volunteer agreements.

Accomplishments:

Continue to monitor and consider any feedback submitted by volunteers concerning the program's policies and procedures. Update program policies or procedures as needed, after conferring with the HIT Steering Group. Use a collaborative process to identify specific issues and concerns and to remedy them through appropriate revisions.

4a. Utilize appropriate advertising mediums for all HIT programs, classes, and clinics.

Accomplishments:

-The HIT website at www.huntereducation.alaska.gov is our primary source of reaching the public. We have updated the site to include all current class offerings, descriptions of delivery methods, advanced clinics, instructor trainings, and information on youth and women's programs.

-The Alaska Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program maintains a Facebook page to attract participants to attend not only BOW classes and workshops but also to our certification courses and other HIT clinic offerings.

-The Alaska Department of Fish & Game maintains a Facebook page where we can post information about our classes, clinics, and workshops.

-Updates to the HIT Program instructor recruitment flyers, clinic posters, and other advertising have occurred upon the purchase of new design software.

-HIT Staff attend local School District conferences and offer informational talks to the teachers in order to recruit new instructors and offer new courses in the schools.

-The relationships with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) and the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) provide us the opportunity to list links on their websites to our website to advertise our course offerings and education programs.

-At major events (Alaska State Fair, Great Alaskan Sportsman's Show, & Mat-Su Sportsman's Show) we provide flyers, posters, and information on class offerings and youth recruitment programs.

4b. Maintain standard testing and passing requirements for HIT courses.

Accomplishments:

-We continue to emphasize our “hands-on” Field Day for our online courses and traditional courses. Each student is required to handle, load and unload training firearms, pass a field examination, and make ethical and responsible decisions. They also have to complete a proficiency shoot to demonstrate their competency and safety with firearms. This shooting proficiency remains one of our top priorities for being certified in Alaska. Both the Bowhunter Ed and Muzzleloader Ed certification courses have a shooting proficiency component as well.

5a. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the HIT Program.

Accomplishments:

-Over 400 volunteer instructors provide feedback since they have direct interaction with every student. Overall they feel the course material and information taught is very effective in producing responsible, ethical hunters.
-Feedback from the Department Management Team (DMT) has been very positive about our program and our continued efforts to promote safety, conservation, and ethics in our classes and clinics.
-The student feedback surveys provide us with mostly positive feedback towards our volunteer instructors and course material. The surveys are shared with HIT staff and volunteer instructors. We updated the student surveys so that we can tabulate the responses and use them with future plans for the HIT Program.

5c. Include planning as an ongoing part of the HIT Program.

Accomplishments:

-During the HIT Steering Group meetings, HIT Staff has discussed possible additions to our clinic/certification offerings including trapper education, crossbow education, or clinics based on technologies that hunters are employing. Further discussions with ADF&G management will occur.
-Discussions about additional HIT staffing needs, to include a Southeast Coordinator, a statewide NASP Coordinator, and a Recruitment & Retention Coordinator is ongoing.

5d: Coordinate with other states and organizations and utilize outside resources to develop recruitment programs and additional training aids that will enhance HIT objectives.

Accomplishments:

-HIT Staff and the volunteer Hunter Ed. Instructor of the Year attended the annual IHEA Conference to keep abreast of new programs and how they will affect Alaska.
-HIT Staff attended the Shot Show to meet with representatives from firearms and shooting sports companies and learn about additional training aids that could be utilized to enhance the HIT Program’s offerings.

OTHER RESULTS:

Total HITClasses Offered:

Basic Hunter Education: 168
Bowhunter Certification: 84
Muzzleloader Certification: 27
Total students enrolled: 3,568
Total students certified: 3,366

**Minority Participation In Hunter
Education Courses**

Female: 911
Alaska Natives: 218
Black: 32
Oriental: 63
Hispanic: 68
Disabled: 673

Do all your publications contain an approved equal opportunity statement? yes

Prepared by: Ginamaria Smith

Date: August 27, 2014