



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Summer 2026

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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My calendar reminder to send out the Summer newsletter always comes as a surprise since I can't believe it's the end of August already! While I'm not complaining about berries ripening and hunting seasons being in full swing, summer just always seems to fly by! Our annual performance reports are due in early September for the previous fiscal year, and I love seeing the numbers!

For the first half of 2026, the HIT Program certified 1,550 students! Our volunteer instructors were busy with over 249 instructors teaching at least one class! With 4 months remaining, we still have a lot of certification classes scheduled. Please reach out to your regional coordinator if you're available to help instruct, especially if you haven't taught a class yet in 2026.

Luke Metherell's last day as the HIT Program Southcentral Coordinator was the end of July. He accepted a job in the Anchorage Wildlife Info Center so he can continue to pursue his career goal of being an ADF&G wildlife biologist. We wish him the best and are happy to hear that he still plans on being an active volunteer with us for the Youth Shotgun League and teaching hunter education classes. We are in the process of refilling both the Southcentral and Southeast Coordinator positions, and in the meantime, Ben is coordinating all Southeast certification classes and I am coordinating all Southcentral certification classes.



SAVE THE DATE:

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 2027 schedule. Dinner will be provided! It's also a chance for us to thank you for your outstanding efforts and volunteer hours in 2026. Please take the time to attend these meetings if you're available.

- **October 21st-Snowshoe Gun Club (Soldotna)**
- **October 27th-Fairbanks Indoor Range**
- **November 5th-Juneau Indoor Range**
- **November 19th-Grouse Ridge (Wasilla)**
- **November 30th-Rural Areas Meeting (Zoom)**
- **December 8th-Anchor Lutheran School (Anchorage)**



DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 1,100 vertebrate species regularly occur in Alaska. Check out the ADF&G website for more info.

How to Give Supportive Corrections When Teaching

Correcting students is an important part of teaching, but sometimes corrections can sound harsher than intended. Here are practical ways to ensure that corrections feel clear, respectful, and encouraging.



1. Start with something they did well-Acknowledge effort or partial understanding before correcting.

- “You’re off to a good start...”
- “I like how you approached this part...”

2. Use neutral, non judgmental wording-Focus on the work, not the person.

- Instead of “That’s wrong,” try “Let’s look at this part again.”
- Instead of “No, not like that,” try “Almost—let’s adjust this step.”

3. Make the correction a partnership-Correct with the student, not at them.

- “Let’s figure this out together.”
- “What do you notice when we compare these two?”

4. Explain the ‘why’ behind the correction-A brief explanation helps students understand the concept, not just the right answer.

5. Slow down the correction process-A calmer pace softens tone, reduces pressure, and helps students stay engaged.

6. Ask guiding questions first-Let the student think it through before giving the answer.

- “What do you think might be happening here?”
- “Does this part look different from the example?”

7. Normalize mistakes-Remind students that errors are a natural part of learning.

- “This is a common mistake—many people mix these up at first.”



8. Watch tone and body language-A relaxed posture, steady voice, and open expression help corrections feel safe and respectful.

9. End with encouragement-Leave the student feeling capable and motivated.

- “You’re improving each time.”
- “You’ve got the right idea—keep going.”

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WANTED: More Volunteer Instructors

Please encourage students, family members, and friends to fill out the instructor application if you think they would be a great addition to the HIT Program. The application is available online (www.huntereducation.alaska.gov) and printed copies have been included in all class paperwork boxes or cabinets.

Help the HIT Program recruit the next cadre of volunteer instructors! Upcoming training dates:

Hunter Education

- Anchorage — October 2 & 3, Friday from 6:00pm-9:00pm and Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm
- Fairbanks — October 9 & 10, Friday from 6:00pm-9:00pm, Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm
- Juneau — November 6 & 7, Friday from 6:00pm-9:00pm, Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm

Bowhunter Education

- Anchorage — September 26, from 8:00am-5:00pm

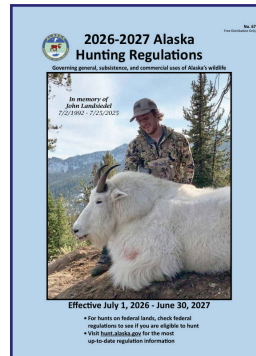
CLASS PHOTOS NEEDED

Please take photos during your class field days, and email or text them to HIT Program staff. The HIT Program needs new photos for our website, policy powerpoint, and publications. Students give ADF&G consent to use their photos when they sign the Student Consent form.

Student Questions About Hunting Regulations

Students typically have questions regarding the regulations. A couple pointers/reminders:

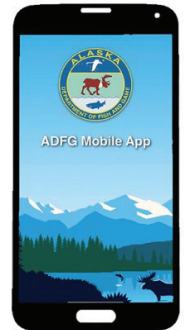
1. Alaska Hunting Regulations:



Copies of the current Alaska hunting regulations are stocked at every class location. Please hand these out to students, they can take 2 if they want! If we're running low, let your regional coordinator know, and they'll provide more.

2. ADF&G Mobile App:

Encourage students to download the ADF&G mobile app. It includes maps, regulations, and your license/permits/tags info.



3. Alaska Wildlife Troopers:

If you don't know the answer to a student's question, don't guess. Direct them to contact the Wildlife Trooper and ADF&G office for the area where they plan to hunt.

****On the inside of the front cover of the regulations, there is a list of office locations and the phone numbers for the Wildlife Troopers and the ADF&G offices.**

Alaska Wildlife Troopers Contact Info

<https://dps.alaska.gov/awt/contact>

Alaska Department of Fish & Game Contact Info

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=contacts.main>

HIT Steering Group Members

Melissa Hendrickson (Interior)
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Instructor Notes

Above & Beyond Recipients



We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" this year. 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 an email.

Kevin Busk (Nome)

Through Kevin's role with the Bering Straight School District, he was able to instruct 7 hunter ed classes so far in 2026. He encouraged teachers to get trained in his district and co-taught with many new instructors. Most of us would need to look closely at an Alaskan map to find all of the class locations that Kevin traveled to (Unalakleet, White Mountain, Shishmaref, Gambell, Savoonga, Teller)!

Charles England (Anchorage)

Charles has become a "regular" at RCSP since becoming an instructor in 2024! He taught 9 hunter ed classes between May and August. He also helped with the HIT Program air rifle booth at the Alaska Wild Sheep Foundation Youth Extravaganza in February.

Dakota Lichliter (Fort Wainwright)

Dakota joined our Fairbanks instructor cadre in April 2026. He's already taught 4 hunter ed classes and his co-instructors enjoy teaching with him. We really appreciate military service members sharing their knowledge and giving back to their "locally adopted" community!

Kateri Tyznik (Palmer)

Kateri started out her volunteer instructor career as an apprentice hunter ed instructor in 2013, and since then has taught a lot of hunter ed classes in the Mat-Su Valley. She taught 6 hunter ed classes between May and August this year already, and continues supporting the HIT Program even while being a new Mom!

HIT Program Staff Contact Information

Anchorage:

Gina Smith 267-2196

Ben Matthews 267-2373

Arianne Asay 267-2187

Heather Hoyt 267-2534

Fairbanks:

Tom Halverson 459-7211

Dani Easterling
459-7242

Juneau:

Dan Palicka 586-4101



**Valdez hunter ed
student Taiya Shiell
harvested her first big
game animal this year!**