



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Fall 2014

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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FUN FACTS

The volunteer instructors that teach in Alaska are a wide array of ages.

- 416 Hunter Ed. Instructors
-Youngest: 17 yo
-Oldest: 84 yo
-Average: 49.5 yo
- 161 Bowhunter Ed. Instructors
-Youngest: 17 yo
-Oldest: 76 yo
-Average: 50.2 yo
- 85 Muzzleloader Ed. Instructors
-Youngest: 19 yo
-Oldest: 75 yo
-Average: 53.11 yo

Fall is a busy time of year for everyone with hunting, yard work, and trying to enjoy the last vestiges of Alaska's summer. This fall I was lucky enough to spend quite a bit of time traveling to meet instructors and attend meetings.

In October I attended the IHEA-USA Administrator's Academy in Denver, CO. The Academy gave me the chance to interact with other state and federal hunter education program administrators. One point of information that I wanted to share is which states are currently offering Internet Only Hunter Ed. classes--this means no interaction with instructors. At this point, Alaska doesn't plan to follow this trend as we feel that the time spent with instructors and the hands-on component are the most valuable parts of our course. Alabama, Iowa, Oklahoma, & Virginia are offering Internet Only classes to all ages and Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Texas are offering Internet Only classes to students that are 17-years-old or older. In the near future we expect additional states to add this option. The State of Alaska will accept these certifications because there isn't a specification on the card and it's IHEA-approved. Another message that I brought home with me, or rather verified, is how terrific our volunteer instructors are. Even with the challenges of such a large state, we have close to 500 instructors and probably 2/3 of these instructors teach at least once a year. Many states have instructor certification procedures that last 1-3 years, which oftentimes leads to instructors dropping out before they're certified to teach. I am very thankful for all of our dedicated volunteers that stick with the HIT Program year after year to ensure that students become safe and responsible hunters.

I also got the chance to attend the Juneau and Fairbanks annual instructor meetings. These meetings allowed me to meet more of the volunteer instructors and find out specific opportunities and challenges for the HIT Program throughout the state. I even got to try a beaver hotdog in Fairbanks, along with many other delicious dishes, as their annual instructor meeting is a potluck! As we continue with instructor meetings in Southeast and Southcentral over the next few weeks, I highly encourage everyone to attend their local meetings when possible. These meetings are a wonderful opportunity to provide feedback to the HIT staff, meet with other volunteer instructors without the pressure of running a class, and we even have door prizes! Plus you'll get the opportunity to help plan the 2015 schedule and sign-up to instruct classes. As we approach the holidays, the HIT Staff wishes you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!~Gina



Bob Hunter presenting Rick Sterling with his 2013 Hunter Ed. Instructor of the Year award at the Fairbanks annual meeting



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Nominations Needed for the 2014 Instructor of the Year Awards

Every year the HIT Program recognizes volunteer instructors that have made a significant contribution to the program. We want to recognize those instructors that have gone above and beyond to advance the cause of safe hunting on a voluntary basis. Past recipients have received trips to national conferences, permits for bear viewing at McNeil, or specialized hunting equipment in order to acknowledge their achievements. Awards are given out for the following five categories/disciplines:

- Basic Hunter Ed
- Bowhunter Ed
- Muzzleloader Ed
- Rural Instructor
- Lifetime Achievement

The nomination form is available online at:

www.huntereducation.alaska.gov

(Located on the Volunteer Instructors tab)

Please take the time to nominate one of your co-instructors that has given extraordinary service to the HIT program. Feel free to contact any of the HIT staff for teaching statistics and contact information. The more information that you can gather from co-instructors, significant others, and friends to fill-out the form, the better. The 9 questions that need to be filled-out are listed on one piece of paper, but don't limit yourself to the space provided. More is better! Additional pages may be attached.

Nominations are due by January 10, 2015.

Thank You!

A huge thank-you to Judy Johnson of North Pole and Andy Finke of Kodiak for serving on the HIT Steering Group for the past two years. They helped review and implement the new Hunter Ed. manual, workbook, and instructor manual, which was a huge task! The years of teaching experience, expertise, and enthusiasm that they brought into Steering Group meetings greatly assisted the HIT Program. Thank you Judy and Andy!



Welcome to Our New Instructors

Basic Hunter Education:

Anchorage: Alex Bortnick, Clint Homestead, Jenna Downs-Last, Martha Peck

Eagle River: Mike Yaniec

Ft. Richardson/JBER: Bruce Montgomery, Jarod Cappon, Jason Weigl

Kotzebue: Eric Swisher

Wasilla: Randy Reamer, Steve Skinner

Bowhunter Education:

Anchorage: Paul Ritz

Cordova: Marc Cloward

Eagle River: Ryan Ragan, Tom Siekaniec

Eielson AFB: Chris Busiman, Courtney Sullivan

Palmer: Scott Work

Wasilla: Ron Robertson



IHEA Instructor Resource Site
www.ihea.com

Alaska HIT Program Site
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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New HIT Steering Group Members

Interior Representative

Rick Sterling

Fairbanks
alaskawindfall@alaska.net

Rick has been teaching Hunter Education classes for the State of Alaska since 2003. He is trained and certified to teach Basic Hunter Education and Muzzleloader Education courses. He has lived in Alaska since 1972, and his knowledge of our wildlife resources makes him an invaluable resource to the HIT Program. He was selected as the 2013 HIT Hunter Education Instructor of the Year and is a huge proponent of passing on our hunting heritage. Rick's years of service and his expertise and knowledge of our program will be of great benefit in representing Interior volunteer instructors.



Rural Representative

Steve Shiell

Valdez
sshiehl@pwscc.edu



Steve has been a Bowhunter Ed Instructor since 2004 and a Hunter Ed Instructor since 2006 in Valdez.

He is also a Certified Basic Archery Instructor Trainer for the National Archery in the Schools Program and a Certified USA Archery Level 3 Coach. Steve initiates and instructs certification classes in his area based on requests from the public, and he is also the Archery Program Advisor at Prince William Sound Community College. His knowledge of setting up classes, instructing classes, and being the "local HIT volunteer representative" will be beneficial while representing Rural volunteer instructors.

The Steering Group will conduct their annual meeting on February 13-14th, 2015.

Please contact your Steering Group Representative with any suggestions, concerns, or feedback that you might have about the HIT Program.



Dear Miss Nedwick,

Thank you for taking us out to shoot 22's. And learn important information on gun safety. But mostly shooting 22's.

What I learn from Hunter-Ed is the basic means of being a safe hunter.

Also, I learned I can't hunt ptarmigan "legally" behind Kotzebue.

A thank-you letter sent to Instructor Megan Nedwick after a Hunter Ed. class in Kotzebue

HIT Steering Group

Steve Shiell (Rural Alaska) sshiehl@pwscc.edu

Ed Bosco (Southcentral) edbosco@gci.net

Rick Sterling (Interior) alaskawindfall@alaska.net

Ted Sandhofer (Southeast) Chairman cedarpond@gci.net

Fred Voss (Southcentral) Secretary fvoss2@gmail.com

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Instructor Notes

IHEA Membership

Become an International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA) member for a yearly fee of only \$30 and receive the following benefits:

- \$1M Liability Insurance-this policy provides protection for a bodily injury or a property damage liability claim arising out of the performance of the registered volunteers' duties
- Exclusive "Instructor only" opportunities to purchase significantly discounted merchandise and closeouts offered by hunting and firearms manufacturers and distributors
- IHEA-USA Member Patch & Pin
- IHEA-USA Responsible Hunting static cling window decal

To become an IHEA-USA member visit:

www.ihea-usa.org

The mission of IHEA-USA is:

"Continuing the heritage of hunting worldwide by developing safe, responsible, knowledgeable and involved hunters".

IHEA-USA is the professional hunter education association affiliated with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the 50 state fish and hunter education programs. The programs employ 55,000 instructors, many of whom are volunteers, that teach hunting and shooting safety and responsibilities throughout the U.S.

Hunter Education courses train and certify more than 650,000 students annually. Since 1949, almost 40 million students have completed hunter education courses that cover firearm safety, bowhunting, wildlife management, field care of game, responsible hunting, landowner relations, wildlife identification, and much more.

Hunting is a safe activity, and, because of hunter education, it is even safer! Over the last 50 years hunting related injury rates have decreased dramatically, even as populations of a number of game species have risen to record numbers.

During the 20th century, hunters raised billions of dollars for wildlife conservation in North America and championed the cause of wildlife restoration programs. Now, in the 21st century, hunters continue to be the most effective political voice supporting legislation to protect wild things and wild places for future generations.

Taku River Valley Sportsman Association

The HIT Program thanks the Taku River Valley Sportsman Association for sponsoring the Hunter Ed. packets for Juneau middle school students. TRSA's generous giving enables ADFG to offer the HE class free to 168 participants. We and the students are very grateful for this continued partnership!

HIT Staff Contact Information

Anchorage

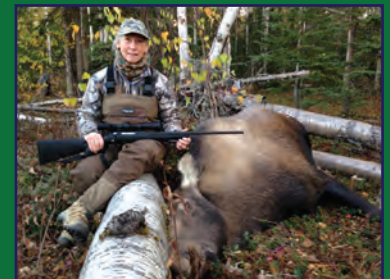
Gina Smith 267-2196
Lee Rogers 267-2373
Kirk Lingofelt 267-2534
Marc Much 267-2241
Gail Volt 267-2187
Fax: 267-2323

Fairbanks

Bob Hunter 459-7375
Ray Johnson 459-7211
Fax: 459-7332

Juneau

Frank Zmuda 586-4101
Fax: 586-4107



Gail Volt with her first moose!

**Alaska Volunteer Hunter
Education Instructor
Association (AVHEIA)**
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