



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Summer 2014

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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Hunter Ed. graduate, Evan Brashear (age 15) with his caribou taken during the Youth Forty-Mile caribou hunt

WANTED: Photos for Newsletter

If you take any photos during your classes please email them to Gina for inclusion in the newsletter. It's always fun to see what other instructors are doing statewide.

The summer months are a busy time for HIT staff and volunteers. We run and participate in a large number of public outreach and recruitment programs, and when we total the number of people that we teach about hunting, firearm safety, wildlife conservation, and the outdoors, it's pretty impressive!



Steve Latz (Soldotna) conducting a blood trailing exercise

Here is a list of activities that HIT participated in statewide during the summer and how many people we reached:

- Explore Bowhunting Girl Scouts Workshop in Anchorage-75 participants
- Outdoor Youth Days in Anchorage (2 sessions)-60 participants
- CSI Camp in Anchorage (2 sessions)-60 participants
- Potter Marsh Discovery Days booth in Anchorage-600 attendees
- Explore Bowhunting & Alaska Wildlife Curriculum Teacher Workshop in Juneau-11 participants
- Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) State Shoot in Wasilla-91 participants from 13 teams throughout the state
- Alaska Conservation Camp in Fairbanks (2 sessions)-83 participants
- Becoming an Outdoors Woman Classes/Workshops (statewide)-159 participants
- Alaskans Afield Classes (Mat-Valley)-60 participants
- 49 Hunter Ed. classes (statewide)-555 students
- 39 Bowhunter Ed. classes (statewide)-426 students
- 7 Muzzleloader Ed. classes (statewide)-37 students



Julian Mason (Anchorage) teaching about safe firearm handling in boats

Our partnerships with other ADFG divisions, Outdoor Heritage Foundation, Alaska SCTP, and school districts help to make our programs possible. And I can't say enough about the hard work and long hours that our HIT program staff and you the volunteers put in to make these classes, workshops, and camps happen!



Brian Marvin (Nome) and a Bowhunter Ed. class



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Marc Much-Southcentral Coordinator



Completing a graduate degree, moving homes, a new job, and marriage; there has been a lot of transition for me over the last few months. What looked to be an exhausting summer in 2014 actually turned out to be quite smooth and exciting, amazingly! Support and help from friends and family have proven to be invaluable. The HIT staff has also been of great help training me as the new Southcentral Coordinator. It is a great team along with many great volunteer instructors.

Over the last couple of months I have gotten to know a number of you and I am eager to meet the rest of you when our paths cross in the months and years ahead. For those of you who haven't met me, my name is Marc Much. I recently transferred from the Dept. of Natural Resources where I led a Student Intern Program aimed at educating students about natural resource careers while completing important conservation work. I also graduated from Alaska Pacific University with a graduate degree in Outdoor & Environmental Education. My favorite outdoor activities are archery and bowhunting, especially introducing people to these activities.

I grew up in a small farming community in central Wisconsin. As a youngster I went fishing nearly every evening after school and started hunting when I was 12

years old. I can still remember taking hunter education at my elementary school. The class was very valuable to me and has led to 25 years of quality outdoor experiences and memories that I wouldn't exchange for anything. During high school and college I spent most autumn weekends pursuing whitetail deer with my uncle on his property. This produced memories that will stay with me for life. While studying at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point I got certified as a hunter education instructor. After college I was hired by the US Forest Service where I traveled around the Midwestern states collecting inventory data on our nation's forests. With this experience came an opportunity to work in Alaska's coastal rainforest. It didn't take long to know that I would be staying in Alaska for a while. After some time the desire to keep traveling for work wore off and I knew it was time for a change. Because I knew I loved introducing people to outdoor activities, it made perfect sense for me to pursue outdoor education. The transition was challenging but brought me to where I am today.

I have no doubt that the time you spent in the classroom and on the field courses as a volunteer instructor have greatly influenced the lives of students in a similar fashion as they did for me. I commend you for volunteering your time and look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead. Good luck to all of you who head out hunting this season. May your time out there be safe, fun, and rewarding. I look forward to hearing about your adventures when you return.

Welcome to our New Instructors

Basic Hunter Education:

Eagle River: Ryan Ragan

Bowhunter Education:

Fairbanks: Timothy Shilling

Muzzleloader Education:

North Pole: Lantz Dahlke

[IHEA Instructor Resource Site](http://www.ihea.com)
www.ihea.com

[Alaska HIT Program Site](http://www.huntereducation.alaska.gov)
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov

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McNeil River State Game Sanctuary

Steve Latz

2013 Bowhunter Ed. Instructor of the Year

Only two things should come out of your mouth when the HIT staff call and say you have been selected for Bowhunter Ed. Instructor of the Year honors. First will be, “Yes, I’ll go [to McNeil]!” and next, “What are the dates?” so anyone interested in going with you can submit a permit application in the lottery.

I got the call in early February and returned last week from our mid-June trip. This is truly an amazing place to visit! We viewed bears on the sedge flats, lower and upper falls of Mikfik Creek, near camp, and while walking between these areas throughout our trip. There were close encounters every day. Hardly any time passed where we could not at least see one bear. The most we saw at one time was 11 at the upper falls and another time 10 at the ripples. We saw bears mating, following, posturing, fishing, grazing, and even watched one catch a beaver!



The McNeil staff welcomed all of the visitors as soon as we unpacked in the cook shack and personally thanked me for my volunteer service with ADF&G over the past 25 years that I have been an instructor. Tom, Drew, and Larry were very knowledgeable about bear behavior and kept the camp tidy beyond expectations. They even cooked spaghetti for all of us one evening after a cold wet day of viewing. We all felt part of the family as we spent that night together eating and sampling my homemade wine.

My wife did not win an access permit during the initial drawing, but on May 7th we received an email from the refuge manager stating that her drawing number was next in line to receive a permit vacancy and they had a guided bear viewing permit available for purchase. I emailed them back, then called and bought her permit that afternoon! It was an added bonus to share this amazing adventure with her.



The icing on the cake was having “Mr. McNeil” – seventy year old retired Fish & Game Larry Aumiller in camp to guide us two of our four viewing days. He was the first manager at McNeil and literally wrote the book on how to run the sanctuary.

I want to thank the HIT staff, my fellow instructors who nominated me, and especially Gail who navigated me through all of my questions. I’m now an avid McNeil fan that plans to visit again!

HIT Steering Group

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Instructor Notes

NEW! Course Surveys for Students

The student surveys for course feedback have been updated. There is a different survey for each discipline (Bowhunter Ed., Online Bowhunter Ed., Hunter Ed., & Online Hunter Ed.). Copies have been distributed to the HIT Staff to update classroom kits and the surveys are available online at the HIT Instructor webpage:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=heinstructor.main>

Distinguished Expert Award Rabbit Creek Youth Rimfire League

The Youth Rimfire League at Rabbit Creek Shooting Park's purpose is to provide new or inexperienced shooters a safe and supervised program to develop consistency and accuracy in rifle marksmanship. The focus is on individual improvement and discipline. The League follows the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program, specifically the Rimfire Rifle Qualification. Each week for ten weeks, participants are coached by volunteer instructors and work towards completing a Course of Fire.



Fifteen-year-old Qenna O'Donnell is a two-season veteran of the League. This spring, she wanted to complete the Distinguished Expert Award. During the League, Qenna worked her way through the skill ratings of Pro-Marksman, Marksman, Marksman 1st Class, Sharpshooter, and Expert. Working with coach Carl Edmiston, Qenna persevered and completed the Distinguished Expert Award in July. To achieve this rating, Qenna had to score 191/200 or better 10 times. For her achievements, Qenna received a certificate, medal, and rocker from the NRA. She will also be recognized at the annual Friends of the NRA State Banquet. Qenna is the first participant in the Rimfire League to achieve this Award. Great job Qenna and a huge thanks to the volunteer coaches that make the Rimfire League possible.



**Pictured: (Back row) Coach Larry Boyle,
Coach Steve Untiet, Coach Carl Edmiston
(Front row) Coach Alex Brown, Qenna O'Donnell**

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