



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Winter 2017

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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DID YOU KNOW?

During the 2015-16 school year, 179 schools in Alaska participated in NASP (National Archery in the Schools Program). 12 additional schools got involved in NASP in the fall of 2016.



Happy 2017! This is probably my favorite newsletter to write as I get to channel my inner nerd and dive into the stats from 2016. Plus I love to see how many people were reached throughout the state, as well as the immense number of hours instructors volunteered because of their belief in the HIT Program. Here is a brief synopsis of the stats from 2016.

Class Type	Number of Classes	Certified Students	Volunteer Instructor Hours
Hunter Ed	145	2,112	4,025
Bowhunter Ed	82	876	1,145
Muzzleloader Ed	21	129	275
Totals:	248	3,117	5,445

- 60 new volunteer Hunter Ed. Instructors were certified
- 47 new volunteer Bow Ed. Instructors were certified

Class Type	# of Instructors that Taught at Least 1 Class	Name of Instructor
Hunter Ed	205	Steve Lanford (Fairbanks) taught 13 classes
Bowhunter Ed	101	Mike Robbins (Anchorage) taught 14 classes
Muzzleloader Ed	24	Bill Sobolesky (Anchorage) taught 4 classes
Multiple Disciplines	266	Lyle Shelnut (Fairbanks) taught 18 classes

HIT Certification courses were taught in **34 different cities and villages** during 2016 and we had **460 active volunteer instructors**.

Region	Number of Classes	Certified Students
Region I (Southeast)	34	442
Region II (Kenai Peninsula & Anchorage)	115	1,411
Region III (Interior)	47	649
Region IV (Central & Southwest)	47	592
Region V (Northwest)	5	23

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2016 HIT Instructor of the Year Awards

The Steering Group chose the following volunteers from the nominations submitted by co-instructors:



Rick Sterling of Fairbanks

Hunter Education Instructor of the Year-Rick Sterling

Rick Sterling has been a hunter ed instructor since 2003 and has instructed 90 classes for the HIT Program, including 10 classes in 2016. He is also a muzzleloader ed instructor. He was a Steering Group member from 2014-2016 and has also played an active role in the Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) and on the Alaska Interior Marksmanship Committee (AIM-COMM). Rick can always be counted on to fill a vacant instructor slot and is recognized as a “go-to” instructor in the Fairbanks area.

Bowhunter Education Instructor of the Year-Bill Tyra

Bill Tyra has been a bowhunter ed instructor since 2015 and in 2016 he taught 3 bowhunter ed classes. He also taught 3 hunter ed classes and 1 muzzleloader ed class in 2016. Prior to moving to Alaska he was a volunteer instructor in Illinois and North Dakota. Bill’s longtime passion for bowhunting easily comes through in his teaching. He is a good teacher who puts students at ease, includes them in the class by encouraging questions, can always be counted on to help with set-up and paperwork, and calms down excited shooters who miss the first two shots on a target during the proficiency shoot.



Bill Tyra of Anchorage

Muzzleloader Education Instructor of the Year-Bill Sobolesky

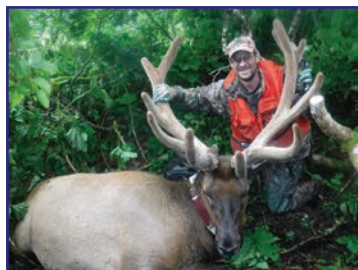
Bill Sobolesky has been a muzzleloader ed instructor since 2012 and has instructed 15 classes, including 4 classes in 2016. While Bill has only been an instructor for a few years, his passion and interest in muzzleloaders is clearly evident to his students. His calm demeanor on the firing line and his ability to answer students questions regarding muzzleloaders helps to make him a “go-to” instructor in Anchorage. Bill is encouraging to new muzzleloader ed instructors and can be counted on to instruct the majority of the muzzleloader ed classes in Anchorage.



Bill Sobolesky of Anchorage

Rural Instructor of the Year-John Crye

John Crye has been a hunter ed and bowhunter ed instructor since 1999 and a muzzleloader ed instructor since 2003. He has instructed 59 certification courses on Kodiak Island. Since there aren’t any HIT staff on Kodiak Island, John has been the point person for the program who will know the answer to student questions, set-up classes when a need arises, and ensure course equipment is fully functional and complete. John is an avid outdoorsmen whose love of hunting and wildlife conservation translate directly into the classes he’s teaching.



John Crye of Kodiak

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Dennis Degnan of Fairbanks

2016 HIT Instructor of the Year Awards (continued)

Outstanding Educator of the Year-Dennis Degnan

Dennis Degnan has been a hunter ed and muzzleloader ed instructor since 2007 and a bowhunter ed instructor since 2010. In 2016 he taught 3 hunter ed, 4 bowhunter ed, and 1 muzzleloader ed classes. Dennis is a living example of the need for safe firearm behavior. He has immense credibility in a class when he relates the fact that he is a survivor of a firearm incident and still has the bullet embedded in him to this day. Dennis's sustained, continued support of the HIT Program by leading and teaching a portion of all three course disciplines is an extremely valuable contribution.



Carl Edmiston of Anchorage

Lifetime Achievement Award-Carl Edmiston

Carl Edmiston has been a hunter ed instructor since 2003 and a muzzleloader ed instructor since 2013. In his career he has taught 90 hunter ed classes and 14 muzzleloader ed classes. Carl is also actively involved in other HIT Program activities including coaching the youth rimfire league and youth shotgun leagues at Rabbit Creek Shooting Park (RCSP), acting as an active RSO at RCSP, and helping instruct at Outdoor Youth Days. He has also sat on or currently sits on the RCSP Advisory Board, the HIT Steering Group, and the IHEA-USA Instructor Advisory Committee. Carl loves firearms and shooting, he loves to teach, and he is willing to work on programs/projects that allow others to teach firearms safety more effectively.



Steve Latz of Kenai

Lifetime Achievement Award-Steve Latz

Steve Latz has been a bowhunter ed instructor since 1989 and has taught 54 classes on the Kenai. He acts as a mentor for new bowhunter ed instructors and is well-known for his enthusiasm and ability to get student involvement during the blood trailing exercise. He is also an active board member of the Kenai Peninsula Archers and has been instrumental in obtaining their shooting range so bowhunters/archers have a place to shoot on the Kenai. He loves helping new instructors become "good" instructors and ensuring students that participate in his classes walk away with the tools to be ethical bowhunters.



**Asst. Director Tony Kavalok
presenting the award to Gail**

2016 ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation Director's Achievement Award

Gail Volt was awarded the Director's Achievement Award for Administrative & Support Service, which shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone in our program. Gail has been the statewide HIT Program admin since 2005. She is affectionately called the "HIT Program's Real Boss" as she keeps all of us on our toes. Folks in all regions of the state recognize her name and know if they have a question regarding certification courses she can always be counted on to provide the answer quickly. Gail genuinely believes in the HIT Program mission and it's very evident to the public and our volunteer instructors. She plays an essential role for the HIT Program and is incredibly deserving of the award.

HIT Steering Group

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Instructor Notes

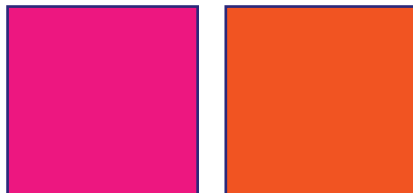
IHEA-USA Statement on Hunter Orange and Hunter Pink

At the 2016 IHEA-USA Annual Business Meeting, the Research Committee was charged with looking at hunter pink as an alternative color to hunter orange. As more and more states are faced with potential blaze pink legislation, IHEA-USA wanted to provide a statement along with research documents for administrators to use.

Below is the official statement adopted by the IHEA-USA Board of Directors:

“Absent of any scientific evidence to the contrary, the IHEA-USA reaffirms our recommendation that Hunter Orange is the most effective color to be worn by hunters in the field to prevent hunting incidents. No nationally recognized study has established or verified standards for the wavelength, luminance, or excitation purity required for visibility of any color other than Hunter Orange in natural environments by human observers. Hunter Orange should have a dominant wavelength between 595 and 605 nanometers, a luminance factor of not less than 40%, and an excitation purity of not less than 85%.

Additionally, no qualitative or quantitative research has been conducted to document the influence, positive or negative, of hunter safety color choice on the recruitment, retention, or reactivation of new or existing hunters. Therefore, IHEA-USA recommends that hunter safety color requirements be established solely on the basis of detectability and visibility of a color in natural environments by human observers.”



500 & 1,000 Hour Pins in 2016

The HIT Program awards 500 and 1,000 hour pins to instructors when instructors have volunteered that much time for the HIT Program. In years past, we've presented 13 pins and after 2016, we presented 6 additional pins to the following instructors. Thank you to these dedicated volunteer instructors!

500 hours

Ed Buyarski-Juneau
Ellen Hannan-Craig
Fred Moore-Seward
Rick Sterling-Fairbanks

1,000 hours

Malin Babcock-Juneau
Steve Lanford-Fairbanks



HIT Staff Contact Information

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Juneau

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Fairbanks instructor Steve Lanford harvested this 7.5-year-old Delta Bison after 11 days of hunting. Congrats Steve!

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