

**Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-E-3-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER : P1.0

PROJECT TITLE: Hunter Information & Training (HIT) Program

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

REPORT DUE DATE: Submit to Coordinator August 27, 2021; due to FAC Sept 1, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ginamaria Smith

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE 1: Program Administration, Coordination, & Enhancement

Description: Provide program administration and coordination for all HIT Program certification courses and other outdoor programs designed to recruit and retain new hunters into the shooting sports and to preserve our hunter heritage. Adopt, maintain, evaluate, and update the certification course curricula, including course materials and teaching aids. Review instructor policy and teaching manuals, and update when necessary. Manage a database to accurately track volunteer in-kind match hours and documentation. Purchase goods and services necessary to meet the objectives. Complete human resource tasks.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The HIT Program Coordinator worked closely with Admin staff to ensure in-kind hours were tracked correctly and used as match. The HIT Project Assistant input all timesheet data, followed up with instructors to ensure proper completion of time forms, and maintained the in-kind hour database.
- HIT Program staff met monthly via teleconference to give updates on their duties and discuss upcoming changes, challenges, etc. for the HIT Program. The annual in-person staff meeting was held in-conjunction with a communications training course in April 2021 in Anchorage.
- The Steering Group met in-person in March 2021. The Steering Group provided advice to HIT Program staff from an instructor's standpoint throughout the year on a number of

items and helped with the overhaul of the certification course policy manuals and the hunter ed written test.

OBJECTIVE 1 EXPENDITURE NOTES:

- A large amount of funds budgeted for travel were not spent due to State of Alaska-imposed travel restrictions, which limited out-of-state travel and in-state travel for the granting period. Plus, COVID-19 cancelled many travel plans for coordination purposes.

OBJECTIVE 2: Volunteer Instructor Recruitment & Training

Description: Recruit and maintain an active instructor roster to address the demand for certification courses and ensure courses are offered statewide. Identify the specific areas throughout the state that need instructors and conduct “target recruiting” efforts in those locations. Provide continued education training, evaluation (by HIT Program staff and students), and incentives/recognition for volunteer instructors. Manage a database to accurately track all volunteer instructors.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 90 volunteer instructors were certified statewide from 27 different cities/villages. We only had to cancel one instructor training due to COVID-19 so we were able to certify more instructors than the previous year. We did have a number of new instructors cancel at the last minute due to COVID-19 restrictions, which meant we did not use all the travel funds to bring instructors in for trainings.
- New HIT Program staff were trained as certification course instructors as well so they can answer questions about the HIT Program, assist with scheduling classes in their area, and instruct classes when available.
- 6 law enforcement agency staff (Alaska State Troopers, National Forest Service) from around the state were certified as volunteer instructors so they can answer questions about the HIT Program and instruct classes when available.
- HIT Program staff met via teleconference with instructors in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Palmer, and Soldotna for annual planning meetings. Due to COVID-19 these meetings were unable to be held face-to-face. These meetings help HIT Program staff assess instructor’s needs, community needs, and form a plan for the following year’s courses.
- A quarterly newsletter was mailed out to every active instructor. The newsletter contained information about policy changes, pertinent class information, and also stories of activities/classes/workshops which highlighted some of the programs offered statewide.
- Uniform shirts and hats for instructors were purchased to ensure the professionalism of the HIT Program.
- The Program Technician maintained and updated all instructor records throughout the year as trainings were held or instructors contacted HIT Program staff with changes in personal information.
- Each year the top volunteer instructors are recognized by statewide awards with nominations made by co-instructors. The HIT Program Steering Group helped to choose

the top volunteer instructors. This past year’s recipients included: Paul Houser of Palmer as Hunter Education Instructor of the Year, Ed Buyarski of Juneau as Outstanding Educator of the Year, and Rachel Mitchell of Fairbanks as Apprentice Instructor of the Year. Somerset Jones of Chugiak and Tom Kron of Anchorage were also awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards.

- We set-up an agreement with Division of Administration for an insurance policy to cover the volunteer instructors instead of asking them to fill-out a new form for each class they taught a couple weeks before the class. This was unproductive and meant many of our instructors would not be able to teach as scheduled due to the paperwork approval process.
- Revamped/updated all certification course policy manuals and mailed new copies to all active volunteer instructors.

OBJECTIVE 3: Student Recruitment & Training

Description: Conduct hunter, bowhunter, crossbow, and muzzleloader education certification courses throughout the state. Manage a database to accurately track all certification course students. Provide funding for facility rentals.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 4,431 hours of volunteer effort provided \$203,644.16 of in-kind match. Due to the cancellation of certification classes and public outreach events during mid-November thru February due to COVID-19, the goal of 5,750 volunteer hours was not met during this reporting period. An SDR was submitted and approved to allow usage of an additional 362.25 hours (\$18,913.01) generated by volunteer effort in Project 2 as in-kind match for the Project 1 deficit.
- Purchased ammunition for the proficiency shoots, orange safety vests, orange hats, and earplugs and safety glasses for each student completing the certification courses.
- Purchased a new set of 3-D archery targets for the bowhunter and crossbow education certification classes on Kodiak.
- Provided utilities for the hunter education facility at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park in Anchorage where a majority of the HIT Program courses and activities are taught.
- Paid rental fees for classroom/range facilities for certification courses.
- The following table reports the number of certification courses offered and the number of students certified in each certification course discipline. Due to COVID-19 we cancelled 26 classes in mid-November 2020 thru February 2021.

Discipline	Classes	Number of Students Certified
Hunter Education	154	1,765
Bowhunter Education	48	419
Muzzleloader Education	20	75
Crossbow Education	12	71
Totals	233	2,321

- The following table reports the number of students in age/gender/race/disabled categories, as determined by the volunteer instructors through visual inspection.

Discipline	Female	AK Native	African-American	Oriental	Hispanic	Disabled
Hunter Ed	499	108	19	52	20	18
Bowhunter Ed	44	9	7	17	8	3
Muzzleloader Ed	6	1	0	0	0	0
Crossbow Ed	4	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	551	118	26	69	28	21

OBJECTIVE 3 EXPENDITURE NOTES:

- PCN 11-4325 was vacant for 9 months during the granting period and so the funds originally budgeted for this objective were not spent.
- Less supplies were purchased due to the cancellation of classes for 3.5 months due to COVID-19.
- Travel to conduct certification courses did not occur during the 3.5 month cancellation due to COVID-19.

OBJECTIVE 4: Program Outreach

Description: Recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts. Offer certification courses, clinics, and workshops in remote locations. Offer skill development in hunting and shooting sports to women, youth, and families. Partner with outdoor-related education programs and organizations to promote the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be a responsible hunter and shooter. Increase the number of clinics offered to the public which are designed to promote hunting and shooting sports by seeking out new facilities and venues. Provide opportunities for the public to learn about certification classes, game regulations, and training opportunities offered by the HIT Program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The HIT Program offered Alaskans Afield clinics and training opportunities to 325 participants. Alaskans Afield clinic topics included: sighting in a rifle, bird hunting, map & compass, big game hunting, small game hunting, archery, rifle basics, tracking, and trapping. Four Alaskans Afield clinics were offered via Zoom due to COVID-19.
- The Sportsman Shows and Potter Marsh Discovery Day where HIT Program staff provide informational booths with the Laser Shot Training Simulator in order to interact and encourage discussion with the public about educational opportunities were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Purchased survival bandanas to give out to participants of all HIT Program educational events and activities.

OBJECTIVE 4 EXPENDITURE NOTES:

- Due to COVID-19, the six Wildlife Conservation Education Program staff budgeted to charge time to this grant while conducting educational activities that aligned with the grant objectives only used 71% of the budgeted amount.

- Funds budgeted for travel were not spent due to State of Alaska-imposed travel restrictions and COVID-19 cancellations of outreach and education events.

EXPENDITURES FOR FY21:

The actual expenditures per budget category in this fiscal year are below:

	Awarded	Spent	Remaining
1000-Staff time	\$939,635.10	\$770,041.15	\$169,593.95
2000-Travel	\$76,751.45	\$28,491.64	\$48,259.81
3000-Contractual	\$104,300.00	\$99,230.28	\$5,069.72
4000-Supplies	\$107,455.78	\$90,718.75	\$16,737.03
Total	\$1,228,142.33	\$988,481.82	\$239,660.51

Note: As noted above under objective expenditures, funds were not spent due to State of Alaska-imposed travel restrictions, staff vacancies, and the cancellation of offerings and travel due to COVID-19.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

This is an annual grant with similar objectives and results completed each year. The objectives are designed to run the HIT Program which will result in safer, better informed, and more prepared resource users. The training of students in firearm safety reduces hunting incidents and the curricula regarding ethics, conservation, and wildlife management assist in reducing game violations.

Based on our records, the HIT Program has certified 1,908 instructors and currently has 494 active instructors. To date, the HIT Program through the Section4c grant has certified the following number of students:

Discipline	
Hunter Education	37,972
Bowhunter Education	13,494
Muzzleloader Education	3,188
Crossbow Education	313
Total	54,967

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

In the project statements submitted for AKW-E-3-2020 HIT Amendment #1 and AKW-E-3-2020 HEE Amendment #2, we included the following amounts regarding volunteer in-kind match hours:

HIT Project #1:

Generate 5,750 hours of in-kind match (\$45.96/hr. * 5,750 hours = \$264,270.00)

Use an additional 218 hours generated from Project 2 (\$45.96/hr. * 218 hours = \$10,019.28)

Total In-Kind Match Used= \$264,270.00 + \$10,019.28 =\$274,289.28

HEE Project #2:

Generate 800 hours of in-kind match (\$45.96/hr. * 800 hours = \$36,768)

Only use 582 hours as match for this project.(\$45.96/hr. * 582 hours = \$26,748.72)

Use additional 218 hours generated from this project as partial match for Project 1 (\$45.96/hr. * 218 hours = \$10,019.28)

Project #1 did not generate enough hours of in-kind match due to COVID-19 cancellations. Project #2 generated an additional 362.25 hours (\$18,913.01) above the expected 800 hours.

IV. PUBLICATIONS



Hunter education students proudly showing off their certificates after completing their hunter education certification.



Whittier School students discussing shoot/don't shoot scenarios using a real black bear during the hunter education field course.



New volunteer instructors being trained on how to conduct the hunter education field course in Juneau.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

AKW-E-3-2020 P1.0 Amendment #1 is a year-long grant, however it's an ongoing annual project, so the recommendation is for continuation.

Date: August 2021