



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Spring 2021

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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With the restart of in-person classes on March 1st, the HIT Program staff and volunteers became extra busy making up for lost time. In three months, we offered the following classes:

- 60 hunter ed classes
- 17 bowhunter ed classes
- 8 muzzleloader ed classes
- 3 crossbow ed classes

We also offered Alaskans Afield classes, Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) classes, and the Rabbit Creek Youth Shotgun League during this time frame.



Kake hunter ed class

For the first time ever we offered a hunter ed class in:



Whittier students pointing at a black bear during their field day

- Shishmaref
- Utqiagvik
- Whittier

We also had a large number of schools offer hunter ed classes this spring.

- Juneau Floyd Dryden Middle School-15 students
- Kake Middle School-15 students
- Kodiak Christian School Class-15 students
- Mat-Su Career Tech-8 students
- Migrant Education-91 students

- Nikiski Middle School-11 students
- Tatitlek School-5 students
- Whittier Community School-8
- Yakutat Middle School-13 students

As the summer progresses, we expect to see a normal uptick in student enrollment especially as hunting season approaches. We'll definitely need all hands on deck to meet the public need. As you see emails requesting help from your regional coordinators, please reply even if you can't help with that particular class. HIT Program staff work through their instructor lists any time they need additional help for a class, so if you're going to be busy or out of town for a couple weeks just give them a heads-up and they won't email or call you to help out during that time frame. We recognize how lucky the HIT Program is to have so many volunteer instructors and we appreciate everyone's willingness to help.



Yakutat hunter ed class

DID YOU KNOW?

Alaska is home to over 430 species of birds, 70 species of mammals, and is home to the highest concentration of brown bears in the world.





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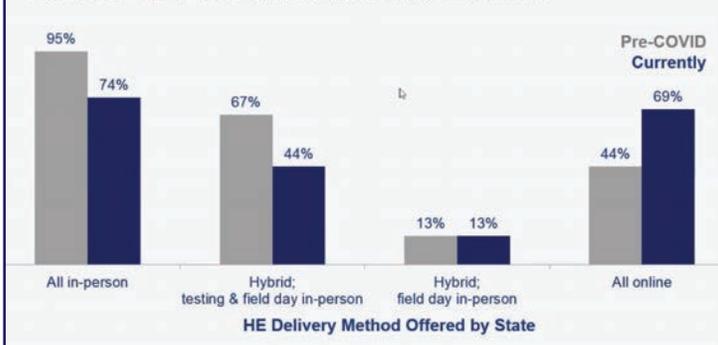
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2021 IHEA-USA Virtual Conference

This year's IHEA-USA Annual Conference was virtual via Zoom and IHEA-USA celebrated turning 50. Like anything, the delivery method had its positives (650 registered attendees of which about 400 were volunteer instructors) and negatives (hard to interact and ask questions when you can't visit with or see the other attendees), but overall it was helpful to get updates and info from IHEA-USA and industry partners/sponsors. Here is some of the info that I'd like to share:

- The keynote speakers were Tracy & Lanny Barnes, three-time Olympians in the sport of Biathlon. They got into the sport because of bumping into one of their volunteer hunter ed instructors at the grocery store. Your hours volunteering can/do have a huge impact on your student's lives!
- An update was given by Loren Chase regarding a state survey about hunter ed and COVID-19 impacts. He shared that most field days are less than half a day and 50% of states require a live fire component.

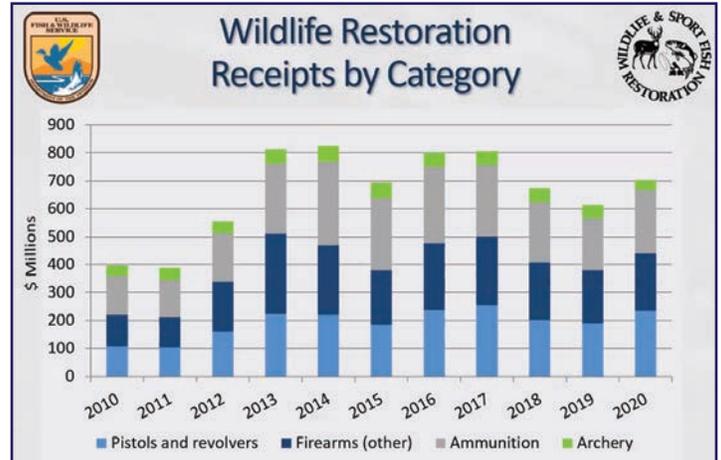
COVID-19 Forced Some States Online



- We always stress the importance of purchasing hunting licenses and how the P-R excise tax works to our students. There is a new initiative called Partner with a Payer. Partner with a Payer strengthens the ties between the people who make a successful conservation partnership work — the manufacturers that pay excise tax through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Acts, the state agencies that

conserve wildlife and habitat across the country, and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Check out their website www.partnerwithapayer.org.

- Paul Rauch (USFWS WSFR Program) shared an update on P-R funds. The graphic below shows the wildlife restoration receipts by category.



- IHEA-USA is in the process of developing an online "Firearm Fundamentals Course" for new firearm owners that stresses firearm safety (including handguns) but for folks who may not be interested in hunting (at least not initially). They hope to have it available starting in 2021-2022.
- IHEA-USA recognized a volunteer instructor from each state who stepped up in a big way in 2020, and **Paul Houser (Palmer)** will receive a Yeti rambler and MyMedic Field First Aid book.

50 for 50 Award

1. Paul Houser - AK
2. Jamie Bass - Guam
3. Jim Cox - NJ
4. Kenneth Saito - HI
5. Kevin Hipple - SD
6. Mark Jensen - NE
7. Marlon Clapham - MT
8. Marty Kotzke - WA
9. Mary Zirkle - AR
10. Mark Spence - MS

[IHEA Instructor Resource Site](http://www.ihea-usa.org/special-offers-for-instructors/)

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

www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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Welcome to Our New Volunteer Instructors

We wish to extend a warm welcome to all new volunteer instructors who have joined us since the publication of our last newsletter. Congratulations and welcome aboard!

Please encourage students, family members, and acquaintances to fill out the instructor application if you think they'll 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.

Hunter Education:

Anchorage: Jason Barrett, John Olson

Angoon: Bryan Shoemate

Fairbanks: David Atteberry, James Kimura

Haines: Colin Nemece

JBER: Troy Bledsoe

Juneau: David Larkin

Ketchikan: Jack Leblanc

Kodiak: Joshua Boyle, John Harver, David Johnson

North Pole: Isaac Lampe

Petersburg: Joseph Boggs

Skagway: Adam Smith

Soldotna: William Deal

Thorne Bay: Samuel Humphreys

Tok: John Rusyniak

Utqiagvik: Alexander Dattilo, Darryl Serino

Wasilla: Cody Akers, Jen Leahy, John Miller

Whittier: Timothy Wieland

Wrangell: James Nelson

Bowhunter Education:

Anchorage: Manuel De la Garza, Anthony Henry, Michael Jensen

Douglas: Daniel Gutierrez

Eagle River: Todd Leroux

JBER: Troy Blesoe

Kodiak: John Harver, David Johnson

Wasilla: Andrew Schultz

Muzzleloader Education:

Anchorage: Anthony Henry, Matthew Jendrusina, Michael Jensen

Eagle River: Lyle Wirth

Fairbanks: Devan Leon

Kodiak: John Harver

North Pole: Jonathan Enlow

Valdez: Jacob Hamilton

Wasilla: Clifford Kaltreider

Crossbow Education:

Anchorage: Stephen Bolan, Anthony Henry, Michael Jensen

Kodiak: John Harver

Instructor training dates planned for this fall:

Hunter Education

Anchorage — October 22nd & 23rd

Fairbanks — November 19th-21st

Bowhunter Education

Fairbanks — October 1st & 2nd

Anchorage — October 8th & 9th

Crossbow Education

Fairbanks — October 9th

FYI-New Federal FireStick Not Legal

Federal developed a new muzzleloading system called FireStick, which has an all-new ignition system that charges from the breech and loads from the muzzle. Based on Alaska's definition of a muzzleloader (*a firearm for which firing components are loaded into the muzzle end of the firearm*), the FireStick cannot be used in a "muzzleloader-only" area/hunt in Alaska. The Department of Law, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and ADF&G were all involved in this decision. This may change in the future if brought before the Board of Game, but we wanted to update everyone in case students ask about FireSticks during a class.

HIT Steering Group

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Instructor Notes

Above & Beyond Recipients

We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" during the past quarter as in-person classes restarted on March 1st.

Bruce Bowler (Juneau)

Bruce taught 5 hunter ed classes this spring. He helped teach the Floyd Dryden Middle School class, the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) hunter ed class, two online hunter ed field days, and the hunter ed class connected to the Instructor Training held in April. Bruce's institutional knowledge and longtime involvement with the shooting sports in Juneau were a huge asset.



Paul Houser (Palmer)

Paul taught 9 hunter ed classes this spring certifying 148 students. He taught classes not only in the Mat-Su Valley but drove into Anchorage to help out as well. He received multiple positive comments from students about his enthusiasm for teaching hunter ed, including a Facebook post. He helped instruct all four Migrant Education hunter ed field days.

Bill Kubik (Wasilla)

Bill taught 5 hunter ed classes and 1 bow hunter ed class. This included spearheading the Migrant Education hunter ed field days classes where the teaching was in an unconventional environment. He also worked closely with an ASL interpreter to ensure a bowhunter ed student had a positive experience.

Paul Ritz (Anchorage)

Paul taught 3 hunter ed, 1 bowhunter ed, and 1 crossbow ed class this spring certifying 67 students. He taught with some of our newest instructors and was instrumental in ensuring they had a positive experience teaching their first classes. The instructors that he mentored have already signed up to teach additional classes in the upcoming months.

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 a nomination email.

HIT Staff

Contact Information

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Juneau:

Daniel Gutierrez
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New hunter ed graduates Benjamin and Jessica Carter proudly show off their certificates after completing a hunter ed class in Wasilla.