

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
January 30, 2021, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Teams Meeting**

IAC Members - Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Hal Sims	Dave Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager	
	Sam Grubbs		
Region 2	Eric Lauver (excused)	Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist	
	Jen Syrowicz (excused)		
Region 3	James Conway (excused)	Mike Whorton Region 1 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Rich Mann		
	Randy Absolon		
Region 4	John Malek	Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Bob Palmer		
	Mikel Edwards		
Region 5	Steve Mills	Steve Dazey Region 4 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Jim Sevier		
Region 6	Jim Gleiter	Amy Elliott Region 5 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Marty Kotzke		
	Larry Lufkin		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe	Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	

⊙ Welcome & General Interest Announcements (20 minutes)

⊕ IAC Member Roundtable and Communications with Regional Instructors

- Kris asked if anyone had anything they want to share regarding hunter education or their teaching team.
- Sam and Hal divided up the region 1 instructors and Sam sent out an email to his folks.
 - He asked about hunter pink and the instructors had not seen a lot of hunter pink in stores or in the field.
 - Sam had an instructor who is a teacher who is going back into the classroom and wanted to know if she still cannot teach hunter ed.
 - Sam advised that currently WDFW is not able to hold classes due to the health risks to instructors and the public as well as the associated liability. This topic will be discussed more in-depth later in the meeting.
 - He also had a question on what the future state of WDFW hunter education will look like.
 - The plan is to move back to the traditional class and online course coupled with the field skill evaluation in the future.
 - Sam had also asked if there was a chance WDFW could hold virtual meetings with IAC members and the instructors in their regional assignments.
 - Kris and the staff will discuss the feasibility of this and get back to the IAC.
- Mikel put together an email to the region 4 instructors and has received some questions about the future of hunter education.
- Butch has had communication with the venues he uses and when they will start holding hunter education classes again.
- The gun club Larry holds his classes at uses an annual calendar and he is getting inquiries if the dates he reserved at the club could be used for other events.
- Rich has had some conversations with instructors and the possible loss of instructors due to the current restrictions.
- WHEIA was contacted about the possibility to conduct a private class and Bob forward that to WDFW staff. The private class was not approved because WDFW has not “re-opened”, and in-person classes can’t be held yet.
- Bob has received some feedback on not having pink vests at the local box stores not stocking those.
- Bob is worried about instructors not staying engaged in the hunter education program.
- Bob talked to an instructor who would like more patches for their shirts.
 - WDFW will work on offering the remaining instructor shirts as well as some patches to instructors.

- The department will determine how best to give out the remaining shirts and the patches soon.

⊕ 2021-2023 season setting

- WDFW is seeking comments on the season setting proposals for 2021-2023.
- Kris sent the IAC members an email on January 29 with the news release.
- The proposals can be found online at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/season-setting>.
- The commission will meet in March to discuss the proposals and the public comments associated with each.
- When the commission meets in April, they will make the final determination on the proposed rules.
- Rich has concerns with some proposed rules relative to safety and encouraged IAC members to review the package & comment if they wish.

⊙ **WDFW Updates (30 minutes)**

⊕ Student manual and exam updates

- Kris and Amy are working on the manual and making sure the test is covered in the new manual.
- They are updating the test as well with the assistance of the rest of the field coordinators.
- WDFW will work on updates to the policy manual later this year and IAC will be briefed on the proposed changes during a future meeting.

⊕ COVID-related Updates

- Dave will be sending an email to all instructors after Feb. 2 and will include any new info from the Director's Office coming out that day.
- Kaitlin Arnes joined the meeting from the WDFW HR Safety Office to discuss COVID related information and what instructors can expect moving forward.
- WDFW will use the governor's roadmap to re-opening to determine when instructors can start holding hunter education classes.
- Standard operating procedures will need to be used to open classes back up.
- We recognize many HEIs are looking forward to getting back into classroom, and frustration can be high due to several factors related to COVID.
- Some schools are moving towards or are already holding in-person or hybrid classes for some age groups.
- Two regions of the state are moving to Phase 2 on Monday (Puget Sound, West).
- These positive indications are countered to some extent by [increasing COVID cases in 6 of the 8 WA Regions](#), as well as the statewide average.
- WDFW is still not "open", and only essential positions allowed to work at buildings/facilities.
- The agency is working to determine when and how to reopen WDFW-specific work activities.

- Hunter Ed is working with Kaitlin Arnes in HR to complete our “reopening plan” for classes that we’ve been developing all along.
 - The framework for that plan was developed long ago, but more work is needed to incorporate new knowledge and SOPs and finalize everything in an agency approved plan so we’re ready to go once the light turns green.
- ⊕ 2020 instructor teaching requirement
 - WDFW will not de-certify instructors for not teaching in 2020.
 - WDFW may not require teaching in 2021 based on current COVID predictions; we will address that issue as we see how the year unfolds, and consult IAC as needed.
- ⊕ Rich asked if WDFW had thought about holding a statewide IST in 2022 or soon because the instructors have been out of the classroom for almost a year.
 - Dave noted the statewide IST was cut during the budget cut discussions, but acknowledged that a statewide IST would be beneficial, and will see how the COVID and budget situations unfold. PR will likely remain healthy for at least a little while. The state budget is more uncertain.
- ⊕ 2021 In-service Trainings
 - WDFW was going to present the following information in 2020:
 - Cultural Awareness Training
 - Effective Teaching Methods from Certified Educators
 - Building a Teaching Team
 - Class Statistics and Hunting Incidents
 - Housekeeping topics like:
 - Update contact info
 - How to get into the HEI webpage
 - Kalkomey how-to
 - Check your hours
 - IAC membership
 - Do you think we can do these virtually?
 - Bob and Mikel think we would have to have some form of acknowledgement of completion of the training.
 - Bob also thought the ISTs could be recorded and posted to the HEI site.
 - Rich suggested that the information should be distilled down to the required information to keep instructor’s attention.
 - WDFW could possibly add COVID protocol training.
- ⊕ Student statistics
 - Pre-Covid traditional and online field skills evaluations were as follows:
 - 960 online students certified
 - 559 traditional students certified
 - The Online + Virtual Field Day certifications in 2020 was 24,892 students.
 - Total certifications in 2020 were 26,411.
 - 2019 certifications were 9,901.

- This is an increase of 16,510 students from 2019.
- For 2021, as of 1/28/2021, 1,766 students have been certified.
- ⊕ Instructors & Instructor Applicants
 - No new instructors have been certified.
 - Kris asked the field coordinators if they have received any applications since March 2020 and there have been a few received.
- ⊕ Brief Regional Field Coordinator Updates
 - Steve Dazey - Region 4 Field Coordinator
 - Steve has been working with Aaron on special field skills evaluations for students under 9.
 - He is also working with the Civil Air Patrol to plan for a future hunter education class for them.
 - He also helped point some Master Hunters to help the Kittitas Field and Stream club to reseed the Wenas Wildlife area.
 - Mike Whorton - Region 1 Field Coordinator
 - Mike has been sending out notices to the region 1 instructors to hopefully keep their interest.
 - He has also been providing some special field skills evaluations for region 1 students.
 - Mike facilitated a very generous donation of 13 personal firearms from Larry Stansberry to the program.
 - Bill Montgomery - Region 6 Field Coordinator
 - Bill has been contacting his instructors.
 - He has also been working with biologists to identify possible volunteer opportunities.
 - Bill assisted a terminally ill hunter on a permitted elk hunt.
 - Aaron Garcia - Region 3 Field Coordinator
 - Aaron has been working on field skills evaluations with Steve.
 - Amy Elliott - Region 5 Field Coordinator
 - Amy is working on issues with department owned gun safes and other odds and ends.
 - Amy has worked with Kris on the new hunter education student manual and test.
 - She is working on special field skills evaluations but has not had many requests from students recently.
 - Amy worked with Jan on deferrals and will be working with her on the incentive permits.
 - Amy is working on distributing plaques and certifications to instructors.

⊙ **WDFW Budget and Legislative Update (15 minutes)**

- ⊕ The legislature requested agencies decrease the number of bills they submit in 2021 due to the virtual legislative session.

- ⊕ WDFW's recruitment bill that would increase hunting participation and remove possible barriers was not requested this session since it did not pass in the past couple sessions.
- ⊕ 2021 agency-request legislation is as follows:
 - SB 5058 - Making technical changes to certain natural resource-related accounts.
 - This will fix an incorrect reference to an account in the 2020 legislation that was passed.
 - SB 5146 - Authorizing the fish and wildlife commission to indemnify the federal government as a condition of securing certain funds.
 - This bill is critical to continue receiving federal funding to manage federal lands (e.g. Bureau of Reclamation lands).
 - HB 1172/SB 5199 - Recognizing judicially affirmed and treaty-reserved fishing rights and promoting state-tribal cooperative in the management of salmon, trout, and steelhead resources.
 - Current statutes don't reflect the State's co-manager relationship with treaty tribes, or the role of the federal government and these bills will correct that.
 - SB 5159 - Concerning payments in lieu of real property taxes by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
 - This would move the payments in lieu of real property taxes to the State Treasurer's office.
- ⊕ Other Bills of Interest are:
 - HB 1261 - Concerning wildlife harvest reports required by the department of fish and wildlife.
 - This bill increases the administrative penalty the department can charge for failure to report hunting activity from \$10 to \$20.
 - It also keeps the penalty active for any previous year of non-reporting instead of being limited to just the prior year's missing report.
 - HB 1185 - Providing discounted hunting licenses to seniors.
 - This bill would offer an 80 percent discount for senior hunting licenses.
- ⊕ People interested in current firearm or weapons bills can see use the links:
 - <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/bi/report/topicalindex/?biennium=2021-22&topic=FIREARMS>
 - <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/bi/report/topicalindex/?biennium=2021-22&topic=WEAPONS>
 - Jim S. and Rich M. commented that WDFW may want to inform he budget committees regarding potential fiscal impacts to Pittman-Robertson revenue from proposed firearm prohibitions. Dave will discuss with Legislative Affairs.

⊙ **Possible topics and/or trainings for future meetings (20 minutes)**

- ⊕ Mikel would like to see any of the previous topics presented to the Master Hunter Advisory Group.
- ⊕ Rich suggested WDFW present changes to the rules and regulations that instructors might need to know about.
- ⊕ Steve Dazey suggested a presentation on waterfowl seasons and allocations.
- ⊕ Steve Mills suggested WDFW should send out facts sheet to the IAC members to send out to instructors on the topics.
- ⊕ Steve Dazey also suggested a presentation on the pheasant release program.

⊙ **Adjourn**