

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

March 15, 2025, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

CWU SURC Room 137A, Ellensburg

IAC Members – Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	John Cushman	Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Section Specialist Steve Dazey, Region 1 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Nick Montanari, Region 2 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Aaron Garcia, Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Jackie McBride, Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Blomker, Public Engagement Division Manager (virtual)	John Camponella, Hunter Education Instructor
	Brian Lyon (excused)		
Region 2	Wanda Chrisman (virtual)		
	Bob Hunt (excused)		
Region 3	Randy Absolon (excused)		
	Sam Grubbs		
Region 4	Mikel Edwards		
	Bob Palmer		
	Evan Windom		
Region 5	Jim Sevier		
	Sig Lillevik (virtual)		
Region 6	Jim Fitzgerald (excused)		
	Blayde Fry (excused)		
	Tani Iwashita (virtual)		
	Steven Slater		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe		
WHEIA	John Malek (absent)		

⦿ **Member introductions (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ All the members and staff introduced themselves.

⦿ **IAC member roundtable and communications with regional instructors (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Instructor feedback to IAC re: news/issues/concerns related to teaching and classes.
- ⊕ Evan had some questions about non-hunter ed topics, and he discussed them with the instructors.
- ⊕ He also had a comment about the timeframe for classes in table 2.
 - He explained that this was an incentive and that we needed more classes during those months and the instructor was receptive.
- ⊕ Another instructor contacted Evan about the size of the traditional chapters and that they need to be shorter or more broken out.
- ⊕ Evan asked if we had the why in part of the incentive permits in the IST presentation.
 - It is not currently but the coordinators will make sure to identify that during their presentations and a note will be added to the notes section.
- ⊕ Mikel has heard from his team that they think the requirements should be higher than what they currently are.
- ⊕ Sam has been in contact with instructors in Region 3 and had some changes of phone numbers and addresses.
 - He had 37 instructors that he couldn't get in contact with and provided information to WDFW for use in cleaning up the database.
- ⊕ Bob is hearing from more instructors who are tenured and looking to get out of their chief instructor duties and there are not people to backfill the chief attrition.
 - Evan suggested having a chief instructor Teams meeting to talk about possible pain points to see if there is something we can do to mitigate chief's retirements.
- ⊕ Tani has had an enforcement officer that was presenting in class but presented on items that are more updated than in the current enforcement PowerPoint.
 - There was a suggestion about identifying the changes each year in a "green sheet" and that is something WDFW will investigate.

⦿ **Questions on WDFW Reports (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Evan contacted Dave to ask what WDFW's position was on some legislative bills recently and Evan felt it might be helpful to share the legislative stance from WDFW.
 - When completing bill analyses, WDFW takes positions on how bills would affect the agency, programs, and our stakeholders, not the effects on rights granted by the State or Federal Constitutions.

⦿ **Terry Hoffer Memorial Firearm Safety Award recap (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ In 2025 we had 10 nominees for the Terry Hoffer.

- ⊕ One nominee received two nominations.
- ⊕ There were only three nominations by instructors with the other eight submitted by WDFW staff.
- ⊕ The staff met on February 27 to narrow the nominees down to the three finalists.
- ⊕ After that meeting, Ericka redacted the nominations as is the standard procedure when presenting the nominees to the selection committee and set the meeting for March 11.
- ⊕ The selection committee always consists of the Game Warden's Association representative, a WHEIA representative, a HERO representative, and the last Terry Hoffer recipient.
 - If the selection committee cannot decide on a recipient, the tiebreaker goes to the nominee that was higher ranked in the staff discussions.
- ⊕ This year the recipient is Jim Fitzgerald from Region 6.
- ⊕ The other two finalists were Evan Windom from Region 4 and John Campanella from Region 4.
- ⊕ WDFW is planning on recognizing the finalists at the upcoming nine ISTs.
- ⊕ Jim will also receive a Terry Hoffer shirt, a plaque, the traveling trophy, and \$750 towards a firearm of his choice.
- ⊕ Evan and John will also receive a plaque congratulating them on being a Terry Hoffer finalist.
- ⊕ Kris talked about the lack of instructor nominations and that we should discuss the process, questions, etc. at the next IAC meeting.

⊙ **Generating 2026 in-service training topics (*Kris Thorson, 60 minutes*)**

- ⊕ WDFW has started planning the 2026 statewide in-service training.
- ⊕ The meeting will be May 29-31, 2026 in Wenatchee.
- ⊕ Ericka is working on securing hotels and doing the contract with the Wenatchee convention center.
- ⊕ Kris will start planning the agenda shortly and that brings up what we want to talk about at the IST.
- ⊕ Does the IAC have any possible topics they would like to see at the 2026 statewide IST?
 - First aid
 - Poaching issues and possible fixes
 - Carnivore management
 - Game district attorney legislation
 - Conservation and habitat enhancement and what instructors can do.
 - Habitat at home
 - How to be a chief instructor
 - R3 presentation, How to move forward, etc.
 - Mark Damien Duda presentation or something similar
 - Private lands access
 - Braden and Natural Resource Economist
 - IHEA incident training team on hunting incidents

- ⊕ What kinds of giveaways should we purchase for the IST and the instructors?
 - Flashlights
 - Game bags
 - Fire starters and/or ferro rods
- ⊕ Do we want to continue to offer a pre-IST shoot for those instructors who are coming in Friday afternoon or are there other things we could offer that would be more beneficial?
 - The IAC was in favor of continuing to offer the shoot.

⊙ **Lunch (30 minutes)**

⊙ **2025 Workplan Discussions (Kris Thorson, 60 minutes)**

- ⊕ Kris sent out the draft workplan on January 14 for the IAC to review.
- ⊕ Are there any edits that the IAC would like to see with the current workplan?
- ⊕ No edits were heard.
- ⊕ Is workplan the right term for this document or would IAC Goals be a better description of the document?
- ⊕ The committee wants to keep it as is.
- ⊕ Kris then went through the workplan items and IAC members assigned themselves to the items.
 - Members not at this meeting will need to assign themselves to an item.

⊙ **Initial 2025 IST report (Kris Thorson and Bill Montgomery, 30 minutes)**

- ⊕ Bill and Kris completed the first In-service training in Olympia on March 8.
- ⊕ Ericka, Kelly Riordan, Dave, and Rachel Blomker also attended.
- ⊕ There were 52 instructors who attended the training.
- ⊕ The give aways seemed to be a hit and Kris even demonstrated the poncho.
- ⊕ Steve Slater, Blayde Fry, and Tani Iwashita from IAC were all also in attendance.
- ⊕ During the important updates we relayed that we have only received 42 percent of the required policy agreement forms (PAF) from the most recent policy update.
 - It was also determined that all instructors in attendance at the Olympia IST had completed their PAFs.
- ⊕ We covered that there is an instructor website, and it looked like more of the attendees knew about the website than in past years.
- ⊕ The instructors were very interested in the 2026 incentive permits updates and seemed appreciative of the changes.
- ⊕ The regulations updates, application and PST process were received without many questions or comments.
- ⊕ There were some questions on the online PowerPoint, and we also have heard from some teams and coordinators that the PowerPoint may run a little longer to present which presents some challenges for back-to-back classes.
- ⊕ One of the largest question and answer sessions occurred during the timekeeping update, which is to be expected.

- There were questions about the requirements and ideas about how to meet those requirements from the instructors.
 - Most of the questions and ideas are ones that we have already internally discussed, and it was affirming to hear that we were considering issues that instructors have concerns on.
 - ⊕ The special hunting permits section explained the process from what a special permit is, how to submit, and how the drawing works and it seemed well received.
 - ⊕ The regional specific topic was about grouse and the grouse wing barrels which instructors were really interested in.
 - Emily Butler brought actual wings from the wing barrels to talk about the differences in the species and how they identify birds and their sex from the wings.
 - ⊕ CWD and team succession were straight forward.
 - ⊕ Kris then asked if any other staff in attendance wanted to share their thoughts on the IST.
 - Bill and Rachel didn't have anything to add.
- ⊙ **Timekeeping changes update (*Kris Thorson, 45 minutes*)**
- ⊕ Kris went through the IST Presentation with the IAC for them to see what the instructors will get at the in-service trainings.
 - ⊕ There were some of the same questions that were heard at the Olympia IST and Kris explained that we don't have all the information yet and it will be coming.
- ⊙ **Budget update (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
- ⊕ You likely know that last week, Governor Ferguson [announced cost saving options](#) to help resolve a nearly \$16 billion budget shortfall. This challenging situation requires the state to take a close look at areas where we can achieve efficiencies, while also making some difficult choices that would have impact on WDFW and the services we provide.
 - ⊕ **The governor's recommendations are not final decisions;** they are recommendations made to the Legislature as part of the budget development and adoption process. WDFW is working with legislative budget writers and partners to support our agency budget priorities for 2025-2027. Those priorities remain the same: Safety, Biodiversity, and retaining existing capacity.
 - ⊕ Gov. Ferguson's list includes some of the ideas WDFW shared and new reductions not seen before. The governor's initial goal was to generate cut options for the legislature before considering new revenue. However, even when combined with the other agency cuts, these do not add up to a complete solution to the state's deficit. A 'no new revenue' budget would include more drastic cuts than the governor's list.
 - ⊕ You can view the governor's list [here](#).

- ⊕ Some of the key elements contained in Gov. Ferguson’s recommendations include cuts to WDFW’s base budget for hatcheries and recreational opportunity. Other items from the list include:
- Furloughs for most state employees for the next two years. Employees subject to furlough would be required to take 24 furlough days during the biennium from July 2025 through June 2027. Some employees such as State Patrol Troopers, Department of Corrections Officers and certain 24/7 Intuitions Staff will be exempt.
 - The cuts to WDFW’s biodiversity work, proposed one-time in Gov. Inslee’s budget, would be made ongoing. Cuts in the previous governor’s proposal to Prosecute Environmental Crimes are expanded to eliminate this funding for the Attorney General’s Office.
 - Also, the small portions of the Reduce Emissions, Build Resilience package, Hatchery Conservation Programs package, Hatchery Investment Strategy package, and the Managing Emergent Toxic Threats package, funded in the Inslee budget would be eliminated with these options.
 - Included in the options is a shift of ALEA funding to hatcheries, freeing up general fund state. As a result, the [ALEA Volunteer Grant program](#) would be eliminated and our pass-through to non-profits would end.
 - Fish Passage and Screening Capacity is the one “one-time to ongoing” area funded in Inslee’s proposal that is listed as a cut option today. This work is currently being done by staff, but needed funding after July 1, 2025 to continue.
 - The Reduce Administrative Costs line item would reduce the number of motor pool vehicles the agency leases, reduce the in-state and out-of-state travel budgets, and reduce facilitation services provided by third parties.
 - The Fund Balance Transfer option proposed takes dollars from some license accounts and places it in the most flexible license account, the Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Account. This allows those dollars to be spent, while general fund state is appropriated elsewhere.
 - The Advisory Group Reduction would not eliminate the Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Oversight Committee, but to reach the total of the cut option, three other advisory groups would need to be cut. WDFW currently has 50 advisory groups.
 - Reduce Western Washington Pheasant is modified to reduce State General Fund support which would mean closing our own pheasant production facility and severely reducing or eliminating pheasant hunting in Western Washington, beginning in July 2026.
 - The governor proposed a cut to hatcheries, which would mean reducing or ceasing hatchery production at multiple hatcheries. This reduction would stop production indefinitely, but does not provide the funding to close, remediate, and sell the sites.
 - The Reduce Management line item doesn’t specify any positions to cut.

- Reduced Licensing Activities is not specific in the governor's list, but would impact hatchery production and recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers.
 - Reduce activities from the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement would impact Enforcement and monitoring. That monitoring is tied to the Endangered Species Act and the terms and conditions of multiple NOAA biological opinions, allowing for recreational fisheries.
- ⊕ In addition to the cuts in WDFW's base budget, Gov. Ferguson also proposed removing several new items proposed in Gov. Inslee's budget.
- The small portions of the Reduce Emissions, Build Resilience package, Hatchery Conservation Programs package, Hatchery Investment Strategy package, and the Managing Emergent Toxic Threats package, funded in the Inslee budget would be eliminated with these options.

⊙ **Adjourn**