



# Hunter Information & Training Program News

Spring 2024

## Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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The saying, "Time flies when you're having fun" is very true! When I moved to Alaska in 2009 and became a volunteer hunter ed instructor and youth shotgun coach, I had no idea how much it would influence my life! I quickly became a Becoming an Outdoors Woman instructor, and in 2012 joined the HIT Program as the Southcentral Coordinator. On April 1<sup>st</sup> I hit my 10 year mark as the HIT Program Coordinator. I'm still pleasantly surprised at all the HIT Program has accomplished since then and all of the amazing people that I've gotten to meet! I love traveling around Alaska and telling people about our amazing

volunteers and all of the programs that we offer to get Alaskans involved in hunting and shooting sports. When I meet with other state Hunter Ed administrators I love bragging about the longevity of many of our volunteers and how it often just takes a couple phone calls to ensure a class is covered. At the Safari Club International Alaska Chapter Banquet in February I was recognized with the 2024 Outdoor Educator of the Year Award for "the extraordinary support of Alaska's outdoor traditions and the many Alaskan's who spend time in the field enjoying Alaska's Great Outdoors." The best part of the evening besides the complete surprise (I thought I won a gun!), was that HIT Program staff



and Steering Group members were there to share it with me! At the Banquet, longtime hunter education instructor Senator Jesse Bjorkman was also recognized with the 2024 Legislator of the Year Award for "the extraordinary support of the Sportsman's Conservation Tradition and the many Alaskans who spend time in the field enjoying Alaska's Great Outdoors."

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, Kirk Lingofelt celebrated **25 years** with the Department of Fish & Game!

In his early years with the HIT Program, Kirk built the shotgun ranges at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park, traveled around the state teaching Alaskans firearm safety and outdoor recreation skills out of the mobile trailer, was instrumental in developing the muzzleloader ed certification course, and more recently took on the role of Statewide Hunter Education Coordinator.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Butte Elementary School took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Elementary School division of the Alaska NASP Virtual Bullseye Tournament. If you would like to help get NASP into more schools, contact: [dfg.dwc.hit.nasp@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.hit.nasp@alaska.gov)



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## Instructor of the Year Awards

Volunteer instructors are the backbone of the HIT Program. As a group, volunteer instructors possess a vast wealth of information which has proven to be invaluable in passing on the knowledge and skills of the outdoors. The HIT Program would like to recognize the following volunteer instructors for making a significant contribution to the HIT Program and considerably advancing the cause of safe/ethical hunting.

### **Hunter Education Instructor of the Year**

#### **Bill Kubik, Wasilla**

Since becoming an instructor in 2018, Bill has taught 46 hunter ed, 10 bow ed, and 1 crossbow ed course certifying 723 students. Bill is always willing to help if a class needs an additional instructor and his enthusiasm for teaching is reflected in his actions. Bill works easily with other instructors and is a great mentor to new instructors.



### **HIT Program Outstanding Educator of the Year** **Joedy Wake, Anchorage**



Joedy is a jack of all trades, teaching all 4 certification disciplines and coaching a team for the Rabbit Creek Youth Shotgun League for multiple sessions throughout the year. Joedy has taught 44 hunter ed, 19

bow ed, 3 muzzleloader ed, and 1 crossbow ed course certifying 964 students. Joedy loves to share his passion for hunting, dogs, and meat processing with his students.

### **Bowhunter Education Instructor of the Year**

#### **Ken Calkins, Salcha**



While Ken has only been an instructor since October 2022, he's become an integral part of the Fairbanks instructor team. He's taught 6 bow ed courses certifying 56

students. With bowhunter ed classes just starting in Fairbanks, we'll definitely keep him busy for another season.

### **Apprentice Instructor of the Year** **Sophie Reid, Palmer**

Sophie got certified in February 2023 and has already taught 4 hunter ed classes certifying 51 students. Sophie has a positive attitude and works well with other instructors. Her role as an apprentice instructor allows her to be a positive mentor to her peers, as she is able to demonstrate exemplary firearm safety skills.



### **Lifetime Achievement Award** **Ellen Hannan, Craig**



Ellen has been teaching hunter and bow ed courses on Prince of Wales Island for over 20 years. She's taught 17 bow ed and 30 hunter ed courses certifying 257 students. Due to its small population, POW typically only offers one class per year, but Ellen promotes firearm safety and assists with other

shooting classes at the POW Shooting Club throughout the year. According to a fellow instructor, "Ellen's biggest contribution is sharing her knowledge and love of the resources in our state and on our island."

**IHEA Instructor Resource Site**

<https://www.ihea-usa.org/>

<https://www.expertvoice.com/iheal/>

**HIT Program Site**

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



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## **Lifetime Achievement Award Fred Voss, Anchorage**

Fred started teaching hunter ed in 1994, and since then has taught 70 hunter ed, 56 bow ed, 19 muzzleloader ed, and 1 crossbow ed course certifying 2,290 students. Fred has taught classes in Anchorage, Kodiak, Kenai, and Kotzebue, and has helped mentor many new instructors. To fellow instructors he is known as an excellent communicator and team player.

## **Legacy Award Vikki Gross, Wasilla**

Vikki has been an instructor since the early 1990's. She's taught 24 bow ed and 16 hunter ed course certifying 654 students. Vikki is a Board Member and very active with the Cook Inlet Archers, and is working with the HIT Program to offer bow ed field days at their new classroom facility in Chugiak. The Legacy Award recognizes "a current or past instructor who has left a lasting legacy in their community, passed on their hunting/firearms knowledge, and contributed to the success of the HIT Program for many years. They exemplify the spirit of the HIT Program and share it with fellow instructors and the students."



## **Welcome to Our New Volunteer Instructors**

### **Hunter Education:**

Anchorage: Quintin Bates, Kirby Gallagher, Marty Gellerman, Adrian Kersten, John Leiter, Kyle Metcalf

Bethel: Joshua Craven, Josh Gill

Fairbanks: Michael Gho, Daniel McAllister, Mark Nelson, Kelsey Snell

Glennallen: John Pleasant

Juneau: Nathan Adams, Jake Jacoby, Benjamin Pinney, Chris Salazar, Thomas Schwartz

Ketchikan: Sean Daly, Kyle Feuge

Kongiganak: Christian Alexie

Kotzebue: Clayton Beck, Steve Cantine

McGrath: Patrick Simasko

North Pole: Caleb Gulley, Kyle McIntyre, Jeff Sagers

Palmer: John Reid

St. Paul Island: Kevin Davis

Wasilla: Cody Brown

Willow: Hunter Leach

Wrangell: Chadd Yoder

### **Bowhunter Education:**

Anchorage: Quintin Bates

Wasilla: Cody Brown, Joe Gelatt, Carl Hanson

### **Muzzleloader Education:**

Anchorage: Luke Metherell

Ninilchik: Jeramy Lemons

### **Crossbow Education:**

Anchorage: Luke Metherell, Don Wirth

## **Above & Beyond Recipients**

We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" during the first quarter of 2024.

- Brock Meredith (Juneau) has taught 4 classes
- Amy Moselle (Juneau) has taught 4 classes
- Ernie Mueller (Juneau) has taught 3 classes
- Tom Kron (Anchorage) has taught 3 classes

## **HIT Program Steering Group**

Melissa Hendrickson (Interior)  
melissamch413@gmail.com

Andy Finke (Rural)  
bdaf49@gmail.com

Regg Simon (SC)  
reggsimon@hotmail.com

John Western (SC)  
jrwesternnavy@gmail.com

Ted Sandhofer (SE)  
cedarpond@gci.net

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## New Staff

### Arianne Asay

#### New Statewide Program Tech



Hello, my name is Arianne Asay. I am a third-generation Alaskan and love living in this beautiful state. I grew up fishing, hunting, and camping with my family, and am excited to be working with a program that helps other families get out and experience Alaska through hunting. In 2016, I graduated with my bachelor's in Plant and Wildlife Ecology with an emphasis in Fisheries from Brigham Young University Idaho. I have a strong love for marine biology/fisheries and thoroughly enjoy teaching others about it whether they are interested or not. After graduating, I worked in Tourism as a Dispatcher and as a Logistics Tech. In the fall of 2018, I started working for ADF&G as an Office Assistant for Commercial Fisheries. I have been a volunteer instructor with the HIT Program for 2 years and love getting to teach alongside my Dad. When I'm not in the office I enjoy boating, camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, scuba diving, and exploring new places. I am looking forward to working with all of you. Please feel free to stop by my office anytime.

### Dani Easterling

My name is Danielle and I am excited to be the new Interior Outreach and Education Coordinator. I am a fourth-generation life-long Alaskan. I have a background in education and tourism,



and am excited to start this new adventure with ADF&G. I moved to Fairbanks to attend UAF, and stayed because I love winter. I have lived as far north as Coldfoot, and spent several seasons guiding aurora tours in the arctic.

When I am not working I enjoy snowmachining, fishing, photography, 4-wheeling, and camping. I spend every weekend in the summer season and most of the winter taking in all that Alaska has to offer. Whether it be ice climbing a glacier, or exploring abandoned mines, I am always down for adventure.

I am looking forward to learning new skills and sharing my love of Alaska with others. I am excited to coordinate new learning opportunities for Alaskans. If you have any questions please reach out or stop in and see me!

### HIT Program Staff Contact Information

#### Anchorage:

Gina Smith 267-2196  
Kirk Lingofelt 267-2373  
Luke Metherell 267-2241  
Maria Bakic 267-2534  
Arianne Asay 267-2187

#### Fairbanks:

Tom Halverson 459-7211  
Dani Easterling  
459-7242

#### Juneau:

Daniel Gutierrez 465-4345  
Dan Palicka 586-4101



**Juneau Alaskans Afield  
handgun class in March**