

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
April 9, 2022, 10:00 AM - 3:30 PM
Teams Meeting

IAC Members - Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests		
Region 1	Sam Grubbs	<p>David Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager</p> <p>Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist</p> <p>Steve Dazey Region 1 Hunter Education Field Coordinator</p> <p>Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education Field Coordinator</p> <p>Jackie McBride Region 4 Hunter Education Field Coordinator</p> <p>Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education Field Coordinator</p> <p>Jan Ulijohn Hunter Education Administrative Assistant</p> <p>Joel Sisolak, Lands Planning, Recreation and Outreach Section Manager</p>			
	Herb Jessen (excused)				
Region 2	Eric Lauver				
	Jen Syrowicz				
Region 3	Randy Absolon				
	James Conway (absent)				
	Rich Mann (excused)				
Region 4	Mikel Edwards				
	John Malek				
	Bob Palmer				
Region 5	Steve Mills (excused)				
	Jim Sevier (excused)				
Region 6	Jim Gleiter				
	Marty Kotzke (excused)				
	VACANT				
HERO	Butch Buffaloe				

⊙ **Welcome & General Interest Announcements (10 minutes)**

- ⊕ WDFW informed the IAC of the new Howard Gardner Lifetime Achievement Award which will be given to an instructor at 55 years of service.
- ⊕ The Howard Gardner Lifetime Achievement Award will be the service award an instructor will receive.
- ⊕ Jen asked if anyone was going to attend the IHEA-USA meeting since it is going to be a hybrid meeting.
- ⊕ Jen also wanted to bring up snag conservation working group and possibly adding information into the hunter education curriculum.
 - This is something WDFW is looking in to adding into the student manual and/or the teaching PowerPoints.

⊙ **Region 4 Field Coordinator Hiring (10 minutes)**

- ⊕ Mike Whorton was the Hunter Education Division field coordinator for region 1 until he retired in August 2021.
- ⊕ WDFW decided to shift that position from a 40 percent employee that was exclusively hunter education focused to a full-time position.
- ⊕ The full-time position has 75 percent of their time dedicated to hunter education and 25 percent of their time dedicated to the Master Hunter Permit Program.
- ⊕ After the recruitment and interview process, the position was offered to Steve Dazey, and he accepted.
- ⊕ Steve worked as the coordinator for both regions 1 and 4 starting in November while the department recruited for a region 4 coordinator.
- ⊕ The recruitment for the region 4 coordinator was posted in early December and ran through the end of December.
- ⊕ WDFW conducted interviews in January.
- ⊕ After the interview process, WDFW offered the region 4 position to Jackie McBride.
- ⊕ Jackie's first day was on March 1.
- ⊕ Kris asked Jackie to introduce herself to the group.
- ⊕ She has been a hunter education instructor for about two years.
- ⊕ Jackie is going to work on becoming a Master Hunter in 2022.
- ⊕ Jackie has been a longtime hunter in Washington.
- ⊕ She has been hunting and/or guiding since she was 14.
- ⊕ She is going to be working with shooting organizations to enhance recruitment and retention efforts.
- ⊕ With Jackie's hiring, Hunter Education is now fully staffed again.

⊙ **IAC Member Roundtable and Communications with Regional Instructors (15 minutes)**

- ⊕ Has anyone had contact with other instructors they wish to share?
- ⊕ John Malek has been in contact with several instructors in south King County and most are agreeable to the age change in June but also have concerns over the virtual field day.
 - Staff understand the issues and challenges with the virtual field day and are working towards more in-person classes.

- ⊕ Bob has seen a lot of folks that are still engaged in classes but there are some that are waiting on COVID due to health concerns.
- ⊕ Butch had to cancel a class earlier this year but held a class with 15 signed up and only seven attended.
- ⊕ Sam had a few contacts with instructors who won't teach when wearing a mask.
- ⊕ The team Mikel teaches with decided to cancel a class recently because of low interest.
- ⊕ Jen asked Dave what he has been hearing other states moving towards for the post COVID world.
 - Dave will know more after the IHEA conference, but the states have been varied in their approaches pre-COVID and he thinks that there will be something similar post COVID.
- ⊕ The team Jen teaches with had their first class in two years.

⊙ **Sam's after-action report (15 minutes)**

- ⊕ Sam contacted the instructors on his list of contacts in region 1 to talk more with those folks about the IAC is and does as well as verifying their contact information.
- ⊕ After completing his list he asked Herb if he could continue though the rest of the region 1 list and Herb agreed.
- ⊕ He compiled a list for WDFW that had outdated contact information and sent it to Jan and Steve for them to correct the info in the databases.
- ⊕ Sam found over 60 percent of instructors needed some corrections.
- ⊕ He spent an average of 14 minutes on the phone with instructors.
- ⊕ Sam got a lot of positive responses from the contacts.
- ⊕ Dave asked about the responses Sam had regarding the IAC.
 - Most of the instructors had heard about the IAC and had an idea of what the committee does but some didn't know about it.
- ⊕ Sam asked the instructors he contacted about virtual trainings and most ok with that idea if the training closely followed the agenda.

⊙ **WDFW Updates (30 minutes)**

- ⊕ Student statistics
 - In total for 2020, 26,411 students were certified.
 - In 2021, WDFW reopened classes on August 15.
 - The online only certifications for 2021 were 18,996.
 - The instructors held 21 online field skills evaluation classes and 29 traditional classes.
 - The online classes certified 112 students and the traditional classes certified 275 students.
 - In total, 19,383 students were certified in 2021.
 - The 2022 student statistics through the end of March are:
 - 2,486 students have passed the online only course.
 - There have been 22 online field skills evaluation classes with a capacity of 369.

- Online field skills evaluation classes had 101 students register for an evaluation.
- Of those 101 registrations, 76 students passed (75 percent), 23 no showed (23 percent), and two failed (2 percent).
- That is a 21 percent pass to capacity rate.
- There have been 24 traditional classes with a capacity of 506.
- There have been 283 students registered for a traditional class.
- Of those 283 registrations, 225 students passed (80 percent), 40 no showed (14 percent), 13 failed (5 percent), and 5 were incomplete (2 percent).
- That is a 44 percent pass to capacity rate.
- In total we had capacity for 875 students, have 384 students registered (44 percent), and 301 students pass a class.
- Jackie asked if there was a way to look at failure ages and if they then took an all-online class?
 - Of the 15 students who failed, the average age was eight.
 - The ages of the students were between 5 and 12.
 - No student who failed a class has completed the all online course.
 - Also, only 8 of the 15 could use that as a possible avenue of certification

⊕ Instructors & Instructor Applicants

- In February and March, some of the field coordinators were able to hold pre-service trainings and we have added six instructors.
- Currently there are 979 certified instructors.

⊕ Regional Field Coordinator Updates

- Steve Dazey – Region 1 Field Coordinator
 - Steve has been working with Sam on his after-action report and correcting the database as needed.
 - He met with the team that teaches with the Kalispel tribe and they are now going to start offering classes.
 - Steve is working with the Colville tribe to get a team started there.
 - He has started getting to know the region 1 instructors and working with them to get classes scheduled.
 - Steve is working with the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council to get their classes started and they have 50 students signed up.
 - He has come across several instructors who have passed away in the last two years that WDFW wasn't notified.
- Aaron Garcia – Region 3 Field Coordinator
 - Aaron had a couple pre-service trainings recently that certified nine new instructors.
 - He has a teacher in Orondo who is starting to teach hunter education at the school.

- He is going to try to power through his applicants and get them certified as soon as possible.
 - Aaron is going to present the Howard Gardner Lifetime Achievement Award to the Richland rod and gun club tonight.
 - He is ready to go on his turkey camp this spring.
 - He is also getting the past due awards out to the region 2 and 3 instructors.
- Jackie McBride – Region 4 Field Coordinator
 - Jackie has been attending classes to meet the instructors as well as hand out overdue awards.
 - She has been going over policy with instructors as well as hearing out concerns about changes to policies and masking.
 - Jackie has noticed there has been a lot of strife over still wearing of masks when teaching and quite a few instructors have stated they will not teach until we go 100% mask free.
 - The mask free issue has been somewhat detrimental to some region 4 students ability to attend a class.
 - She has been meeting with different members of outside programs of the hunting community including park rangers about beneficial programs for hunter education and the use of park facilities for classes outdoors
 - She has been speaking with different ranges, groups, and organizations about getting more outreach going including archery.
 - The groups include the interscholastic shooting association, NRA scholastic shooting, USPA shooting, Silver Bowman Archery, and Ladies' Hunting Camp by Candy Yow.
 - Jackie has had several women in some of the hunter Ed classes express the want/need for something like Candy's women's' camp here in Washington.
 - She has been speaking with different youth organizations and women's shooting organizations including The Well Armed Woman to find out their needs and how to bridge the gap with their organization to hunting.
 - Jackie has talked with Amy and look forward to more discussion about diversifying our hunter ed instructor ranks based on some of the concerns of current instructors.
 - She has been speaking with different veteran's and first responding hunting groups she is a part of to see if there is any interest in putting on clinics, again working with park ranger staff such as Jason Armstrong who will be putting on a duck calling clinic at Deception pass as well as an adult style turkey camp for brand new hunters.

- Jackie has been working on a list of projects and wants for Master Hunters and hunter ed instructors such as new dummy guns for the smaller kids we keep seeing in classes like those who can't even carry the 22 orange guns because they are simply too heavy.
- She also recently attended some NRA trainings at camp Pigott to get up to speed to be a rifle and shotgun instructor where she was asked to attend the upcoming firearms day for the boy scouts with staff from outreach and an enforcement officer to talk about hunting and fishing with the kids.
- Bill Montgomery – Region 6 Field Coordinator
 - Bill has had an interesting trend where there are two new instructors who held traditional classes in Wishkah and they have been well attended.
 - An instructor in Yelm has had a class each month since August 15 and the classes are well attended.
 - He is working on holding pre-service trainings as he can.
 - Bill is also the first aid coordinator for Hunter Education, and he was recently certified as an instructor and will get the rest of the field coordinators certified as instructors.

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

⊕ Budget Update

- The legislative session ended on March 10, 2022, and overall WDFW did well in the Supplemental Budget (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023) for new and enhanced work in certain areas.
- Some items of interest that were included in both the House and Senate operative budgets, that likely are in the final budget bill include:
 - Recreational land management
 - Wildfire habitat recovery
 - Habitat protection in solar energy projects
 - Increased elk and deer monitoring
 - Increased turkey management & access
 - Increased upland bird habitat management
 - Water access areas maintenance
- Pittman-Robertson funding has increased significantly for next fiscal year.

⊕ WDFW also did well in the Capital Budget, which appears to fund hatchery improvements, wildlife area fencing, property acquisition, fishing access, etc.

⊕ Legislative Update

- WDFW had four agency-request bills and tracked about 170 other bills that influenced WDFW or the resources we manage.
- Dave reminded members that they can check the legislative website to find more information on bills at <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/> and entering the bill number into the search field.

- **HB 1626 – WDFW electronic licenses**
 - This was also agency request legislation. It passed the legislature and was delivered to the governor.
 - It authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to allow electronic cell phone-based licenses, tags, and permits.
 - Also, it allows customers to display their licenses on a mobile device.
- **HB 1649 – Expanding Eligibility for the ADA Advisory Committee**
 - This agency request legislation passed legislature and was delivered to the governor.
 - The bill allows up to two additional advisory committee members to include individuals with all types of disabilities and experienced caregivers.
 - It will also increase the performance of the committee by providing for diverse viewpoints and experiences to be included in discussions.
- **SB 5504 – Extending discover pass free days**
 - This agency request legislation passed legislature and was delivered to the Governor.
 - This bill extends the current 12 discover pass free days from State Parks to include WDFW and DNR lands and recreation sites.
 - When practical, free days could be timed to correspond with family fishing days planned by WDFW.
 - It also authorizes a vehicle access pass to be issued for WDFW lands in conjunction with a seaweed or shellfish harvest license.
 - Expanding the existing State Parks free parking days to all state recreational lands will increase access to those lands for underrepresented communities and will reduce confusion overall for Discover Pass holders.
- **SB 5552 – Making hunting & fishing more accessible by removing participation barriers and providing financial incentives.**
 - This was agency request legislation, but it did not pass the legislature because other bills took priority in the short session. The bill had unanimous support all the way thru the session and hopefully it will get good support and pass next year.
 - Bill elements:
 - Align fishing and hunting youth ages at 16
 - Eliminate \$5 fee for youth fishing license
 - Allows temporary fishing license for opening day of lowland lakes
 - Allow one-time hunting license discount for hunter ed graduates
 - Removes hunter ed class 10 hours length requirement

- Eliminates the three-year license requirement for accompanying hunters in the deferral program
- Clarifies military exemption rules
- Adds federal peace officers to the law enforcement exemption
- Provides resident license rates to full-time college students whose residency is outside of Washington state.
- Allows commission to offer new combination licenses
- Allows DFW director to offer temporary discounts on licenses
- **HB 1181 - Programs and measures to prevent suicide among veterans and military members.**
 - This was not agency request legislation and it would add WDFW to the suicide-safer homes task force.
 - It requires the task force, in consultation with WDFW, to develop strategies for creating and disseminating suicide awareness and prevention information for hunting safety classes, including messages to parents that can be shared during online registration, in either follow-up email communications, or in writing, or both.
- All bills concerning the Fish & Wildlife Commission and the governance of WDFW did not pass.

⊙ **COVID update (45 minutes)**

- ⊕ What IAC is hearing from instructors re: teaching, all-online course, minimum age, etc.
- ⊕ The governor's mask mandate expired at midnight on March 11 which means the public does not need to mask indoors unless that business or location requires it.
- ⊕ The State of Washington, as an employer, still requires employees to mask when indoors with the public, partners, volunteers, contractors, etc. of unknown vaccination status.
- ⊕ The mask requirement extends to all volunteers working with the department.
- ⊕ WDFW staff and volunteers working outdoors with the public do not need to be masked.
- ⊕ Social distancing is encouraged outdoors but not required.
- ⊕ Several instructors have indicated that they will not return to teaching until masks and other covid restrictions are over.
- ⊕ We have tried to emphasize that the masking requirements is not a WDFW decision but a requirement from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) that WDFW must follow.
- ⊕ Changes to the current masking protocols will follow the governor's roadmap to recovery guidance from OFM.
- ⊕ We are also working on updating the teaching standard operating procedure (SOP), but we recently learned about a possible change to guidance from OFM

that would also affect the SOP language and didn't want to change the information and then change it again so soon.

- ⊕ WDFW will update the SOP and send it to the instructors as soon as practical once the changes are known and communicated to WDFW.
- ⊕ WDFW reopened its offices to the public on March 21.

⊙ **10-year Recreation Strategy for DFW-Managed Lands (60 minutes)**

- ⊕ Joel gave the IAC an overview of the 10-year recreation strategy for DFW-managed lands consisting of the plan's goals, strategic initiatives, recreation planning, and education and engagement.
- ⊕ Jackie asked if WDFW tied in the Recreation Conservation Organization survey through Eastern Washington University.
 - Yes, WDFW is working with the survey results, but WDFW is also going to do some work with WDFW managed lands.
- ⊕ Jen asked about sensitive areas and the uses of folks on those areas.
 - The sensitive areas will be very specific on what areas will be tracked via anonymous cell phone pings.
- ⊕ Butch asked if we have had conversations with BLM and the Forest Service for these kinds of recreational opportunities and strategies.
 - WDFW has been in contact with the federal agencies and is reviewing some of the federal rules and to possibly align with the federal rules for consistency.

⊙ **Incentive permits discussion (60 minutes)**

- ⊕ Recently, Jan has noticed that instructor paperwork has not been turned in on time and we are still missing a fair amount of information from current instructors.
- ⊕ The instructor permits have been drawn and Jan will be working with the winners to get the permits claimed soon.
- ⊕ Seeing the paperwork shortage, Jan has suggested a good way to get some instructors to submit their paperwork.
- ⊕ This would be by adding the requirement that paperwork would need to be submitted for the instructors to be eligible to submit permits.
- ⊕ We have 28 of the 98 background checks outstanding from 2020.
- ⊕ We only have 9 of the 86 required background checks for 2021 left.
- ⊕ The 2022 background checks have 40 outstanding of the 72 scheduled.
- ⊕ Since the 2022 policy manual was published in October, only 83 of the current instructors have sent their policy agreement forms to Jan.
- ⊕ This would hopefully increase instructor's compliance with the requirements.
- ⊕ Mikel feels that the paperwork should be completed before applying for the incentive permits.
- ⊕ Bob recommended that we need to really get the background check completed.
- ⊕ The IAC was in support of adding the requirement of completing the instructor's paperwork before applying for permits.

⊙ **Future meeting schedules (30 minutes)**

- ⊕ We discussed at previous meetings about the length of meetings and there were some suggestions about changing the meeting format to accommodate member concerns.
- ⊕ Is Saturday the best day for all current members?
 - Eric likes the idea of Friday.
 - Butch is good with any day because he is retired.
 - Bob thinks that we should stick with Saturday because it may exclude working age instructors.
 - Bob also thinks if we go virtual, we should do a 9am start time and 10am for an in-person meeting.
 - Mikel thinks 8am for virtual is good as well, but he likes the 10am start time for in-person meetings.
- ⊕ In January, Eric mentioned having an afternoon or evening meeting may be nice when meeting virtual.
 - John thinks that some issues/challenges could be completed via virtual in an afternoon meeting as needed.
 - Butch agreed with John that virtual afternoon meetings may be used for emergent issues, but he likes the quarterly meetings for larger agendas.
- ⊕ The IAC agreed to start the meeting on July 30, if virtual, at 9am.
- ⊕ Bob mentioned that the term expiration date may want to be put onto the IAC roster moving forward.
 - Dave agreed and asked Kris to put it on the IAC list as well as the MHAG list.

⊙ **Adjourn**