



# Hunter Information & Training Program News

Summer 2023

## Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

### Inside This Issue

Coordinator's Corner ..... 1

Welcome to new HIT Program staff ..... 2-3

Steering Group Members Needed .... 3

Annual Instructor Meeting Dates ..... 3

Instructor Notes ..... 4

In June I attended the annual IHEA-USA Conference which was held in Boise, Idaho. It was wonderful to reconnect with fellow hunter ed administrators and talk shop. A few highlights that I wanted to share with you included:

#### **www.Learnhunting.org**

IHEA-USA has developed a new website to connect mentors/instructors to folks interested in learning about hunting. You can register without becoming a mentor and have access to some great continuing education online courses for instructors.

- Teaching Strategies for Hunter Education
- Teaching Strategies for Bowhunting Instructors
- Field First Aid
- Creating an Inclusive Environment
- The Ethics of Hunting

#### **Hunters Experience Magazine**

This online publication is packed full of information for new hunters. The magazine offers everything from safe gun handling to treestand safety and the benefits of modern ammunition. It's an interesting read and an opportunity to recommend to students who want to learn more after attending a certification course.

#### **www.partnerwithapayer.org**

Partner with a Payer is an initiative of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program. The website highlights examples of wildlife restoration programs, range enhancement projects, etc. that Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson (fishing) funds are used for. It's a great way to see how firearm/ammunition/archery equipment excise taxes help fund conservation success stories. It includes a lot of information and videos from around the U.S.

#### **Range Day Highlights**

On Range Day we visited the Blacks Creek Shooting Range. Highlights for me included walking their hunter education field course with volunteer instructors (silhouette pronghorns instead of bears or caribou!), learning to throw a tomahawk and knife, a chuck wagon-style BBQ luncheon, and getting to act as a Cannoneer.



Juneau Alaskans Afield Intro to Rifle class

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
In 2022, 548,316 students received their Hunter Ed certifications in the US.





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Summer 2023

## Mykenzie Robertson

### New Interior Outreach & Education Coordinator



Hello, my name is Mykenzie Robertson. I am thrilled to be the new Interior Outreach and Education Coordinator for the HIT Program, up here in Fairbanks.

I was born on the Gulf Coast of Florida and moved to Alaska in 2018 to pursue a new adventure working for the Girl Scouts. I have since worked for Fish and Game

as a Fish and Wildlife Technician working on the Kenai, in Juneau, and in Fairbanks. I am excited to use the knowledge I have gained in those roles to help offer my community opportunities to learn new skills.

In my free time I enjoy fishing, camping, kayaking, yoga, baking, and live music. I am also a student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, working towards my bachelor's degree in biology. I feel very lucky to call Alaska home and continue to be amazed by the people and beauty of this state as I explore.



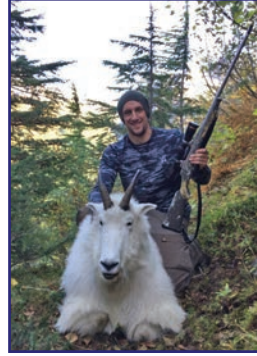
I look forward to reigniting and supporting past volunteers as well as inviting new faces to share their passions through instruction. Please feel free to stop by my office, send me an email ([mykenzie.robertson@alaska.gov](mailto:mykenzie.robertson@alaska.gov)), or call me (907-459-7242), I would love to hear your ideas and work together!

## Certification Course Photos

The HIT Program needs new photos for our website, policy powerpoint, and publications. Please take photos during your classes and email them to [ginamaria.smith@alaska.gov](mailto:ginamaria.smith@alaska.gov).

## Luke Metherell

### New Southcentral Coordinator



Luke is originally from Wyoming, and he grew up with a family who owned an outfitting business that guided hunting, horseback trips, and fly fishing. He has led an eclectic personal and professional life, mostly spent outdoors, working as a guide and in wildlife research. Luke has lived all over, but prior to living in Alaska, he lived in San Diego where

he worked for the research division of the San Diego Zoo. Although he enjoyed SoCal life surfing, ocean fly-fishing, and eating In-and-Out burgers, he eventually grew tired of having his field meetings at Starbucks and began to long for a life working in less inhabited parts of the world.

This led Luke to taking a job working for ADF&G in Alaska in 2016, beginning as a research tech for the Dall's sheep project. During his time on the sheep project Luke completed his undergrad in Biology from UAA. Luke began a sheep nutrition project in 2016, and after years of picking up sheep poop, he became somewhat of an expert in the field and eventually completed a master's thesis on Dall's Sheep nutrition in 2023.



Luke spends most of his free time adventuring and traveling with his wife Beki, their baby boy Theodore, and their two dogs: Nollie and Char. Luke enjoys all things outdoors but has a particular affinity for fly fishing and

hunting. Luke not only likes getting outside himself, but also enjoys educating others on the outdoors and the recreation opportunities they afford. This enthusiasm,

## IHEA Instructor Resource Site

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

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

## HIT Program Site

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



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Summer 2023

combined with a lifetime of outdoor experience makes him a solid fit for the HIT Program. To contact Luke regarding Southcentral region certification courses: (907) 267-2241 or [luke.metherell@alaska.gov](mailto:luke.metherell@alaska.gov).

## Steering Group Members Needed- Southcentral & Southeast

On November 1, 2023 there will be open seats on the HIT Program's Volunteer Steering Group. The openings will be from our Southcentral and Southeast regions and each seat is a two-year term. Joe Brewer (Homer), Jeramy Lemons (Ninilchik), Ellen Hannan (Craig), and Ted Sandhofer (Petersburg) have been tremendous assets to the Steering Group over the past two years. They have helped review the online hunter ed course and the online bowhunter ed course.

The duties of the Steering Group are as follows:

- advise HIT Program Coordinator and staff on a wide range of issues pertaining to hunting and firearms safety
- establish/maintain open communication between volunteer instructors and staff
- periodically monitor and review program goals, objectives, and policies
- provide ongoing recommendations on program curriculum (study manual, workbook, test, and lesson plans)
- represent instructors and program participants
- attend 1-2 teleconferences and one in-person meeting in Anchorage annually

**To apply, submit an email describing your background, how your membership on the Steering Group would benefit the HIT Program, and why you're interested in being on the Steering Group.**

**Emails are due by September 15, 2023.**

The HIT Steering Group has proven to be a great advisory resource in advancing HIT Program goals and objectives. The members have consistently served both the volunteer instructors from around the state and ADF&G, and we look forward to continuing with this tradition.

If you have any questions about being on the Steering Group, feel free to contact a current member.

## SAVE THE DATE: Annual Instructor Meetings

The annual instructor meetings are a great way to meet other instructors, share your hunting stories, provide feedback to HIT Program staff, and help plan the 2024 schedule. Dinner will be provided! It's also a chance for us to thank you for your outstanding efforts and volunteer hours in 2023. Please take the time to attend these meetings if you're available.

- **October 29<sup>th</sup>** at Fairbanks Indoor Range
- **November 7<sup>th</sup>** at Snowshoe Gun Club (Soldotna)
- **November 16<sup>th</sup>** at Juneau Indoor Range
- **November 30<sup>th</sup>** at Grouse Ridge (Wasilla)
- **December 5<sup>th</sup>** at Anchor Lutheran School (Anchorage)
- **November 28<sup>th</sup>**-Rural Areas Meeting (Zoom)

## WANTED: More Volunteer Instructors

Please encourage students, family members, and friends to fill out the instructor application if you think they would be a great addition to the HIT Program. The application is available online ([www.huntereducation.alaska.gov](http://www.huntereducation.alaska.gov)) and printed copies have been included in all class paperwork boxes or cabinets.

Help the HIT Program recruit the next cadre of volunteer instructors!

## HIT Program Steering Group

Melissa Hendrickson (Interior) [melissamch413@gmail.com](mailto:melissamch413@gmail.com) Jeramy Lemons (SC) [jeramylemons@icloud.com](mailto:jeramylemons@icloud.com)

Andy Finke (Rural) [bdaf49@gmail.com](mailto:bdaf49@gmail.com)

Ellen Hannan (SE) [ehannan32@gmail.com](mailto:ehannan32@gmail.com)

Joe Brewer (SC) [jabinalaska@gmail.com](mailto:jabinalaska@gmail.com)

Ted Sandhofer (SE) [cedarpond@gci.net](mailto:cedarpond@gci.net)

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Summer 2023

## Instructor Notes

### Above & Beyond Recipients



We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond" this summer. 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 an email.

#### **Ken Calkins-Salcha**

Ken became a certified bowhunter ed instructor in October 2022. He signed right up to instruct classes and he's become a great addition to the Fairbanks instructor team. Ken taught 4 bowhunter ed classes so far this summer certifying 42 students.

#### **John Sloss-Sterling**

John has become a go-to hunter ed instructor in Soldotna in 2023. He's taught 5 of the 8 classes offered and certified 74 students. When a class has been short on instructors, we've given John a call and he pitches right in to help.

#### **Kurt Woodward-Anchorage**

Kurt took 2022 off and has jumped back into instructing with both feet! He taught 4 hunter ed classes this summer which certified 56 students, and is signed up to instruct a couple more classes before the end of August.

### Duck or Ptarmigan Jalapeno Popper Recipe

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- 4-6 duck/ptarmigan breasts
- 1 package bacon (we prefer turkey)
- 1 jar sliced jalapeño peppers
- 8 oz block of cream cheese

#### **DIRECTIONS**

1. Cut breasts into bite size pieces.
2. Cut cream cheese into bite size pieces.
3. Cut each bacon slice in half.
4. Assemble poppers: Roll one piece of duck, one piece of cream cheese, and 1-2 slices of jalapeño peppers inside bacon half. Secure with toothpick.
5. Place poppers on tinfoil on cookie sheet.
6. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes.



### HIT Program Staff Contact Information

#### Anchorage:

- Gina Smith 267-2196
- Kirk Lingofelt 267-2373
- Luke Metherell 267-2241
- Maria Bakic 267-2534
- Anna Petersen 267-2187

#### Fairbanks:

- Tom Halverson 459-7211
- Mykenzie Robertson  
459-7242

#### Juneau:

- Daniel Gutierrez 465-4345
- Dan Palicka 586-4101



**Participants in the BOW  
Small Game class did  
a fantastic job learning  
how to clean and  
cook ptarmigan and  
snowshoe hares**