

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
January 29, 2022, 10:00 AM - 3:30 PM
Teams Meeting**

IAC Members - Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Sam Grubbs	David Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager	
	Herb Jessen		
Region 2	Eric Lauver	Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist	
	Jen Syrowicz		
Region 3	Randy Absolon	Steve Dazey Region 1 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	James Conway (absent)		
	Rich Mann		
Region 4	Mikel Edwards	Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	John Malek		
	Bob Palmer (excused)		
Region 5	Steve Mills	Amy Elliott Region 5 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Jim Sevier		
Region 6	Jim Gleiter	Jan Ulijohn Hunter Education Administrative Assistant	
	Marty Kotzke		
	VACANT		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe	John Wisner WDFW Warehouse Manager	

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

- ⊕ Dave announced that Larry Lufkin decided to step down from IAC. Larry has been a longtime and very valuable member of IAC, and Dave thanked him for his contributions to the program as an IAC member.
- ⊕ Kris let the IAC know that the draft 10-year recreation strategy for WDFW-managed lands meeting was recorded and the video is on YouTube.
- ⊕ Dave informed IAC that Steve Dazey recently was selected to fill the vacant region 1 field coordinator position.
- ⊕ The Region 4 Field Coordinator interviews have recently been completed and the position will be filled before the next meeting.
- ⊕ In addition to the hunter ed, MHPP, and volunteer duties in region 4, the position will be the statewide lead to help partner with shooting sports programs and organizations with the goal of helping to recruit shooting sports participants into hunting.
- ⊕ Amy reported that Marty Kotzke won the Paul Bunyan's Sportsman of the Year at a recent meeting of that group.

⊙ **Meeting length discussion (20 minutes)**

- ⊕ In recent months, some of the agendas for IAC meetings have been short on topics.
- ⊕ In those cases, WDFW still plans a five-hour meeting and indicates this on the agenda.
- ⊕ All meetings are important, even if they are shorter meetings.
- ⊕ WDFW wants to respect IAC time on Saturdays, so we will adjust the meeting end as necessary in the agenda.
- ⊕ Also, just because the agenda states we will end at a particular time the meetings will ebb and flow with the discussions and could possibly go over the scheduled end time.
- ⊕ The IAC members were generally supportive of keeping the meetings as is and if we need to shorten or cancel the meeting, then that is ok.
- ⊕ Mikel made the comment that members are committed to the meetings and participating, so it's ok if meeting times are unpredictable, shorter, etc.
- ⊕ Rich Mann, John Malek, Sam Grubbs, Herb Jessen, Eric Lauver agreed with Mikel.
- ⊕ Jen asked why we meet on Saturdays and not during the week and she suggested revisiting the meeting date in the future.
- ⊕ Eric seconded the suggestion from Jen because it is nice to have a meeting in the afternoon or evening when virtual.

⊙ **Updated student manual discussion (60 minutes)**

- ⊕ Kris and Amy sent the draft manual to Kalkomey in July 2021.
- ⊕ The Kalkomey staff completed a first draft for review on November 1.
- ⊕ Since then, Kris and Amy reviewed the draft and sent some follow up comments to Kalkomey.
- ⊕ The draft manual was sent to IAC for their review on January 21, 2022.
- ⊕ The IAC had the following questions/comments:

- Rich thought the manual looked good and that he didn't see any issues with the current draft.
 - Herb asked for the review questions to be at the end of the chapters in the PowerPoint.
 - Rich asked if the PowerPoint was going to be more locked down rather than allow the HEI to add their own stuff.
 - Steve Mills commented on the changes for the PowerPoint should be approved to ensure it is within WDFW allowances.
 - Steve Dazey noted that the field coordinators will be able to review the updates and changes to the PowerPoint and make sure it is in WDFW's best interest.
 - John Malek agreed with the previous comments and his concern is the out-of-date information that has happened in the past and how we can correct the issues.
- ⊕ Kris gave the IAC until February 12 to submit any comments to Kris and/or Amy on the draft manual and possible fatal flaws.
 - ⊕ Once the manual is finalized, Kalkomey will produce the PowerPoint.
 - ⊕ When WDFW receives the PowerPoint, Kris and Amy will add in the Washington specific info and student manual review questions.
 - ⊕ Rich asked if instructors will be able to add content to PowerPoint?
 - Yes, instructors will be able to add information to the PowerPoint just like they can today. Field coordinators will continue to visit classes and provide constructive feedback on presentations and teaching.

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

- ⊕ Kris asked if any member of the IAC had communications with their regional instructors.
- ⊕ Sam sent out an email to the instructors on his list of instructors but did not get responses.
- ⊕ Then Sam called his instructors who didn't have emails and found that most of them were happy with the information WDFW is sending out.
- ⊕ After some of those calls, Sam started calling all his assigned instructors to have a chat with them.
- ⊕ Jen had a conversation with an instructor regarding the incentive permits drawing process and how complicated it can be.
 - Steve contacted the instructor and discussed the information and process.
- ⊕ Kris suggested WDFW think about how to make the incentive permits more understandable to instructors and how to encourage more involvement.
 - Steve Mills would like to see the document as a word document so instructors can fill the form rather than having to print it and fill it in.
- ⊕ Rich noted that a possible issue is remembering when classes may have been taught and if instructors qualify for specific permits.
- ⊕ After more discussion, it was decided to have an agenda item on the next meeting to discuss the incentive permits and how to improve the process.

- ⊕ John made the comment that he holds a meeting with his team to help let them know when they taught and which permits they may be eligible for.
- ⊕ Eric has heard from one instructor about being excited to get back into the class.
- ⊕ Marty and Randy have noticed class registration and attendance is very low.
- ⊕ Some parents have contacted instructors and said they won't send their kids to a class due to the mask mandate.
- ⊕ Jen commented that Omicron may be affecting the public's willingness to attend in-person classes as well.

⊙ WDFW Updates (30 minutes)

- ⊕ Student statistics
 - Per IAC member request, Kris sent the 2020 and 2021 stats to the IAC.
 - In 2020, WDFW had to transition to fully online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - There were 1,519 students who complete an in-person class before the state shutdowns occurred.
 - After the shutdowns, 24,892 students completed the online and virtual field day certification.
 - 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.
 - As of the morning of January 28:
 - 865 students have passed the online only course.
 - There have been three online field skills evaluation classes with a capacity of 52.
 - Four students have passed an online field skills evaluation class.
 - That is a 7 percent pass to capacity rate.
 - There have been four traditional classes with a capacity of 94 seats.
 - Twenty-seven students have passed a traditional class.
 - That is a 29 percent pass to capacity rate.
 - Butch normally has a class in January and February and he is not seeing many sign ups.
 - Rich asked if there had been any review on the large number of students who have certified in 2020 and 2021 purchasing licenses.
 - At this time, we haven't reviewed those numbers but will do so in the future.

- Marty noted that he has seen a lot of no shows this year and he has also had some parents who decided not to come to class if there was a mask mandate.
- Herb has been contacted by prospective students asking if they are doing their classes yet and he has several classes scheduled.
- Jim Sevier thinks that the online only student numbers are higher because kids were home and not in school.
- ⊕ Instructors & Instructor Applicants
 - Currently we still have 994 certified instructors
 - There are 191 applicants in the pipeline.
 - Aaron has had a couple conversations with instructors who were resigning because of not teaching and he reminded them that WDFW is not decertifying instructors based on non-teaching during COVID times.
- ⊕ Regional Field Coordinator Updates
 - Steve Dazey – Region 1 coordinator
 - Steve met with the Colville tribe to set up a hunter education program with the tribe.
 - He has been in contact with Camp Cowles in the Spokane area to see if they are able to host National Hunting and Fishing Day in 2022 if the department decided to hold an event.
 - Steve has a new instructor at Deception Pass state park who will be able to hold classes and they will also be able to do live fire with air rifles.
 - Steve, Aaron, and Bill met with a person in Shoreline to help promote hunting in underserved areas and demographics.
 - He is also working on possibly holding a female oriented class in region 4 soon.
 - Aaron Garcia – Region 3 coordinator
 - Aaron is working on getting the regional awards out to the instructors.
 - He is starting to visit classes as he can.
 - Aaron is working with NWTF and Rich Mann on a turkey camp that will have mentored hunts in northeastern Washington.
 - Amy Elliott – Region 5 coordinator
 - Amy is contacting current instructors.
 - She is also hearing from past instructors who want to come back and teach again.
 - Amy has some venues that are looking for classes in the future and she will follow up with those.

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

- ⊕ WDFW was well represented in the governor's budget, which is the starting point for the house and senate budgets.

- ⊕ However, last session, by request of WDFW, the Wildlife State fund was split to improve transparency which created a significant budget hole for WDFW.
- ⊕ This issue was not fixed in the Governor's budget, so WDFW is working with the House and Senate fiscal committees on a resolution.
- ⊕ Pittman-Robertson funding is expected to increase, as the federal preliminary apportionments are positive.
- ⊕ WDFW may need to utilize some of the increased funding to help fix the budget hole if the legislature doesn't fix the problem described above.
- ⊕ Senate bill 5552 is an interesting bill that makes hunting more accessible.
- ⊕ There is also a bill that would allow electronic licenses.
- ⊕ This is a short legislative session which ends March 10.
- ⊕ You can see the legislative calendar at <https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/cutoff.aspx>
- ⊕ You can review bill language and the status of bills by entering the bill number in the search window at: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>
- ⊕ WDFW has four agency request bills. See: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/legislative-priorities>
 - **SB 5552 – Making hunting & fishing more accessible by removing participation barriers and providing financial incentives.**
 - This bill would:
 - 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
 - Bill status: Unanimously voted out of committee January 20, and unanimously voted out of the Rules Committee Jan. 28. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.
 - <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5552&Year=2021&Initiative=False>

- **HB 1626 – WDFW electronic licenses**
 - This bill would:
 - Allow commission to allow electronic licensing documents
 - Status: Substitute bill unanimously passed out of committee Jan. 25. The substitute removed the commission's authority to adopt rules electronic raffle tickets due to the gambling commission's concerns about raffles in electronic formats. The bill was referred to the House Appropriations Committee.
 - **HB 1649 – Expanding Eligibility for the ADA Advisory Committee**
 - This bill would:
 - Allow up to two additional advisory committee members
 - Modifies the requirements for committee reports to the legislature.
 - Status: Substitute passed out of committee Jan. 25 and referred to the Rules committee. The substitute reinstated and modified some of the report requirements.
 - <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1649&Year=2021&Initiative=False>
 - **SB 5504 – Extending discover pass free days**
 - This bill would extend discover pass free days to all state recreational lands, including WDFW lands and recreation sites.
 - Status: The bill unanimously passed out of policy committee Jan. 20, unanimously out of the Rules Committee Jan. 28. The bill will head to the House for consideration.
 - <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5504&Year=2021&Initiative=False>
- ⊕ Some other bills of interest regarding the agency, Fish and Wildlife Commission, and Natural Resource Agency:
 - **HB 2027 - Concerning the governance structure of WDFW**
 - This bill creates a task force charged with reviewing options to restructure or eliminate the Fish and Wildlife Commission, recommending options for a new governance structure of WDFW, and reviewing the statutory mandate of both the agency and Commission. A task force findings report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2022.
 - Status: Public hearing held Jan. 26. As of Jan. 28, it hasn't been scheduled for executive session (policy committee vote).
 - **SB 5656 - Concerning fish and wildlife commission members**
 - If the Senate does not confirm an appointment to the Fish and Wildlife Commission within 12 months, the appointment to the commission expires and the governor must provide a new appointment.
 - Status: The bill had a public hearing Jan. 25. As of Jan. 28, it has not been scheduled for executive session (committee vote).

- **SB 5721 - Consolidating natural resource management under the commissioner of public lands.**
 - This bill would:
 - Authorize the Commissioner of Public Lands to appoint the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Director of the State Parks and Recreation Commission.
 - Authorizes the Commissioner of Public Lands to appoint the members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Parks and Recreation Commission.
 - Transfers the powers and duties for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to the Director and the Department of Fish and Wildlife and makes the Fish and Wildlife Commission advisory.
 - Transfers the powers and duties for the State Parks and Recreation Commission to the Director and the State Parks and Recreation Department and makes the State Parks and Recreation Commission advisory.
 - Status: A public hearing was scheduled for Jan. 25, but the bill was not heard.

⊙ **COVID update (60 minutes)**

- ⊕ WDFW planned to open its offices to the public on January 2, but that plan was put on hold per the Office of Financial Management guidance.
- ⊕ At this point, WDFW will reopen its offices sometime after March 15.
- ⊕ WDFW is going to maintain the current Hunter Education SOP for now.
- ⊕ Dave asked the IAC members if they have heard anything from their instructors on the SOP or had questions on the SOP.
- ⊕ Butch has a class on Monday January 31, with only 2 students signed up and may cancel the class.
- ⊕ Rich brought up that spacing can be a challenging issue in classes.
 - Dave reaffirmed that the distancing in the SOP is encouraged but not required.
- ⊕ Kris sent the instructor input on future classes based on current COVID teaching protocols and higher public demand survey results out to the IAC for their review.
- ⊕ The survey was open from Dec 15 through December 31.
- ⊕ WDFW received 318 responses from instructors.
- ⊕ Of the 318 who took the survey, 227 responded they were likely to teach in 2022.
- ⊕ The graphs of instructors who were planning to teach in each month resembled WDFW's long history of when classes are needed and offered in years past.
- ⊕ Sixty-two percent of instructors who completed the survey indicated they were planning on teaching the same number of classes they would have taught pre-COVID in 2022.

- ⊕ The instructors were also asked what they felt was the appropriate minimum age for students to complete the all online class.
- ⊕ Age 12 received the highest number of responses with 115.
- ⊕ The next closest response was 9 years old (no change) with 67 responses.
- ⊕ Kris asked the IAC what they are hearing from instructors regarding teaching, all-online course, minimum age, etc.
- ⊕ Sam talked to an instructor who had an issue with the virtual field course and the instructor's suggestion was to give all online class attendees a one-year waiver for the HE requirement before they must go into an in-person class before the next season.
 - Dave talked about the logistical issues with this approach.
- ⊕ The group discussed the pros and cons of changing the age to complete the online only class.
 - John Malek didn't see his comments in survey results, but he supports raising the minimum age to 12.
 - Herb agrees with the 12-year-old minimum age change.
 - All IAC members support 12 years old starting June 1.

⊙ **Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation plan (30 minutes)**

- ⊕ The commission adopted a [25-year strategic plan](#) recently.
- ⊕ The strategic plan identifies the need to complete a plan to better recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers, hunters, and nature appreciators, from diverse backgrounds.
- ⊕ WDFW is addressing hunter and angler R3 independently from "nature appreciators" due to the inherent differences of those broad groups.
- ⊕ WDFW developed and adopted a formal R3 plan charter that outlines key team members, milestones, and a projected timeline.
 - This is important as it gives the R3 plan sponsorship from the Director's Office and makes it an agency priority.
- ⊕ The R3 plan team has representation from the Director's Office, Wildlife program, and Fish Program, both in Olympia and the regions.
- ⊕ WDFW has been gathering data related to demographics, hunter and angler participation trends, etc., and developing draft goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics, related to:
 - Increasing hunter education students and demographic diversity
 - Increasing the number of small game hunters and anglers
 - Increasing participation in shooting sports as they related to hunting
 - Reducing churn rate of hunters and anglers
 - Maintaining acreage accessible to hunters
 - Increasing youth angling participation
 - Maintaining and increasing boat launches, shore access for anglers including private lands
 - Increasing public support for hunting and fishing, as well as awareness for how those activities contribute to funding and support conservation.

- ⊕ One of the key next steps will be hosting a “R3 Summit” with hunting and angling partner organizations and individuals to further develop goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.
 - This is tentatively scheduled for April 19, and we will be identifying and reaching out to summit participants soon.
- ⊕ The R3 Plan is anticipated to be finalized this spring/summer.
- ⊕ We’ll likely need to craft a more detailed Hunter Education Division “R3 implementation plan” that will be a tool.

⊙ **For the good of the order**

- ⊕ Dave talked a little about in-service trainings and how WDFW may handle those soon.
- ⊕ WDFW uses instructor hours as match for Pittman-Robertson grant funding and there may be shortages based on the current levels of instructing.
- ⊕ Rich Mann is working on an NWTF turkey clinic mentored hunt for three days this spring and he needs mentors and people to help in camp.
- ⊕ Jen commented on the draft recreation strategy being a paradigm shift of how WDFW manages the public on WDFW lands, and it will better align WDFW with other natural resource agencies.

⊙ **Adjourn**