

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**

October 8, 2022, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Central Washington University SURC room 137, Ellensburg WA

IAC Members - Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Sam Grubbs	David Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist Steve Dazey Region 1 Hunter Education Field Coordinator Jackie McBride Region 4 Hunter Education Field Coordinator Amy Elliott Region 5 Hunter Education Field Coordinator Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education Field Coordinator Rachel Blomker Public Engagement Division Manager	
	Mike Kirkwood		
Region 2	Eric Lauver (excused)		
	Jen Syrowicz (excused)		
Region 3	Randy Absolon		
	James Conway (absent)		
	Rich Mann (excused)		
Region 4	Liz Crain		
	Mikel Edwards		
	Howard Schoen		
	Evan Windom		
Region 5	Herb Jessen		
	Jim Sevier (excused)		
Region 6	Blayde Fry (excused)		
	Marty Kotzke		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe		

⊙ **Welcome & General Interest Announcements (*Kris Thorson, 10 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Kris introduced Rachel Blomker, the Public Engagement Division Manager.
- ⊕ She oversees the Hunter Education section in the newly formed Communication and Public Engagement (CAPE) program as well as several other sections.
- ⊕ CAPE is part of the Directors office.
- ⊕ The program is broken into Communications Division and Public Engagement Division.
- ⊕ The Communications Division is mainly what used to be the public affairs unit.
- ⊕ The Public Engagement Division encompasses hunter education, sales and marketing, conservation education, volunteer coordination, and Diversity, equity, and inclusion outreach data analysis sections.
- ⊕ Also within the CAPE program is the Killer Whale Policy Lead, a Conservation Social Scientist, and a Natural Resource Economist.
- ⊕ Mikel asked what instructors could do to help CAPE with its public engagement mission.
 - Kris will add this to the workplan ideas.
- ⊕ The IAC membership introduced themselves to Rachel and the group.

⊙ **Introduction of New IAC Members (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Kris welcomed the new IAC members to the IAC.
- ⊕ Since the group introduced themselves to Rachel and the group, it moved to the next agenda item.

⊙ **IAC Recruitment (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Recently, the Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG) changed the way they recruit members.
- ⊕ The recruitment process the MHAG used previously was like the current IAC process of asking three questions.
- ⊕ The MHAG found that some applicants did not elaborate on the answers to the questions which made it difficult to gauge the answers against other applicants who were more verbose.
- ⊕ Kris passed out the new recruitment information MHAG will use in the future.
- ⊕ Some of the questions would need to be changed to be useful for the IAC's recruitment, but what does the group think about expanding the questions used to recruitment?
- ⊕ Howard asked if staff had thought about doing an interview panel or something to read the person so to speak.
 - The field coordinators generally have interactions with the applicants and are able to speak more about what they have seen from the applicants.
- ⊕ Sam indicated he sees the same questions each year and must work a bit to keep his application fresh.
- ⊕ Randy asked if the process is broken.
 - Amy talked a bit about the current process and how some folks have answered questions in more detail to help give more information to the selection committee have more to go in for selection.

- ⊕ Liz suggested that there be a question about what their obstacles or challenges are.
- ⊕ Butch also suggested the interview route as it would help remove some of the questions on person 1 vs person 2.
- ⊕ Evan asked if being currently on the IAC weighed into the recruitment process.
 - Kris explained that being a current IAC member does not guarantee another term on IAC. However, when two applicants are extremely similar and one is a previous or current member, it can influence the choice.
- ⊕ Another thing to consider is term limits.
- ⊕ Term limits would add a natural progression of new membership onto the IAC and add new viewpoints to the group.
- ⊕ Kris envisioned the term limit would be after two consecutive terms a person would need to wait at least one year before reapplying to the IAC.
- ⊕ Kris asked if the group thought the proposed term limit mechanism would work?
- ⊕ Mikel suggested that WDFW lean on the staff to determine if the current member would be an asset and if they are not then they could be.
- ⊕ Evan suggested WDFW move more towards instructors selecting their member rather than a selection committee approach.
 - There was a comment about instructors who teach on teams with 30 people maybe having an advantage in the election style appointments.
- ⊕ Liz asked how many applicants we have each year.
 - There were 11 applicants for 2022 and there are generally about 11-20 applicants each year.
- ⊕ Randy asked what the spatial distribution was of the applicants so we could be informed on what term limits might do to the IAC representation.
 - Of the 11 applicants only three were in eastern Washington.
- ⊕ Sam asked if there would be value to require five years as an instructor or computer skills.
 - Kris doesn't think requiring any years of service being a requirement would serve the committee well because sometimes the newest members of a group bring great new ideas.
- ⊕ Dave suggested adding a subgroup from IAC to help the selection committee with the recruitment selection.
- ⊕ Kris suggested that the IAC send their comments on letter of interest questions to him by December 25 and we can discuss the process more at our January 28 meeting.
- ⊕ Kris suggested that maybe we send the IAC meeting notes to the instructor corps.
 - Steve suggested this approach might short circuit the IAC members outreach opportunities.
- ⊕ Liz suggested having a prospective IAC applicants come job shadow to see what a meeting is like and what the IAC is doing. She will add this to her suggestions for the IAC recruitment questions.

⦿ **IAC Workplan Planning (*Kris Thorson, 60 minutes*)**

- ⊕ This agenda item will be to gather goals and projects the IAC wants to accomplish in 2023.
- ⊕ Kris felt that creating an IAC workplan will help set goals and objectives for the coming year and will help drive IAC's work.
- ⊕ Amy proposed an idea to Kris during a previous conversation that the IAC could do some brainstorming on how to do some instructor networking.
- ⊕ Other ideas the IAC proposed were:
 - Mikel suggested instructors could help with videos and information for the MyWDFW.com site and WDFW outreach efforts.
 - Mike suggested how to recruit and retain instructors in smaller counties with smaller teams.
 - Mike also suggested helping instructors overcome technical aversion.
- ⊕ Mikel asked if there was a way to have an instructor get together or something like a meet and greet.
 - Bill shared his experience, before he was a staff member, that was a get together each December that he held with the Pierce county instructors and they would schedule classes to not be on the same dates.
- ⊕ Evan sees a need for more real time coordination to get instructors for quick turnaround issues.
 - There was discussion on how to find the instructors quickly and Kris showed the IAC how to find the local instructors.
- ⊕ Evan also suggested a Facebook group that instructors in the region could use to communicate.
 - This idea is not feasible because WDFW's social media policy requires WDFW to own and moderate its social media channels and does not have the current staffing for this.
- ⊕ Mikel asked what the IAC could do to help the instructors deliver the curriculum in a more efficient way.
- ⊕ Howard suggested we look at how to reach each generation and how we as the IAC can do to help the instructors teach to the generations.
 - This may be something we can do in the future and we will have an agenda item on the statewide IST that can help this issue.
- ⊕ Liz suggested we revamp the online review class that is less slides.
- ⊕ She also suggested creating a how to teach effectively adding the narrative to instructors.
- ⊕ Work on a list of creating small videos reinforcing the points on the PPTs.
- ⊕ Kris will take these items and create a workplan that he will send to the IAC before the January meeting to approve.
- ⊕ There was also an idea of changing the incentive permit tables information to review the Incentive permit tables.

⦿ **Lunch (45 minutes)**

⦿ **WDFW Updates (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

⊕ Budget and legislative update

- The legislative session will start in early 2023.
- WDFW has secured ongoing funding for a permanent hunting R3 coordinator.
- We are also getting a fishing R3 coordinator through the end of the 2023 fiscal year.
- WDFW is looking to secure ongoing funding for the Fishing R3 Coordinator.

Legislative:

- There are 4 agency-request bills for the upcoming 2023 legislative session:
 - **Hatchery maintenance permitting** - The bill requests exemption from permitting for routine maintenance, like the existing WSDOT maintenance and repair exemption.
 - **Recreational fishing license for smelt, crawfish, common carp** - The bill would remove the current license exemption for the 3 species.
 - **Fish and wildfire disease prevention authority** - The bill would give WDFW authority to post signage for disease checkpoints and request voluntary compliance.
 - **One-time capitalization of shoreline restoration revolving account** - The goal is to provide voluntary low interest/easy repayment loans to private property owners to restore shorelines in Puget Sound by replacing failing hard armoring with healthy alternatives.
- WDFW is not requesting a recruitment bill this session.
- Hunter Ed has provided desired Hunter Education RCW changes from previous recruitment bills to the Legislative Affairs Director in the event an opportunity arises during the legislative session to introduce relatively minor changes like:
 - Remove the 3-year license requirement for accompanying hunters in the deferral program.
 - Remove the 10-hour minimum course length.

Budget:

- Angling & Hunting R3 Coordinator positions have been added to Hunter Ed/R3 Section.
- These positions will be responsible for implementing WDFW's R3 Plan.
- The Angling R3 Coordinator has 1-time funding through June 30 and we expect to fill that position relatively soon.
- There is support for continued funding starting next biennium (July 1, 2023), funding source TBD.
- The Hunting R3 Coordinator will be funded by PR dollars on an ongoing basis. We anticipate filling that position in the next 2-3 months.
- Policy-level budget initiatives

- Fact sheets will be developed soon, and we will distribute those when available.
- Some budget initiatives that may be of higher interest to instructors:
 - **Restoring Washington's Biodiversity**
 - The goal of this budget request is to stem the tide of biodiversity loss and accelerate our work with partners to implement the State Wildlife Action Plan and other protection and recovery efforts in Washington's most important habitats.
 - **Expand Wildlife Conflict Response**
 - Due to the large increase in human-wildlife conflicts, this funding would build capacity and consolidate and expand conflict response to address agricultural damage & dangerous wildlife.
 - **Wildlife Disease Surveillance**
 - The proposal would expand WDFW's capacity to proactively mitigate wildlife disease risks associated with climate change and provide action plans and management for healthy wildlife.
 - **Engaging Volunteers in Conservation**
 - This request would add a volunteer coordinator in each region, plus a community science coordinator.
 - Dedicated volunteer coordinators in each of WDFW's six regions and a community science coordinator would allow us to expand volunteer opportunities by 25 percent, increase volunteer hours by 50 percent, and improve volunteer retention rate by 10 percent.
 - **Manage Impacts to State Lands**
 - This request would fund data collection, management, & analysis on how outdoor recreation, climate change, weeds, and other factors impact fish and wildlife habitat, & allow more informed decision making to create a balance between conservation and the increasing demand for outdoor recreation.
- Capital Funding Needs - \$270M, driven by (1) addressing the backlog of repair and restoration projects, and (2) design and construction to meet the needs of the state's growing human population.
 - Broad categories of capital budget requests include:
 - Forest Health Hazard Fuel Reduction
 - Habitat Acquisition
 - Estuary Habitat Restoration
 - Hatchery maintenance & renovations

- Facilities: Deschutes Watershed Center, Fish and Wildlife Health and Biosecurity, Region 1 Office
 - Minor Works Projects
- The link for the 2023 Legislative session requests can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/budget/update>.
- ⊕ COVID updates
 - Governor Inslee announced the end of Washington's state of emergency will happen on October 31.
 - Dave has made inquiries to the agency leadership to see what the ending of the state of emergency means for WDFW's SOPs and masking requirements.
 - So far, we don't have any information from leadership on what this will mean for hunter education moving forward.
- ⊕ 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 September are:
 - The online only course has certified 7,975 students.
 - There have been 138 online field skills evaluation classes with a capacity of 1,773.
 - Online field skills evaluation classes had 791 students register for an evaluation.
 - Of those 791 registrations, 638 students passed (81 percent), 127 no showed (20 percent), and 24 failed (4 percent).
 - That is a 36 percent pass to capacity rate.
 - There have been 117 traditional classes with a capacity of 2,365.
 - There have been 1,435 students registered for a traditional class.
 - Of those 1,435 registrations, 1,099 students passed (76 percent), 277 no showed (19 percent), 51 failed (4 percent), and 38 were incomplete (3 percent).
 - That is a 46 percent pass to capacity rate.
 - In total we had capacity for 4,138 students, had 2,226 students registered (54 percent), and 1,737 students pass a class (78 percent pass rate).
 - That is a 42 percent pass to capacity rate.
- ⊕ Instructors & Instructor Applicants
 - There were 36 new instructors certified through August 2022.
 - Kris has received inquiries from several Master Hunters on how to become an instructor.
- ⊕ Kalkomey updates (PST course, duplicate HE cards, etc.)

- The new pre-service training (PST) course has been taken by several applicants and been well received.
- Dave has submitted the contract to WDFW's contract office for signature.
- Kris and Dave talked about sending the instructor training class to the IAC for their review and understanding.

⊕ Regional Field Coordinator Updates

- Bill Montgomery – Region 6 Field Coordinator
 - He has held a couple PSTs and certified at least 13 new instructors.
 - He asked his Port Angeles team to hold a class because there were some students going to region 4 from the peninsula and the Port Angeles class only received seven students.
 - Bill is working on a hunting clinic that will be held on November 5.
- Amy Elliott – Region 5 Field Coordinator
 - Amy has seen few classes, but most of the classes are full.
 - She is working on holding pheasant clinics in 2023.
 - The Bob Oke team is looking to start holding classes again in 2023.
 - She is working on a Centralia College hunter education class.
 - Amy is also looking at doing another PST soon.
 - She needs to do a lot of restructuring of teams, particularly in Vancouver.
 - Amy and Jackie are planning women-oriented opportunities for the future.
- Jackie McBride – Region 4 Field Coordinator
 - Jackie attended Pewluck, a free event offering firearm training where she brought the orange guns plus some pamphlets she made up for shooting sports resources.
 - At Pewluck, she got four new instructor applications and educated at least 15 on how to sign up for hunter ed as well as First Hunt Foundation and mentoring resources.
 - She has been developing a relationship with Skookum Archers for National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) as well as hunter education and shooting sports mentorships for instructors.
 - Jackie attended the Washington State Fair and Return of the Salmon.
 - She is working with Tom Teigen at Snohomish County parks for the new Public Shooting Sports complex and development.
 - Jackie is taking the range development course offered by the NRA to look at forest service shooting pit locations as possible WDFW partnership opportunities for safety improvement/development.
 - She certified 10 new instructors from all over the region.
 - She has a tentative appointment with Fort Lewis MWR for shooting sports and hunting opportunities “coffee chat” events on base.

- Jackie has attended 10 classes over the last three months with eight of those being PSTs.
- Jackie is looking at standardizing the hands-on portion of the class in her region because she has seen some bad teaching habits and situations when visiting classes.
- She is working on an inert firearm inventory for John Wisner.
- Aaron Garcia – Region 3 Field Coordinator
 - Not a lot of classes coming up.
 - He helped organize the Chris Christiansen Annual Deer Camp event.
 - He is planning a turkey camp for November 18-20.
 - For the youth pheasant season WDFW had a hybrid release with only six kids coming out to hunt.
 - He is going to conduct inventory checks with his upcoming instructor visits.
 - There is a need for Field Skills Evaluation classes in the Tri-cities area.
- Steve Dazey – Region 1 Field Coordinator
 - Steve attended the first CAPE in person meeting in Lacey.
 - He attended the hunter ed class at the Kalispel Camas center.
 - Steve also conducted Range Safety Officer (RSO) training in Wenatchee.
 - He attended deer camp at Kettle Falls where 12 first time youth hunters were given an opportunity to harvest their first deer.
 - Steve conducted a Hunter Education and NRA Basic Rifle Course for Civil Air Patrol Cadets at their Washington All Mission Academy with Aaron Garcia, Amy Elliott, and Chuck Ray.
 - He conducted agency firearm training and qualification of non-enforcement staff who are issued firearms to do their job.
 - He held a pre-service training and certified five new instructors in region 1.
 - Steve trained staff and volunteers to become Chief Range Safety Officers so that they can assist with future RSO training.
 - He presented an instructor his 35-year service plaque.
 - He also worked to assist a blind hunter to get authority to use adaptive hunting equipment.
 - Steve emailed a Master Hunter volunteer low impact project out to assist staff monitor for CWD in eastern Washington.
 - He is scheduled to meet with the Boy scouts of America to secure the 2023 National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) venue.
 - Steve also met with Inland Northwest Wildlife Council to secure their assistance for the NHFD event.

- National Hunting and Fishing Day event is always the fourth Saturday in September.
- This year, WDFW did a digital event because of COVID restrictions earlier in the year limited /the planning WDFW could complete in time.
- WDFW asked partner agencies, staff, and volunteers if they would be interested in participating.
- On September 24, WDFW posted stories on Instagram as well as videos on YouTube.
- Kris handed out the statistics of “attendees” who saw the content.
- There were over 25,000 views of the Instagram story or YouTube video since they were posted.
- You can see the NHFD Instagram @thewdfw and on YouTube by searching TheWDFW.

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

- ⊕ Instructor feedback to IAC re: news/issues/concerns related to teaching, COVID SOP, all-online course, minimum age, etc.
- ⊕ Evan sent an email to his instructors and received a lot of response but three overall ideas were:
 - Covid-19 restrictions need to end
 - The all-online class needs to go because they felt it was harmful.
 - They wanted more diversity in our instructors.

⊙ **Hunter Education Instructor Incentive Permits (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Kris is starting to work on the 2023 incentive permits background information.
- ⊕ The permit background will follow the 2022 version.
- ⊕ The thought is that WDFW will move the qualifications and tables back to the pre-covid requirements for the 2024 permits.
- ⊕ Kris has been in contact with the regional program managers and in region 3 there was support for adding two GMUs to the any bull permit.
- ⊕ Per previous discussions with the IAC, WDFW will add the qualification of all required paperwork like the Policy Agreement Forms and Background check authorization forms be submitted to put in for permits.
- ⊕ Liz would like to see an easier way to apply for the permits and possibly automatically add them to the pool and to possibly revisit the paperwork etc.
- ⊕ Amy will talk to Jan about the signature line on the incentive permit to see if it is something that we can remove.
- ⊕ There was also discussion of revamping the tables to allow for those areas with less student need to meet some of the table requirements.
- ⊕ Kris will add this to the workplan and add it to the agenda for the January meeting.

⊙ **Statewide In-Service Training update (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ The statewide in-service training will be held on April 28-30.

- ⊕ April 28, WDFW is hosting an optional range event and early registration for the IST.
- ⊕ The agenda topics for the 2023 statewide IST have been finalized.
- ⊕ The topics WDFW will cover on Saturday are:
 - Opening remarks
 - The state of Hunter Education
 - Cultural Awareness
 - Recruitment, retention, and reengagement (R3) plan
 - North American Non-Lead Partnership
 - Effective Teaching Techniques
 - IHEA-USA Presentation
 - Kalkomey Presentation
 - 2023 Awards Presentation
- ⊕ Sunday has two sets of concurrent sessions.
- ⊕ This means that instructors will have three sessions to choose from and only time to do two sessions.
- ⊕ The first concurrent sessions will be:
 - How to Become a Chief Instructor, Duties, and Building a Team
 - Stop the Bleed, Traumatic Wound Care
 - Hunter Recruiting Relating to the Shooting Sports
- ⊕ The second concurrent sessions will be:
 - Master Hunter Permit Program Overview, What it is, What it isn't, and Improvement Efforts
 - Hunter Education Instructor Recruitment
 - Snags 101 and the Intersection with Hunting
- ⊕ The last presentation before lunch will be Mentoring New Hunters.
- ⊕ During lunch WDFW will provide some closing remarks as well.

⊙ **Adjourn**