

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
December 14, 2024, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
CWU SURC Room 137A, Ellensburg**

IAC Members – Representing		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	John Cushman	<p>Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Section Specialist</p> <p>Steve Dazey, Region 1 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Nick Montanari, Region 2 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Jackie McBride, Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Amy Elliott, Region 5 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</p>	
	Brian Lyon (excused)		
Region 2	Wanda Chrisman (absent)		
	Bob Hunt (excused)		
Region 3	Randy Absolon		
	Sam Grubbs		
Region 4	Mikel Edwards		
	Bob Palmer		
	Evan Windom		
Region 5	Jim Sevier (virtual)		
	Sig Lillevik (virtual)		
Region 6	Jim Fitzgerald (virtual)		
	Blayde Fry (virtual)		
	Tani Iwashita (virtual)		
	Steven Slater (virtual)		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe		
WHEIA	John Malek (virtual)		

⊙ **Member introductions (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Herb Jessen has some personal and family needs that he's been dealing with and recently they've needed more attention, so he made the difficult decision to retire from hunter education.
- ⊕ Since he cannot be a member of the IAC while not being a certified instructor, he resigned his seat.
- ⊕ His remaining term will be served by a familiar face, Jim Sevier.
- ⊕ Welcome back Jim!
- ⊕ Kris asked each of the members to introduce themselves.

⊙ **Reiteration Related to the First Aid Policy (*Kris Thorson, 5 minutes*)**

- ⊕ The Hunter Education Section is working internally to determine how the agency requirement for staff First Aid certification applies to volunteers, including hunter education instructors.
- ⊕ The current requirement in the Policy Manual applies until it is changed.
- ⊕ This means any certification system is currently acceptable.
- ⊕ We do not currently have direction regarding whether certifications valid when the policy is changed will remain valid or whether WDFW will provide training under a different certification system (i.e. the certification system required for staff).
- ⊕ The timeline for any possible changes is currently not known.
- ⊕ Current Policy Manual language is as follows:
 - First Aid Requirements Policy: At least one instructor who is currently certified in rendering first aid and first aid equipment is required at all hunter education courses.
 - It is the responsibility of the chief instructor to ensure compliance with this policy. Instructors may request first aid and first aid training from a WDFW hunter education field coordinator. Additional training is available statewide from a variety of first aid training organizations certified by the state. CPR training is encouraged but does not fulfill the first aid training requirement. Instructors can request a first aid kit from WDFW.

⊙ **Timekeeping changes (*Kris Thorson, 10 minutes*)**

- ⊕ This information is a heads-up related to how instructors report their volunteer hours as there is much still needed to be worked out.
- ⊕ The U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Inspector General (OIG) is required to audit Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) every five years.
- ⊕ The Code of Federal Regulations, the FWS Manual, and applicable regulatory guidance is used to evaluate regulatory compliance related to use of PR funds.
- ⊕ PR grants require a 25% match of non-federal funds.
- ⊕ WDFW's hunter education grant match requirement is provided via the value of hunter education instructor volunteer hours.

- ⊕ Methods for submitting, reviewing, and approving donated instructor hours is required to be the same as the process used for staff, to the extent feasible.
- ⊕ During the fall 2024 audit of Fiscal Years 2021 & 2022, the OIG found that WDFW did not maintain sufficient documentation of instructor hours.
 - Note that WDFW did not receive any findings during the 2018 audit.
- ⊕ The OIG recommended, and the FWS concurred, that WDFW needs to develop and implement procedures for tracking, verifying, and certifying volunteer time that align with methods used for staff to verify reported volunteer hours accurately reflect actual hours worked.
- ⊕ WDFW does not agree with the OIG finding and recommendation.
- ⊕ However, WDFW will likely need to develop and implement a new system for recording and tracking volunteer instructor time.
- ⊕ Essentially that means hunter ed instructors will need to submit their own hours (which verifies they are accurate), and those hours will need to be approved by two individuals in the chain of command.
 - This system would be similar to the process used by WDFW, where staff submit timesheets (attesting hours are accurate and true), and the timesheets are reviewed and approved by the supervisor, and then by payroll staff.
- ⊕ The timeframe for development and implementation is still under discussion.
 - It could be as early as June 2025 or as late as June 2026.
- ⊕ A possible solution may be to utilize Kalkomey's Electronic Time Tracking in Event Manager:
 - Instructors enter their own hours electronically, using a personal identification number (PIN) as a digital signature.
 - The Chief Instructor reviews hours for accuracy and approves the hours, and electronically submits their own hours.
 - A Hunter Ed Field Coordinator and/or other Hunter Ed staff would review & approve hours.
- ⊕ Instructors without an email address and the ability to use a computer could submit paper timesheets that would be uploaded to Kalkomey by the chief.
- ⊕ The data entry process, as well as workflow to review and receive corrected instructor data when necessary, are all automated through Event Manager to help instructors and WDFW administrators minimize the time needed.
- ⊕ We are at the beginning stages of this, and need additional information related to specific questions.
- ⊕ We will give instructors as much lead-time as possible and will provide guidance or training as needed.
- ⊕ Evan noted that when we roll this out to the instructor's we need to clearly identify why we are having to change to this kind of system.
 - Might want to have a budget item on the statewide IST on how our budget works, where our money comes from, how its spent, and how we need to present our hours based on our current PR grant.
- ⊕ Mikel suggested we could have one sheet per class that has the instructor's name, hours, and signature that the chief could upload to WDFW via Kalkomey.

- ⊕ Randy suggested we look at what other states do and use what is working well.
- ⊕ Evan and John both think that until we have a clearer picture of the problem, we cannot work towards fixing it.

⊙ **Teaching Guide Update and Discussion (*Nick Montanari, 60 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Nick went over the current draft of the Hunter Education Instructor Lesson Guide and how the idea came about.
- ⊕ Bob suggested that we put the published date on the guide, what date the test was used to compile the questions, student manual use.
- ⊕ All the IAC liked the information and tool for instructors to use if they choose to.
- ⊕ Kris and/or Nick will get the file out to the IAC for their review and commenting by January 17.

⊙ **HEI Incentive Permit Pricing Update (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ After the drawing for the 2024 Hunter Education Instructor Incentive Permits, it was brought to the staff's attention that the cost of the second deer and elk tags was different than the price identified in the big game regulations pamphlet.
- ⊕ Hunter ed staff did some research on the reasons the permit costs were not the same as the pamphlet and then met with the licensing staff.
- ⊕ During that meeting, it was explained that the language for reduced rates for deer and elk licenses in [WAC 220-220-080](#) and [WAC 220-220-090](#) did not have exceptions and language to allow for a reduced rate for the instructor incentive permits.
- ⊕ Ericka, Dave, and Kris met with the Game Division Manager and the Ungulate Section Lead to discuss the possible changes.
- ⊕ In that meeting, the Game Division staff were very receptive to the proposed changes to the WACs to allow for reduced rates for the incentive permits but thought we might be able to get those reduced rates through other WAC language.
- ⊕ Hunter ed, game, and licensing staff met to discuss the possibility of offering the same reduced rates, but we ran into the same language roadblocks that was identified in the previous licensing meeting.
- ⊕ Since all parties in the meeting were in favor of offering the reduced rate, Kris presented his drafted language for the WAC changes.
- ⊕ The proposed language would drop the second tag cost of both deer and elk permits to \$22.50.
- ⊕ Currently those permits are \$66.50.
- ⊕ The game Division will present these proposed changes to the commission during the next three-year season setting process.
- ⊕ For those who are not aware, the hunting seasons are set in Washington, the Game Division creates three-year season setting packages that they present to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- ⊕ These three-year season setting packages have large scale changes and set the seasons for the next three years.

- ⊕ During the off years, hunting season setting often includes relatively minor changes to seasons or permits, and response to emerging needs.
- ⊕ We are currently in the middle of a three-year cycle.
- ⊕ The next three-year season setting will begin in 2026 for the 2027-2030 seasons.
- ⊕ Since this change in price is a larger scale change that was recommended by an instructor and hunter ed staff, it will be proposed to the commission for inclusion in the WACs in 2027.
- ⊕ Kris will keep this on the radar and make sure to help shepherd the WACs through the process and get the reduced fee for instructors.

⊙ **Lunch (45 minutes)**

⊙ **IAC member roundtable and communications with regional instructors (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Instructor feedback to IAC re: news/issues/concerns related to teaching and classes.
 - Sam has been contacting the Region 3 instructors to talk to them about updating their contact information and other items.
 - Evan has some instructors contact him on what constitutes a fail when on a field skills evaluation and he suggested we possibly need to look at defining that clearly.
 - Randy sent out the agenda two weeks ago to instructors in Region 3 and had four comments from instructors.
 - There was a comment about having no cost for instructor incentive permits.
 - Unfortunately, the RCW does not allow for monetary incentives. RCW 77.32.155(3): To encourage the participation of an adequate number of instructors for the training program, the commission shall develop nonmonetary incentives available to individuals who commit to serving as an instructor. The incentives may include additional hunting opportunities for instructors. There is no fee to apply for instructor incentive permits. Also, please see the notes above related to WDFW efforts to reduce the cost of second tags for incentive permits.
 - He also had a comment on a senior hunting license fee.
 - This topic is outside the context of hunter education and is within the purview of the Game Division, hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3), and Fish & Wildlife Commission.
 - Hunter Education staff will forward the suggestion to the Marketing and R3 Section manager.
 - License prices are set via RCW with input from the Game Division, rule making process, and commission.

- To contact the commission please see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/contact/>.
- An instructor brought up the special permits (not instructor incentive permits) could be weighted more highly for seniors because the special permits are becoming more of a once in a lifetime permit.
 - This is also outside the purview of Hunter Education, but it could be something to discuss with the commission and Game Division.
 - WDFW will be presenting the information on how the draw is run at the 2025 In-service Trainings.
- He also had an instructor ask for a discover pass for disabled folks or one pass for all public lands.
 - WDFW understands the confusion and frustration of not being able to purchase an access pass for all public lands. Hunter education doesn't have any ownership over the discover pass, but Derric Lowery in the Lands Division works with that program.
 - The Discover Pass is valid on state recreation lands managed by WDFW, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks. Holders of a permanent disabled parking placard or disabled license plates, issued by Dept. of Licensing, are exempt from needing a Discover Pass at State Parks (you'll still need a Discover Pass to access lands managed by WDFW or DNR). There are several "free days" when a Discover Pass or Vehicle Access Pass (included with hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses and only valid on WDFW-managed lands and water access sites) is not required. Volunteers who work 24 hours or more on agency-approved projects are eligible for a complimentary Discover Pass, and the pass is not needed to participate in eligible volunteer projects. Ask the volunteer coordinator for a temporary pass to use during your volunteer work. For more information, see wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/parking and <https://discoverpass.wa.gov/131/Exemptions>. The Discover Pass does is not valid for access to public lands managed by Federal agencies, and there is currently no mechanism for federal and state jurisdictions to share access permits and passes.
- John had a conversation with an instructor who asked for chapter 2 to be broken out since it takes him five hours to complete that chapter.
 - There were comments from the IAC about that being too long so Steve will get in contact with John and this instructor to discuss how to get the time on chapter 2 down.

- Jim worked with Bill on putting together a teaching team with the Skykomish tribe.

⊙ **2024 National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) Recap and 2025 planning (Kris Thorson, Amy Elliott, and Nick Montanari, 30 minutes)**

- ⊕ There were 134 youth who attended the 2024 event with 147 parents/guardians attending as well.
- ⊕ The average age of the attendees was 8.7 years old.
- ⊕ We also looked at their travel data and we had attendees travel between just a couple miles from Castle Rock to 126 miles from Redmond.
- ⊕ The attendees identified that 63 of the 134 (47 percent) had not ever fired a bow or firearm.
- ⊕ We also asked if the attendees had taken hunter education yet and 113 of the 134 (84 percent) had not.
- ⊕ We sent out an attendee survey and volunteer/NGO survey to capture information that will help WDFW and our partners understand the event's value to attendees, to what extent the event supports the Washington Hunting and Angling Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Plan, and improve the event for the future.
- ⊕ We had 25 attendees or their parents take the survey.
- ⊕ For times sake, Kris didn't go through all the questions and responses but the main things he wanted to give the IAC as for the responses was:
 - How much time did your attendee spend at National Hunting and Fishing Day?
 - 88 percent responded with 2+ hours and 12 percent responded at 1-2 hours
 - How satisfied were you with your attendee's overall experience at National Hunting and Fishing Day?
 - 84 percent were very satisfied and 16 percent were satisfied
 - How likely are you to attend a future NHFD event?
 - 96 percent were very likely and 4 percent were likely
 - Was this the first time your attendee caught a fish?
 - 44 percent responded yes and 56 percent responded no
- ⊕ They were also asked how strongly they thought their attendee intends to go hunting and fishing:
 - Fishing: 71 percent strongly agrees, 21 percent agrees, 8 percent neutral
 - Hunting: 42 percent strongly agrees, 21 percent agrees, 29 percent neutral, 4 percent disagree, 4 percent strongly disagree
- ⊕ Kris will send the survey results out to the IAC members.
- ⊕ We also did a survey for the volunteers, staff, and NGOs in attendance and those results can be made available to IAC members.
- ⊕ After the 2024 event, staff had a meeting to discuss how it went and what we may want to do for the future.
- ⊕ We are still in discussions on how the future events might look.

- ⊕ It has been suggested to do more smaller events around the state to spread the joy of NHFDD moving forward.
- ⊕ Nick has started to investigate using the North Central Washington Gun Club for an event in 2025 in East Wenatchee.
- ⊕ Steve is also planning an event at the Waitsburg Gun Club.
- ⊕ The IAC was in favor of having smaller events more across the state.

⊙ **2024 Workplan Recap (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ With the year ending, we need to revisit the 2024 workplan.
- ⊕ Does the IAC like using the workplan?
 - The IAC do like using the plan.
- ⊕ Sig had a question about what the workplan was for.
 - The workplan is a good way for the committee to help guide their work and meetings for the year.
- ⊕ Two of the five workplan items were completed during 2024.
- ⊕ Do we want to move the other three to the new workplan?
- ⊕ Steve would like to see item 4, Instructor Networking Ideas, to be on the 2025 work plan.
 - Evan suggested that we ask the instructors how they want to network with other instructors.

⊙ **2025 Workplan Discussions (*Kris Thorson, 45 minutes*)**

- ⊕ What topics do the IAC want to address or work on in 2025?
- ⊕ The group would like to add recruitment of instructors onto the workplan, and Evan volunteered to head that item.
 - Mikel suggested that we could identify roles of the WDFW staff for recruitment and volunteers for recruitment.
- ⊕ Sam suggested we hold a virtual what we do as instructors, and this could be a venue for more recruitment.
- ⊕ There was a suggestion to create a how to become a chief instructor course and recruitment.
- ⊕ Kris will put together the plan and get that to IAC in January for their input.

⊙ **2025 IST preview and discussion (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ It is almost Hunter Education Instructor In-service training time again.
- ⊕ In 2025 we will be holding regional trainings.
- ⊕ The current dates for these trainings are:
 - Region 1
 - April 5 – Spokane
 - April 12 – Walla Walla
 - Region 2
 - April 26 – Grand Coulee
 - Region 3
 - March 22 – Ellensburg

- Region 4
 - April 26 – North Region 4
 - May 3 – San Juan
 - June 7 – South Region 4
 - Region 5
 - March 22 – TBD
 - April 12 – TBD
 - Region 6
 - March 8 – Olympia
 - April 12 - TBD
- ⊕ At the training, we will be covering some hot topic items like chronic wasting disease, possibly volunteer time keeping update, website updates, and of course, the awards.
- ⊕ Each of the regions will also have a presentation specific to their region that is chosen by the regional field coordinator.
- ⊕ At the IST, we will also be giving out ponchos and lens wipes as thank you gifts.
- ⊕ Kris is working on the IST PowerPoint and agenda.

⊙ **Adjourn**