

**HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING NOTES**  
**January 28, 2023, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**  
**Teams Meeting**

<b>IAC Members - Representing</b>		<b>WDFW Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Region 1	Sam Grubbs (excused)	David Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager	
	John Cushman		
Region 2	Eric Lauver	Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist	
	Jen Syrowicz		
	Bob Hunt		
Region 3	Randy Absolon	Steve Dazey Region 1 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Rich Mann (excused)		
Region 4	Liz Crain	Jackie McBride Region 4 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Mikel Edwards		
	Howard Schoen		
	Evan Windom		
Region 5	Herb Jessen	Amy Elliott Region 5 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Jim Sevier		
Region 6	Blayde Fry	Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education Field Coordinator	
	Marty Kotzke		
HERO	Butch Buffaloe		

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

- ⊕ The IAC members introduced themselves since we had a couple new members at this meeting.
- ⊕ The staff also introduced themselves to the group.

⊙ **Online Field Skills Evaluation Timeline Discussion (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Currently the policy on the Field Skills Evaluation Component of the Online Hunter Education Course states, “Students enrolled in the Online Hunter Education Course must complete a field skills evaluation prior to certification.”
- ⊕ In the supplemental information it clearly lines out, “The online field skills evaluation course will consist of a four-hour block of time with a curriculum that will include the following modules.”
- ⊕ In the supplemental information, it breaks down two modules, both of which are two hours.
- ⊕ Since this information is clearly defined in the WDFW Hunter Education Instructor Policy Manual, we would need to update the policy manual and its supplemental information.
- ⊕ Kris asked if the field skills evaluation needs to be lengthened based on the number of younger students currently attending the online class?
- ⊕ Blade brought this up to Kris because he feels the four-hour timeframe is too short in hands on training.
- ⊕ Marty believes that most instructors are trying to teach the online class rather than do the review and then the field course.
- ⊕ Butch has seen some students that may not fully comprehend the online class and it can be beneficial to take more time to teach students in the evaluation class.
- ⊕ Herb thinks that the current way we handle the online course is fine since they get the training and then we test their skills.
- ⊕ Bob has had students in his online class that are older but has seen some students who don’t possess the correct knowledge get weeded out with the online quiz.
- ⊕ Steve noted that the policy manual has one hour for the field skills evaluation and exam for the traditional class whereas the online has one hour for firearm handling and one hour for the field course/optional live fire.
- ⊕ Evan is a huge proponent of a field skills evaluation and one of his main concerns are that students are not able to determine which different species are they are looking at or handle each firearm action.
- ⊕ Evan also feels that the timeline in the online is tight.
- ⊕ Amy suggested that it could possibly be a matter of restructuring the class, so it flows better.
- ⊕ Liz asked if we have engaged with experts on how to learn the material?
  - Dave did not have information at his fingertips, but we could get more information from Kalkomey. Dave will check with Kalkomey and report back to the IAC.

- ⊕ Liz also had a question about why there is not an age limit for the online course like 12.
  - Dave had some discussions with legislators back when he started as the division manager and there were so many differing opinions on a minimum age that the department decided to let parents/guardians choose when was appropriate to have their students take hunter education.
- ⊕ Jim's classes run about four and a half to six hours based on their skill levels with firearm handling, but he feels that six hours would be a good time frame.
- ⊕ John has found having smaller classes allows him to give a good class and teach them handling within the timeframe.
- ⊕ John is good with the four-hour timeframe.
- ⊕ Mikel thinks that we need to equip our instructors with the best available curriculum and give them the leeway to teach the curriculum effectively.
- ⊕ Howard asked if there was a need to further structure the online course so the instructors are held more to a schedule and can more effectively hold the class.
  - Kris responded that while some structure is great, too much structure can stifle the instructor's teaching creativity and effectiveness and staff has been mindful about this.
- ⊕ After hearing the discussion, Kris thinks that making a change to have a minimum and a maximum hour requirement for the online field skills evaluation in the next policy manual update would work well.
  - The requirement would be between a four-to-six-hour class.

⊙ **Virtual Hunter Ed Delivery (*David Whipple, 60 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Dave has started drafting a document for the Executive Management Team discussion and decision on the virtual only class for students who are 18 and over.
- ⊕ Jim had a question on the virtual only class and if the student can fail the class?
  - Dave believes that the students can fail the test, but they can then go right back into the test and take it again.
- ⊕ Dave knows there are concerns over the number of students per class and concerns with COVID and the SOP requirements.
- ⊕ The options that Dave outlined moving forward is to either keep the current program as is or eliminate the virtual only class option.
- ⊕ There is also a new interactive online class that Kalkomey is rolling out in the future, and we will need to discuss if WDFW wants to offer the class.
- ⊕ Dave walked the IAC through the two studies that he sent out regarding this discussion, the Effectiveness of Hunter Education Delivery Methods and Hunter Education in a Post-COVID-19 World.
- ⊕ Howard identified that students taking the virtual only class are not evaluated on their skills and attitude like students in in-person classes are, the virtual only just tests the student's knowledge.

- ⊕ Evan sent out communications to the instructors in region 4 and has received back comments from about two dozen people that all do not like the virtual only class and have even said that they may discontinue teaching if it continues.
- ⊕ Herb agrees that the virtual only class should be eliminated moving forward.
- ⊕ Butch feels that the virtual only class should be eliminated as well.
- ⊕ Blayde also believes in the elimination of the virtual only class.
- ⊕ Jim asked if a Washington resident could take a class virtually in another state and still be able to get a hunting license in Washington.
  - Yes. Some states that allow online only certification allow non-residents to complete the course.
- ⊕ Jim agrees with elimination of the virtual only class.
- ⊕ Mikel has seen students in his field skills evaluation classes that had been certified in the virtual only class that got a lot out of the evaluation class.
- ⊕ Jen is remembering to consider equity and accessibility in her thought process, and she supports the hybrid for underrepresented demographics.
- ⊕ Randy feels the virtual only class can serve the underserved people and locations moving forward because Washington students could go take the Oregon all virtual class and receive the same certification.
- ⊕ Bob suggested that instructors may want to think about students who are demographically underrepresented and their possible perceptions on authority agencies when preparing for field skills evaluations.
- ⊕ Jen brought up that some demographics have multiple jobs, work Saturdays, and removing the virtual only option may impact their ability to take hunter education.
- ⊕ Howard agreed with Jen's assessment.

⊙ **Mentoring/coaching & Hunter Ed Instructors (*David Whipple, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ The R3 plan identifies mentoring new hunters as a key component.
- ⊕ There are two identified mentoring types, formal and informal.
- ⊕ Formal mentoring can be thought of as WDFW and partner led mentored hunts.
- ⊕ Informal mentoring can be thought of as one-on-one mentoring via First Hunt Foundation between mentor and hunter.
- ⊕ IAC doesn't believe that there would be a large impact on hunter education classes if instructors decide to be a mentor as well as an instructor.

⊙ **Incentive permit background (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ WDFW had internal discussions about the permit background and a feasible timeline to update the incentive permits.
- ⊕ WDFW staff want to make sure the IAC has time to really review the permit tables and requirements with applicable data.
- ⊕ In the next year, IAC and WDFW will work on updating the incentive permits by determining what the group wants to incentivize and what is equitable for all instructors.
- ⊕ Since we are starting to return to more normal class attendance, we are going to revert to pre-covid table structure for 2024 incentive permits.

- ⊕ The table requirements for tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 will remain the same as pre-covid levels.
- ⊕ For review the requirements for each table follows:
  - Table 1 – Been in active status as an instructor for the three calendar years prior to the permit drawing.
  - Table 2 – Certified instructor participating in at least two field skills evaluation courses between the months of August, September, October, and November. Class must have a class size of at least 10. Can submit up to three applications.
  - Table 3 – Served as chief instructor for a minimum of five courses during the previous year.
  - Table 4 – Must be certified as an instructor.

⊙ **Lunch (30 minutes)**

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

- ⊕ Due to time constraints, WDFW will decided to send this section out to the IAC via email.

⊙ **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.
- ⊕ Marty has heard from instructors that just want to get back to their job teaching hunter education.
- ⊕ Howard has had some questions about the ages of students and if WDFW would support an age limit for entry into the hunter education course.
  - Dave had agency request legislation in 2013 with a minimum age in the bill, where most of the legislators he spoke with were split on the minimum age requirement, and even split in each caucus.
- ⊕ Evan had three contacts that he wanted to rely:
  - Instructors he talked to would like some sort of a mechanism to find places to teach or help match instructors.
    - Kris told Evan that he should have those instructors contact Jackie for these kinds of questions or there is the instructor directory on the instructor website.
  - Is the department going to emphasis underutilized opportunities like waterfowl and turkey hunting?
    - Yes. In the R3 plan one of the goals is to increase small game hunting like upland bird, waterfowl, and turkey hunting.
  - A couple instructors would like some assurances that hunting will not be going away based on the current political climate.
    - The departments mandate is captured in [RCW 77.04.012](#). In this RCW, it states, “The commission shall attempt to maximize the

public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens.”

⊙ **NHFD Overview (*Kris Thorson and Steve Dazey, 15 minutes*)**

- ⊕ WDFW is once again planning to have an in-person National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) event!
- ⊕ NHFD will take place on September 30 at Camp Cowles in Newport.
- ⊕ Attendees will be able to shoot shotgun, .22, air rifle, archery, and BB gun.
- ⊕ They will also have an opportunity to catch stocked trout from a net pen in diamond lake.
- ⊕ Requests to participating groups will go out in a few weeks.
- ⊕ Steve has already started recruiting groups and has two local fly-fishing clubs to come tie flies to show attendees.
- ⊕ He has met with several other groups to talk about participating at the event.
- ⊕ We are planning on having 500 youth attendees at the event.
- ⊕ WDFW will send out the volunteers request closer to the event, but if you would like to come to the event and volunteer, please feel free to mark your calendars and let Steve know you plan on volunteering.

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

- ⊕ The workplan was sent to the IAC for their review and stamp of approval.
- ⊕ In the email that Kris sent, he asked the IAC members think about which items they may want to work on so we can set smaller groups to work on the workplan items to help move them forward.
- ⊕ The workplan items are:
  1. Revisit the instructor incentive permits qualifications and incentivized activities
  2. Review the online field skills evaluation PowerPoint
  3. Helping the instructors effectively deliver the curriculum
  4. Help with outreach videos and information for MyWDFW.com site
  5. Instructor networking ideas
  6. How to recruit and retain instructors in smaller counties
  7. Helping instructors overcome technological aversion
- ⊕ Kris asked if IAC members had questions on the workplan and there were none.
- ⊕ Kris then asked the members which workplan items they wanted to work on in 2023 in the smaller groups.
  - Item 1 – Liz
  - Item 2 – Evan, Randy, Blayde, Liz
  - Item 3 – Steve D. Howard, Mikel, Butch
  - Item 4 – Jackie
  - Item 5 – Liz, Jen
  - Item 6 – Herb, Bob, Butch, Amy, Steve, John
  - Item 7 – Howard, Evan Blayde

- ⊕ Amy suggested updating the power point slides for use with specific diverse groups. Information could be added that would speak to their specific demographic.

⊙ **IAC Premeeting Report (*Jackie McBride, 30 minutes*)**

- ⊕ Jackie, Evan, Jen, Liz, and Mikel met to discuss regional issues and challenges and how to move forward.
- ⊕ Their suggestions were:
  - Create a plan and let IAC members sign up for participation to handle and manage action items.
  - Need more proactive follow through according to members and instructors.
  - Delegate organizational duties and work plans to IAC members to take off Kris' plate. Task orientated
  - Staff perspective on members being more supportive.
  - Don't care about budgets or legislatives changes, less time of that in IAC meetings.
- ⊕ They also came up with some topics to discuss:
  - Transparency, candid, functionality efficacy, governance of the IAC
  - Job description for IAC. Onboarding needed, application and review process by IAC members for new IAC members
  - Breakout groups for themes/workgroup plans I.e. DEI. Specific questions for them so that groups can work on them and bring information back to the table. Road mapping. Sprinkle coordinators in the groups. Time topic outcome. Deliverables for the next meeting
  - IAC leadership. Most capacity or time or skill set. 3-5 people. Would work as IAC leadership who will work with coordinators on agenda and act as group leads. Would be extra support/additive. Could be self-selecting to start.
- ⊕ WDFW will work on these suggestions and report back at the next IAC meeting about the progress.

⊙ **Adjourn**