

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
July 25, 2020, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Teams Meeting

⊙ **Welcome & General Interest Announcements (60 minutes)**

⊕ IAC Member Roundtable

- Jeff Bull
 - Jeff is enjoying retirement.
 - He talked to his team and they are all awaiting the ability to hold classes this year.
- Eric Lauver
 - Eric did not have any classes scheduled before COVID-19 hit.
- Rich Mann
 - Rich worked with WDFW staff to get spring hunting season opened.
 - He also sat in on budget meetings with WDFW.
- Randy Absolon
 - Randy has classes scheduled for late September and October.
- John Malek
 - John has occasionally answered questions from students on why we are not holding classes.
- Jim Gleiter
 - Jim has two classes scheduled in August.
- Sam Grubbs
 - Sam has a draft video on firearm handling skills with the inert firearm set.
- Butch Buffaloe
 - Butch has talked to several instructors.
 - He has been fielding questions about when Hunter Education is going to reopen.

⊕ IAC Member Communications with Regional Instructors

- John Malek
 - John has fielded questions from his team members.
- Bob Palmer
 - Bob has had some contacts with HEI but nothing really to report.

⊙ **Recognition of members whose terms are expiring (15 minutes)**

- ⊕ The members whose terms are expiring are Sam Grubbs, Jeff Bull, Rich Mann, Cathy Lynch, and Jim Gleiter.
- ⊕ WDFW will send the appreciation plaques to the members whose terms are expiring after COVID-19 has abated.
- ⊕ Kris thanked all the members whose terms are expiring for their service to IAC and the instructors.
- ⊕ Staff will meet on July 30 to finalize the IAC appointments for 2020.
- ⊕ Once the selections are complete Kris will notify each applicant of the decisions.
- ⊕ Dave expressed his gratitude to the members whose terms are ending for their service.

⊙ **WDFW Updates (30 minutes)**

- ⊕ Student statistics
 - Since the April meeting we have not held any classes.
 - The 2019 statistics for March through July show 4,121 students passing the class.
 - March 16 through July 20, 2020 online only classes have certified 8,203 students.
 - This number does not include the 55 students under 8 years of age who completed the online course but have not completed a field day.
 - The number of completions in 2020 has basically doubled for the same time frame last year.
 - The total certifications this year through July 20 is 9,722.
 - For the same timeframe last year, the certifications were 4,904.
 - That is a 98 percent increase from last year's certifications.
 - Jim Sevier asked if we are seeing out of state certifications or if most of the other states are doing the same thing.
 - Most other states transitioned to online only for some or most of the last several months.
- ⊕ Instructors & Instructor Applicants
 - Kris does not know if we have had any more instructor applications since the start of COVID-19 teleworking.
 - WDFW has not completed any pre-service trainings due to COVID-19.
- ⊕ Brief Regional Field Coordinator Updates
 - Mike Whorton – Region 1 field coordinator
 - Mike has been answering questions from instructors regarding shutdowns and anticipated openings.
 - Many of the instructor inquiries originate in counties that moved into phase 3 openings.
 - He has spent considerable time answering student inquiries regarding the Virtual Field skill course.

- Mike has sent out several newsletters to regional instructors with updates and sent out letters to applicant instructors that were scheduled for PSTs letting them know that we have not forgot about them.
- Mike had a few individualized field skills evaluation courses for students under 9 who got caught up in the age change restrictions for certification.
- Aaron Garcia – Region 3 field coordinator
 - Aaron had two chief instructors/teams that have had to stop teaching and turned in their equipment.
 - Aaron and Steve conducted an individual field skill eval for a seven-year-old who failed the quiz by one question and plans to re-try soon.
 - He is working on a new turkey mentoring property near Newman Lake through a Master Hunter contact.
 - He has had a lot of inquiry about mentored hunts which are on hold until further notice.
- Steve Dazey – Region 4 field coordinator
 - Due to the COVID restrictions most of Steve’s activities have been answering many questions from instructors and Master Hunters.
 - He has also helped with special field skills evaluations.
 - Steve assisted the division in locating archery ranges in Washington State.
 - Steve will be assisting with the mountain goat relocation effort next month.
 - He has worked with the boy scouts on taking hunter education for their rifle merit badge.
 - He is working with Bill Montgomery on a field skills evaluation this Tuesday.
- Amy Elliott – Region 5 field coordinator
 - Amy and Bill completed a lot of field skills evaluations at the start of COVID-19.
 - She has one more to complete at this point, but they have not been able to schedule due to the parents work schedule.
 - She has been contacting her instructors and fielding questions.

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

Fiscal Year 21 Budget (current FY, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021):

- ⊕ Since COVID-19, there has been a forecasted downturn in funding for the state and WDFW. The Office of Financial Management identified a \$12.8 million shortfall of general fund-state for the current fiscal year (FY) for WDFW.
- ⊕ WDFW used the former 2018 zero-based budget analysis and the new draft 25-year strategic plan to inform its approach to the reductions, which resulted in savings in four broad categories:

- FY20 savings of \$800,000 will apply to the FY21 target.
- A reduction of \$1.3 million in some of our new provisos appropriated in the 2020 supplemental budget.
- New savings ideas, vacant positions, and delays in purchasing in the amount of \$4.2 million.
- Utilizing \$6.5 million in positive fund balances in a variety of restricted and dedicated accounts. The 2021 legislature would need to approve these via statute changes to make the dollars available.
- The Hunter Education Division did not have direct impacts other than general cost savings that will also help mitigate the FY21 Pittman-Robertson act (PR) reduction; PR funds are also declining despite the recent firearm & ammo purchasing trend.

Next Biennial Budget (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023):

- ⊕ For the next biennium, the state anticipates reduced general tax receipts of \$9 billion due to COVID.
- ⊕ WDFW has been directed to reduce the base budget by 15 percent and assume the reductions may be permanent.
- ⊕ The Wildlife Program reduction target is \$6.1 million.
- ⊕ Hunter education funding would decrease about \$186,000 over the biennium, which will have the following effects:
- ⊕ WDFW discussed with Kalkomey to increase the cost to students from \$19.95 to \$24.95 for the online course. This fee is more in line with most of the rest of the country and will save the division almost \$45,000 for the biennium.
- ⊕ Dave also identified the statewide in-service training as a possible cut for this biennium and moving forward, which saves Hunter Education almost \$70,000 each biennium. Butch had concerns over not having the statewide IST moving forward after COVID-19, and suggested we look into support from partners, industry, etc. to help fund the IST. Dave values the statewide IST and thanked Butch for his thoughts on what other fund sources we may be able to use for the ISTs.
- ⊕ The National Archery in the Schools (NASP) Grant to the Washington State Archery Association will receive a \$15 thousand reduction over the biennium due to COVID impacts to schools, including budget reductions and ability to participate in NASP.
- ⊕ Reductions to miscellaneous supplies, travel, and a vacant position will save an additional \$60 thousand of PR dollars, but \$50 thousand of that will be made up by using funds from the dedicated Firearm Account (comprised of a portion of the late fee for CPL license renewals).

WDFW Legislation

- ⊕ WDFW will propose and promote the following legislation related to recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts:
- ⊕ Provide hunter education graduates with a \$20 discount off their first hunting license.

- ⊕ Eliminate the three-year license requirement for the accompanying hunter under the deferral program.
- ⊕ Exempt retired members of the US military (statutory clarification of current practice) and current or retired federal peace officers (e.g. Border Patrol) from online course field skills evaluations.
- ⊕ Standardize the definition of a youth across fishing and hunting licenses at 16 years of age.
- ⊕ Allow out of state full-time college students, spouses, and children to purchase resident Washington licenses.
- ⊕ Allow temporary fishing combination licenses to be used for the popular lowland lakes fishing opener.
- ⊕ Allow youth to use a second pole free of charge.
- ⊕ Allow the Commission to adopt rules creating bundled license packages and multi-year licenses and allow the director to offer promotionally pricing.

Target Shooting Rule Revision

- ⊕ Dave gave an update on the Target Shooting Rule Revision. The goal is to provide quality target shooting opportunities, increase safety, reduce fire risk and littering and improve enforceability. WDFW staff are presenting the rule to the commission in August.
- ⊕ WDFW's current rule for target shooting on WDFW managed lands is general and outdated. The Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee recommended updating WDFW's target shooting rule to be consistent with the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) rule. DNR's rule is much better but also has shortcomings.
- ⊕ WDFW manages a great deal of lands that are checkerboarded with DNR, which creates issues related to safety, habitat protection, as well as enforcement difficulties.
- ⊕ WDFW's proposal has received input from Wildlife Area Advisory Committees and the public. It was presented to the Fish & Wildlife Commission.
- ⊕ The proposal and recommended adjustments will be presented for FWC adoption July 31. The proposed change would go into effect January 1.
- ⊕ The rule proposal describes:
 - Definition of recreational target shooting
 - General target shooting restrictions
 - Prohibited ammunition
 - Where target shooting is allowed
 - Where target shooting is prohibited
 - When target shooting is prohibited
 - Allowable targets
- ⊕ There have been two recommended adjustments for the commission to consider:
 - Allowing steel core bullets because the target shooting closures during fire season will address this issue.
 - Clarifying the definition of a road by referring to the existing WAC.

⦿ **COVID-19 and Hunter Ed Processes Update (30 minutes)**

- ⊕ Dave provided an update and discussed the current state of COVID restrictions with the IAC.
- ⊕ For background, WDFW closed in-person classes at this point through August 14.
- ⊕ In discussions with the human resources staff and Labor and Industries staff, hunter education classes are classified as “gatherings” in the governor’s Safe Start initiative. Currently phase 2 counties are open for gatherings of up to five people and phase 3 counties are limited to 10 people.
- ⊕ Volunteers are treated just like employees and would have to complete the same trainings and requirements. There are several video trainings instructors would have to complete. Also, instructors will have to complete a self-health screen and attest their health before each class date.
- ⊕ Internal discussion is ongoing regarding how to hold classes, how to ensure student health and attestation, cleaning requirements, social distancing requirements, personal protective equipment, etc., etc. (there is a lot to it).
- ⊕ Dave asked the IAC membership for their input on how to move forward.
- ⊕ Jeff Bull expressed his concern for opening classes because the requirements may be too restrictive. He does not think teaching for the rest of this year is feasible.
- ⊕ Jim Sevier thinks this will depend a lot on what the governor decides to do but he agreed with Jeff Bull.
- ⊕ Larry feels his team would not be in favor of starting up classes because he and his instructors are all in their 70s. He feels we might be better to back off the classes until COVID is under control.
- ⊕ Butch agrees with the other IAC members. His concern was possibly contracting the virus and transmitting it to his mother and other elderly folks.
- ⊕ Dave brought up an internal discussion about the possibility of instructors perceiving pressure from WDFW or teaching teammates to continue teaching when they may not feel comfortable doing so.
- ⊕ Bob has a lot of instructors who would like to get back to teaching classes. Most of these instructors are also limited to what their venue can do.
- ⊕ Rich agrees with the other IAC members on pushing off classes until COVID is under control.
- ⊕ Sam also agreed with other IAC members.
- ⊕ Dave thanked the IAC for their input, and we will use the information to inform agency actions moving forward.

⦿ **Lunch**

⦿ **Fall Turkey Hunting Meeting Discussion (15 minutes)**

- ⊕ WDFW and turkey stakeholders had a meeting to talk about the fall season.

- ⊕ One recommendation that was discussed was to allow .22 caliber rifles or pistols as a legal hunting equipment during the hunting season.
- ⊕ Rich asked to have this agenda item to discuss the proposed change and the possible safety impacts of this change.
- ⊕ This was discussed at an internal season setting meetings and Hunter Education brought forth our safety concerns.
- ⊕ Rich asked the IAC for their input on the proposed change to .22 caliber rifles or pistols.
- ⊕ Bob Palmer expressed concerns of the effectiveness of the pistol's effectiveness shooting.

⊙ **Draft Student Manual Discussion (120 minutes)**

- ⊕ Kris went through the comments submitted by the IAC members previously and discussed comments the department was unsure on.
- ⊕ There was some disagreement on where the information on suicide awareness WDFW is proposing including in the student manual should reside.
- ⊕ The members weighed in on where they would like to information:
 - In the curriculum
 - Bob
 - Jim
 - Jim G.
 - John
 - In the back
 - Butch
 - Sam
 - Eric
 - Jeff
 - Rich (would like a reference in the curriculum)
- ⊕ Kris and Amy will work on the updates and send a new draft version out the IAC for review before our next meeting.

⊙ **Adjourn**