

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES DIVISION HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

2009 HUNTER EDUCATION PEER REVIEW

FINAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alabama Hunter Education Program (ALHEP) has many strong attributes. The Hunter Education Coordinator is dedicated, knowledgeable, and well respected throughout the State. He has three full-time Regional Hunter Education Coordinators that are very dedicated and enthusiastic. The Hunter Education Instructors are passionate and devoted to the program. Prior to the Peer Review, the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) developed a Hunter Education Instructor’s Questionnaire Survey (“*Alabama Hunter Education Instructor Questionnaire*”) that the ALHEP staff mailed to 750 Hunter Education Instructors to provide feedback on the program. The Peer Review Team (Team) received 58 completed questionnaires representing a 7.7% response rate. The survey results indicated that Hunter Education Instructors were largely satisfied with the level of support they received from the program office. Sixty-eight percent of the Hunter Education Instructors interact more than three times a year with the ALHEP staff, while twenty-two percent of the respondents indicated they interact one to two times a year.

Alabama has a strong hunting and sporting heritage. Like other States, the number of hunters in Alabama is declining. Despite this trend, participants taking the hunter education course and/or the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) are increasing, as noted in Table I below.

TABLE I: ALHEP STATISTICS

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of Hunter Education Students Certified ¹	10,867	10,867	9,886	12,290	12,021	12,673
Number of NASP Students ¹	3,450	5,250	9,000	6,000	18,000	21,500
Number of Hunting Accidents ²	34	23	21	17	19	18
Number of Hunting Licenses Certified ³	270,229	273,638	270,229	267,354	259,241	255,923

	2001	2006
Number of Hunters ⁴	423,000	391,000
Big Game	392,000	352,000
Small Game	109,000	126,000
Birds	95,000	73,000
Days	7,616,000	8,649,000

¹Annual Performance Reports and Personal Communication with the Hunter Education Coordinator (2003-2008): W-1 and W-60

²Alabama Hunter Education and Hunting Incident Statistics Reports (2003-2008)

³U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National License Certification Report

⁴National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, 2001 and 2006

The mission of the ALHEP is “to provide leadership and training for others to be safe, knowledgeable, responsible, and involved stewards of Alabama’s wildlife resources.

Alabama strives to prevent hunting accidents, to support hunting as a sustainable wildlife resource, to recognize hunting's value as a wildlife management tool, and to promote the shooting sports as a wholesome recreational activity." As many of the interviewees pointed out, the program supports this mission statement by providing a "quality education" and by providing the community an opportunity to meet law enforcement in a positive environment. When asked about the mission and goals of the program, firearm/hunter safety, and management of the resources were the predominant answers of those interviewed.

Overall, Alabama has a strong hunter education program. However, the Team found several areas of the ALHEP that need improvement. Recommendations, based on these findings, will improve the program and address short and long-term needs. This report provides the findings and associated recommendations in detail. Some of the key recommendations are:

- Develop a strategic plan for the hunter education program;
- Require Hunter Education Instructors to attend in-service training;
- Develop a standardized evaluation process for Hunter Education Instructors to ensure quality and consistency of program delivery;
- Clarify and define staff members' roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability pertaining to the delivery of hunter education program;
- Improve internal communication among the ALHEP staff;
- Provide a stronger message regarding the importance of the hunter education program throughout the agency;
- Encourage live-fire exercises for all hunter education courses offered and include hands-on exercises during delivery of the traditional course;
- Update training equipment and provide adequate supplies to Hunter Education Instructors;
- Recruit corporate, non-profit and club support to help pay for events like the hunter education recognition banquet and recognition awards for volunteer instructors; and
- Encourage the increased use of volunteers and provide training for key the ALHEP staff on volunteer recruitment and retention.

Please refer to the main body of this report for more details on these recommendations and other important findings and recommendations.

I. METHODS

At the request of Ray Metzler, the Hunter Education Coordinator, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) invited the Peer Review Team (Team) to review the State's hunter education program. The purpose of the Peer Review was to determine if the highest quality of information and the most up-to-date teaching techniques were used, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats with the State's hunter education program.

The Team conducted a Peer Review of the DCNR, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division's (WFF) Hunter Education Program from August 25-28, 2009 at the WFF headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. The Team members were:

Wayne East, Executive Director, International Hunter Education Association

Marilyn Bentz, Executive Director, National Bowhunter Education Foundation

John Sturgis, Hunter Education Administrator, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Christine Willis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, Region 4, Atlanta, Georgia

Tom McCoy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, Region 9, Washington, DC

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Multistate Conservation Grant Program provided the funding to the IHEA to conduct peer reviews of a State's hunter education program. The Team used several evaluation methods. The Team reviewed Federal Assistance documents, financial information, organizational charts, statutory information, student and instructor handbooks, the Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual (March 2005), and hunting incident reports prior to visiting Alabama. The Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual was very beneficial to the Team during the review process. The IHEA developed a Hunter Education Instructors Questionnaire Survey ("*Alabama Hunter Education Instructor Questionnaire*" also known as the survey) that the ALHEP staff mailed to 750 Hunter Education Instructors to provide feedback on the program. The Team received 58 completed questionnaires representing a 7.7% response rate. The Appendix contains the results from the survey. The Team also conducted 21 in-person and telephone interviews with WFF staff, Hunter Education Instructors, and stakeholder representatives. The Team was unable to attend the lecture portion of a traditional course. However, they were able to attend a field day class to observe teaching and hands-on techniques.

The Team's findings and recommendations in this report are the product of interviews, survey results, the review of materials provided, and the field day course observation. The goal of the Team was to provide recommendations contained within this report to help make the program more efficient, effective, and able to fulfill its role within the agency.

The Team would like to thank Ray Metzler for his outstanding assistance in preparing for this Peer Review, scheduling interviews, making documents available to the Team, and providing logistical information. The Team also wishes to acknowledge WFF staff, for their cooperation and candid comments.

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Alabama has a long history of wildlife conservation that dates back to 1867. That year, legislators introduced the first laws in the State to regulate hunting and fishing. In 1907, Representative Henry Stegall of Dale County passed a bill to establish the Department of Game and Fish. The State appointed State representative John Wallace of Madison County as the first commissioner of the newly formed Department. The Department's duties included regulating wild bird and game harvests, setting hunting season and harvest limits, and issuing certificates for scientific bird studies.

In 1915, several agencies and commissions responsible for the State's wildlife and natural resources were consolidated under the Department of Game and Fish, and in 1919, the agency was renamed the Alabama Department of Conservation. Prior to 1939, several bureaus (the Forestry; Game, Fish, and Seafood; and Parks, Monuments and Historical Sites services) protected the State's outdoor wealth. Alabama Department of Conservation would undergo many name changes as the focus and overall scope of operations evolved until settling on its current name, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in 1971.

The DCNR is the agency responsible for managing and protecting many of Alabama's natural resources including fish, wildlife, State owned lands, and marine resources. The modern day DCNR consists of five Divisions: Lands; Marine Police; Marine Resources; Parks; and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) where each is in charge of protecting and managing the various natural resources within the scope of their authority (Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual, March 2005).

The mission of the WFF Division is to manage, protect, conserve, and enhance the wildlife and aquatic resources of Alabama to benefit the public. It accomplishes this mission through three sections: Enforcement (LE), Fisheries, and Wildlife. The Enforcement Section is responsible for enforcing game and fish laws and regulations by 158 sworn officers located throughout Alabama. The Fisheries and Wildlife Sections are responsible for management of Alabama's fish and wildlife resources (Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual, March 2005). The Wildlife Section has administered the hunter education program statewide since 1973. All LE Officers and District Wildlife Biologists are required to be certified instructors and conduct courses if there are not enough Volunteer Instructors in their county to meet the demands of the public.

During the Peer Review, it was evident that the WFF Director and senior staff were supportive of the program, but were also open to suggestions that might help improve it. In regards to the Hunter Education Coordinator, the Director stated, "He wants the program to adapt to change before it happens." The Regional Hunter Education Coordinators and volunteers were highly motivated and passionate about doing their job. We received several comments from senior staff that the Hunter Education Coordinator worked hard to make the ALHEP the best in the nation. Based on the

results from the survey, a majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the leadership provided by the ALHEP staff was excellent. One respondent said, "The ALHEP staff is very dedicated and professional....." Another respondent said, "I am very pleased with the support I receive from the ALHEP staff." However, several LE Officers said that other job duties conflict with teaching the hunter education course during peak hunting season. Almost all LE staff thought Hunter Education should be conducted similar to a State Driver's License written test. LE staff that had volunteer assistance seemed more positive overall with teaching hunter education. Some LE staff said that they did not have volunteers to assist with Hunter Education classes. Overall, the program has excelled over the years, due to its dedicated staff in the Wildlife and LE Sections working together as one unit. It also has excelled over the past couple of years working on their shooting range development and archery/bow hunter education programs by creating more recreational shooting opportunities in several counties and the NASP in over 163 schools statewide to benefit the public. For example, WFF collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service to build a shooting range in Hale County, Alabama. The agency also constructed the Athens Archery Park in Decatur, Alabama and plans to build more archery ranges statewide.

Program funds originate from State dollars and Federal financial assistance dollars from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) grant program (Section 4(c) Hunter Education and Section 10 Firearm, and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program). These funds cover salaries, archery and shooting range development projects, the NASP, and the operation of the program. The DCNR receives no funding from the State General Fund. These operating funds come from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, boat registration fees, oil and gas royalties from leases of State Lands, and State Parks usage fees.

III. HUNTER EDUCATION'S ROLE WITHIN THE AGENCY

Hunter education in Alabama plays a vital role in the relationship between the public and the fish and wildlife agency. Hunter education programs serve as a "portal" to the agency, where students must pass a hunter education course in order to become an active participant in the sport. The agency expects that the student will become a license buyer in the future. A complimentary function is the recruitment of new participants and the retention of existing participants. States tend to expose young adults to hunting through an outreach event such as Wildlife Expos, become interested, and proceed to take hunter education in order to become an active participant. Several instructors reported in the survey they had an interest in additional information (which could also be construed as advance courses) in areas such as orienteering or survival. Graduates from basic hunter education classes may want to learn about specialized hunting programs and seek classes in bowhunting, wingshooting, etc. These areas may provide opportunities for Alabama to reach out to nontraditional hunter education participants or to re-establish contact with former students. This would also allow the hunter education program to create and promote staff awareness on the importance of the program within the agency.

Alabama State law (Title 9-11-44-1 (a) and (d), as amended June 2007) established the ALHEP in August 1993. It mandated that any person 16 years of age or older must present a certification of completion of an approved hunter education course prior to obtaining a hunting license in Alabama. The law states that:

Title 9-11-44-1 (a), as amended in June 2007 states, "It shall be unlawful for any person born on or after August 1, 1977, and of 16 years of age or older, or his or her agent, to procure any annual, trip, or heritage hunting license unless the person has been issued and exhibits to the issuing agent at the time of purchasing any annual, trip, or heritage hunting license, a certification of satisfactory completion by the person of a hunter education course approved by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The person shall only be required to exhibit the certification at the time of purchase of his or her initial license. The exhibition of the certification shall not be required at the time of purchase of subsequent licenses if the person exhibits to the issuing agent at the time of purchase a license, which was issued by this State to him or her in a previous year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, active duty U.S. military personnel, Alabama residents who are active members of the National Guard of the United States, and persons certified by the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission as law enforcement officers who are employed by a law enforcement agency, as the terms are defined in Section 36-21-40, upon submission of proof of that status, shall be exempt from this requirement. The Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources may provide by regulation for the specific proof requirements."

Title 9-11-44-1 (d), as amended in June 2007 states, "The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, shall prescribe a course of instruction in competency and safety in hunting and in the handling of firearms and archery equipment. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries shall also prescribe procedures whereby competent residents of this State shall be certified as hunter education instructors. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries may approve hunter education courses from other jurisdictions."

The mission of the ALHEP is "to provide leadership and training for others to be safe, knowledgeable, responsible, and involved stewards of Alabama's wildlife resources. Alabama strives to prevent hunting accidents, to support hunting as a sustainable wildlife resource, to recognize hunting's value as a wildlife management tool, and to promote the shooting sports as a wholesome recreational activity."

As many of the interviewees pointed out, the program supports this mission statement by providing a "quality education" and by providing the community an opportunity to meet law enforcement in a positive environment. When asked about the mission and goals of the program, firearm and hunter safety and management of the resources alone were the predominant answers of those interviewed.

IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND STAFFING

Alabama's Hunter Education Program Coordinator, located in Montgomery, Alabama is responsible for the coordination of the hunter education program. The Hunter Education Program Coordinator directs the program, under the guidance of the Wildlife Section Chief, and works with Regional Hunter Education Coordinators, District Wildlife Biologists, and LE Officers to carry out the program's mission on a statewide basis. The Wildlife Section Chief is one of three Section Chiefs laterally responsible to the Assistant Director and the WFF Director. Other Sections include the LE Section and Fisheries Section. The LE Section also provides Hunter Education Instructors to the ALHEP. The Hunter Education Coordinator also oversees the ALHEP when taught by professional educators in the Alabama Public School System. Regional Hunter Education Coordinators help provide oversight and guidance to Hunter Education Instructors. Therefore, Regional Hunter Education Coordinators, District Wildlife Biologists, LE Officers, professional public school educators, and Volunteer Instructors teach the State's Hunter Education course.

The Hunter Education Coordinator appears to have a good rapport with his superiors and hunter education staff. His congenial attitude is a source of admiration among his co-workers and his "get it done" approach has been responsible for moving forward the status of such projects as extensive and ongoing range development and implementing new programs such as the NASP.

Both the survey and personal/telephone interviews exemplified that both the Wildlife personnel and LE Officers play an important role teaching the ALHEP class. However, it appeared that most LE Officers often taught the entire class, while other LE Officers taught only the laws and regulations portion of the class. When interviewed, LE Officers responded that mandatory hunter education could create a barrier to those wanting to go hunting if classes were not readily available. However, the mentor license program has helped alleviate this effect and reduced LE staff demands during peak hunting and fishing seasons. The demand for the ALHEP classes during times of peak LE responsibilities appears to be the root of dissension and interagency tension. The chain of command or alignment of job responsibilities is unclear or unspecified in job descriptions. LE Officers duties regarding teaching hunter education classes may be "assumed responsibilities" and based on need rather than actual specified job description. All LE Officers interviewed felt that the hunter education classes provide an excellent opportunity for LE Officers to be in front of the public in a positive setting.

All Wildlife Section personnel interviewed were genuinely supportive of the ALHEP and provided insight regarding means of making the program better or more attractive to potential students. It was noted during interviews that occasionally, Regional Hunter Education Coordinators have to shift their priorities to other activities such as shooting range development or the NASP. One interviewee stated that most of the Regional Coordinator's time was devoted to shooting range development projects, while another stated that the Regional Coordinator's time was devoted to running the NASP

statewide. When interviewed, however, all Regional Coordinators displayed the “can do” attitude and enthusiasm in moving the ALHEP forward. During the Peer Review, some WFF staff and Hunter Education Instructors thought it would be good to have a Regional Hunter Education Coordinator in each of the six districts of the State.

Volunteer Instructors made up 55% of the Hunter Education Instructor force, teaching 13% of the courses in 2008. The Alabama Hunter Education Association (ALHEA) appears to be a viable organization, which supports the efforts of the ALHEP. There were 215 professional educators from the Alabama Public School System that provided invaluable support to the ALHEP by teaching students hunter education in area schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Create Range Development/Shooting Sports position to work on range development and the NASP to allow more time for Regional Hunter Education Coordinators to concentrate on the ALHEP.
- B. Clarify and define staff’s roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability pertaining to the delivery of hunter education program. The Team recommends that the hunter education program staff, District Wildlife Biologists, and LE Officers work as a team to make a collective decision as to the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of the hunter education program. Supervisors should then ensure that the specific job related tasks are part of the employee’s work plans and evaluate them during the employee’s annual performance review.
- C. Track each Section’s time devoted to hunter education.
- D. Inform LE Officers and Hunter Education Instructors that the Hunter Education Instructors (volunteers) should schedule the courses and teach majority of the course. This will free up LE time, especially during peak demands.
- E. Examine class scheduling and the length of time spent on a class to allow more time for LE Officers primary duties. This will allow the ALHEP staff to determine where they need to focus on providing additional courses and recruiting of additional volunteer Hunter Education Instructors in a particular Region. This will also determine the course needs based on demand, rather than dictating the set number of courses offered in each county.
- F. More widely disseminate information about the importance of the hunter education program throughout the agency regarding recruitment, retention, shooting range development, the NASP, and other complimenting programs.

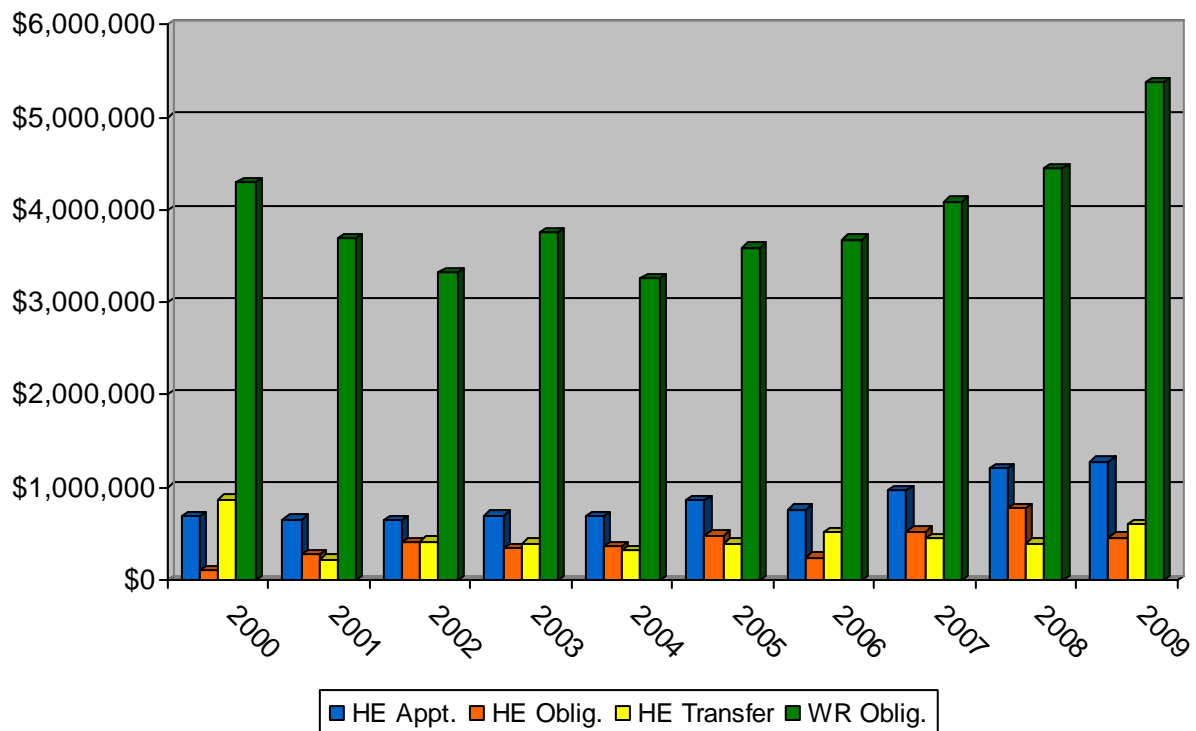
V. BUDGET

Budget planning, performed on an annual basis, is necessary to implement a strategic plan. The budget plan identifies how much funding is available to implement specific strategies and how to allocate it.

Each year, the WFF submits grant proposals to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program to receive Federal funds. Alabama

received \$4,544,138 in Wildlife Restoration funds and \$1,280,482 in Section 4(c) Hunter Education funds in 2009. If you take an average of the Section 4(c) Hunter Education funds apportioned to Alabama over a ten-year period, they obligated \$397,725 to administer the program, while transferring on average \$460,934 to Wildlife Restoration for other eligible wildlife management activities each year. As a result, there is very little funding available for new enhancements or growth opportunities to the ALHEP such as more Hunter Education Instructor training to improve skills, development of advanced or specialized hunter education courses, or purchase necessary training aids and equipment for classes. The graph below illustrates Alabama's Section 4(c) Hunter Education apportionment and obligated funds for hunter education program activities under Section 4(c), Section 4(c) funds transferred to Wildlife Restoration (WR), and WR obligations over a ten-year period.

Graph #1: Section (4) Hunter Education and WR Obligations, and Transfers for Alabama



Since 2001, Alabama received between \$169,260 (Fiscal Year 2001 and 2002) and \$180,544 (Fiscal Year 2003 to the present) from Section 10 Firearm, and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Program funds each year. The ALHEP used these funds to construct firearm and archery-shooting ranges, administer the NASP, and update their alternative method of delivery of the program curriculum. The program obligated all of their Section 10 funds on eligible hunter education activities each year.

At this time, adequate program funding is not an issue. However if funding becomes an issue, there are several ways to create revenue. Currently, Alabama does not charge students to take the hunter education course or charge for duplicate certification cards. Assessing fees for courses, last-minute course requests, duplicate certification cards and/or a non-refundable deposit for students who fail to show for the classes can generate additional funding for the program. Many States charge to replace lost or stolen cards. For example, Colorado charges \$5, while Pennsylvania charges \$10. Pennsylvania recently began charging for cards and their response has been favorable as there is an expectation of the requestor to pay something for this service. Instituting a fee for replacement cards could turn losses of staff time, materials, and postage into a small revenue producer. As a comparison, hunter safety and education course fees in Canada start at \$50 or more and provide funds for instructors to deliver quality, consistent courses, and insure that participants who register for the course attend. In today's society, parents pay \$50 to \$100 for swimming lessons, football, soccer, or music lessons. Additional funding generated from fees could directly benefit Hunter Education Instructors or generate revenue for the program as an indirect benefit to the instructors and/or students. These fees could also support the development of target ranges and advanced hunter education program efforts. Local partners, fundraisers, and sponsors could provide additional funding for Hunter Education Instructor recognition and banquets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Identify short and long-term funding needs for the ALHEP that drive the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan.
- B. Consider charging a fee to replace lost or stolen hunter education cards.
- C. Consider charging registration fees for hunter education courses.
- D. Explore opportunities to partner with outside entities, i.e. Whitetail Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, school systems, 4-H Clubs, ALHEA, etc. as an additional funding source for program needs. Support and nurture the relationship with ALHEA.
- E. Provide a budget for newsletter, program brochures, and the ALHEP Web site to communicate with staff, Hunter Education Instructors, and the public. It will help market the program.
- F. Consider the use of more or all of the Section 4(c) Hunter Education as well as Section 10 Hunter Education and Safety funds for the program. WFF should reevaluate the use of these funds and look at other funding sources for wildlife restoration initiatives. States that obligate all Section 4(c) on hunter education activities can then use their Section 10 apportionment for "other" wildlife restoration activities, hunter education, or shooting ranges, and they are eligible for reverted funds. The average amount of reverted fiscal year funds returned to eligible States during fiscal year 2008 was \$25,271. Alabama is currently not eligible for those funds. These reverted funds are in addition to those apportioned for traditional Wildlife Restoration, Section 4(c), and Section 10.

VI. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is an integral component of a hunter education program. This effort should include a “needs assessment” to determine the appropriate funding and staff level for the ALHEP. Issues such as Hunter Education Instructor recruitment, training, and evaluation should be included in the discussions. Strategic planning must be an ongoing process involving input from a variety of stakeholders including agency managers, the Hunter Education Coordinator, Regional Hunter Education Coordinators, LE Officers, administrative staff, Hunter Education Instructors, the ALHEA, and other organizations involved with the program. Hunter education planning must integrate with the State’s agency planning efforts to ensure program use and success.

Currently, there is no strategic plan for the ALHEP to address the short and long-term goals. However, Alabama’s Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual contain useful information that should help in the development of a strategic plan. The strategic plan should include:

- Identify the mission and vision of the program;
- Address how the program fits within the agency;
- Address how important the program is relative to other agency programs and activities;
- Address hunter participation;
- Define methods for recruiting and retaining Hunter Education Instructors including volunteers and public school teachers teaching hunter education.
- Better define the role of volunteers and public school teachers teaching HE within the program;
- Identify and recruit new hunters; and
- Develop and implement advanced hunter education programs.

There is annual program planning that occurs in the context of the hunter education program’s Application for Federal Assistance submitted to the Service. The Hunter Education Coordinator completed a five-year Application for Federal Assistance in 2007 and identified the following program objectives for continued funding and development:

- Train students in safe and responsible use of sporting arms and other hunting equipment;
- Eliminate as many hunting related incidents as possible;
- Promote wise wildlife management; and
- Promote ethical use of wildlife resources.

The stated long-term program goals in Alabama’s Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual are to serve the citizens of Alabama to:

- Eliminate as many hunting related incidents as possible;

- Encourage recognition of sport hunting and sport shooting as viable recreational activities;
- Increase the sportsmen's and the public's awareness and knowledge of Alabama's wildlife resources and their management;
- Create an awareness and sense of responsibility among hunters and other outdoor persons of their legal and ethical responsibilities when enjoying or harvesting wildlife, thus improving the image of hunters and hunting;
- Improve hunter's skills, techniques, and proficiency; and
- Instill among hunters and other outdoor persons a respect for private land and public property and acknowledgement of the rights of others.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. The WFF should determine if the current goals of the program are still relevant. This will help determine budget priorities.
- B. The WFF should look at the structure, operational budgets, and workload of other State hunter education programs to gain ideas and examples of successful models and efforts that might work for their program. The Hunter Education Coordinator should continually review the strategic plan and work with the Director to ensure that hunter education fits within agency goals, policies, and objectives.
- C. Develop a short (two to five years) and long-term (five or more years) strategic plan for the ALHEP. The plan should clearly establish what the mission and goals of the program are for the agency. The WFF should establish a vision as to where they would like to see the program in five to ten years and establish a reasonable budget plan to allow the program to achieve success. The plan should be dynamic and reevaluated every two to three years based on measurable objectives. Use the mission statement and long-term goals of the program as a starting point in developing the strategic plan.
- D. Create an advisory group of instructors to provide feedback, assist in strategic planning, and ensure Hunter Education Instructor support of overall program changes.
 1. The plan should address the following elements:
 - a) Where are we? This is an inventory of the current state of the program including problems and issues.
 - b) Where are we going? What strategies will the agency use to develop a direction for the program? Objective topics to address in the plan include:
 - 1) Budgeting/funding/staffing
 - 2) Demographic changes in Alabama
 - 3) Organizational and communication structure
 - 4) Hunter Education Instructor recruitment, retention, management, and training
 - 5) Aging population of Hunter Education Instructors
 - 6) Course evaluation
 - 7) Partnering opportunities with outside entities
 - 8) Mentoring
 - 9) Marketing

- 10) Alternative delivery
 - 11) Number of classes held versus quality of classes
 - 12) NASP
 - 13) Youth hunts
 - 14) Shooting Range Development Program (firearm and archery)
- c) How do we get there? What strategies will be used to implement the objectives identified and will they be implemented by agency staff or in partnership with outside affected entities?
2. Meet with media and web-development staff and partners to develop strategies for communicating hunter education, hunting, and conservation to the public.
 3. After the development of the strategic plan, it should then drive the budget process for the program.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

There needs to be better communication among the ALHEP staff, LE Officers, and Hunter Education Instructors. For instance, some the ALHEP staff are difficult to reach by cell phone. Furthermore, hunter education staff are not fully using the staff calendar on their e-mail system to indicate absences and availability.

Some LE Officers seem to do most of the hunter education course planning and in some cases the majority of course instruction as well, while other LE Officers only teach the laws and regulations portion of the class. The extent with which LE Officers are to teach hunter education is not being clearly communicated.

Communication from the ALHEP staff with Hunter Education Instructors varies, but appears to be successful. Often communication does not come in a single form, (i.e. e-mail only) as the ALHEP staff uses multiple methods of communication to staff and Hunter Education Instructors in order for them to receive the message. The ALHEP should continue using the quarterly Hunter Education Instructor newsletters to communicate with the Hunter Education Instructors and WFF staff. The survey resulted in forty-one respondents that stated they were "very satisfied" with the ALHEP staff communications with them, while five respondents said that they were "dissatisfied" with the ALHEP staff communication. The survey results also indicated that Hunter Education Instructors were largely satisfied with the level of support they received from the program office. Sixty-eight percent of the Hunter Education Instructors interact more than three times a year with the ALHEP staff, while twenty-two percent of the respondents indicated they interact one to two times a year. However, some Hunter Education Instructors would like more communication. Their comments included:

- "Let volunteer instructors know what is going on in the area they live. I am retired and willing to help out at most anytime but don't know what's going on."
- "I have been an instructor for a number of years and until now; I did not know we were able to earn pins for the number of years we have instructed. Get the word out."

- "...survey your volunteers 1-2 times a year and evaluate their remarks. Some will be good some will be bad. But all should be evaluated."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Improve internal communication through regional quarterly contact/meetings (LE and Wildlife (includes hunter education staff)).
- B. Integrate program communications with other agency programs to improve dissemination of information and knowledge of agency-wide programs.
- C. Enhance internal communication among Sections via interaction and program updates.
- D. Improve communications with the ALHEP staff - group calendar, timeliness of the rosters submitted (instructors), and conduct regular ALHEP staff meetings.
- E. Provide newsletters to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), conservation groups, and WFF staff as well as Hunter Education Instructors. This should include area Regional Hunter Education Coordinators' updates.
- F. Continue to build a Hunter Education Instructor e-mail distribution list. Capture Hunter Education Instructor's' e-mail addresses by:
 1. Include it on the new Hunter Education Instructor application form;
 2. Collect at workshops and continuing education programs; and
 3. Make a request in the newsletter for Hunter Education Instructors to send it to the program staff.
- G. Communicate the importance of the ALHEP agency wide.

VIII. INSTRUCTOR RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, TRAINING, AND RECOGNITION

The ALHEP has an impressive group of Hunter Education Instructors. These Hunter Education Instructors include District Wildlife Biologists and LE Officers, professional educators from the Alabama Public School System, and Volunteer Instructors. District Wildlife Biologists have hunter education written into their job descriptions as an assigned duty, while LE Officers have the responsibility for outreach and education in their assigned area. Participation in the hunter education program helps them partially meet this requirement and that of community oriented policing (i.e. education, prevention, and as a last resort apprehension).

With current retention and recruitment efforts being closely related to range expansion, it was evident the ALHEP's priorities were accommodating additional responsibilities in that regard; particularly in the area of range establishment and training individuals associated with the NASP. Survey results indicated respondents felt leadership and interaction with the ALHEP staff was positive, helpful, and courteous. They also mentioned that WFF needs more funding to hire additional hunter education staff to help improve the program.

The ALHEP Instructor core consists of approximately 780 active Hunter Education Instructors (185 WFF employees, 160 teachers, and 435 volunteers). Alabama has 1,700 inactive Hunter Education Instructors. In 2008, the ALHEP taught 473 classes and certified 13,221 students. If each Hunter Education Instructor participated in only one ten-hour class a year, their contribution to the program would be approximately \$89,000 annually. The ALHEP certifies approximately 12,500 students annually with professional educators in the Public School System certified approximately half of those. Below is a breakdown of classes:

- 215 coordinated by professional educators in the Alabama Public School System;
- 132 coordinated by LE staff;
- 25 coordinated by District Wildlife Biologist (Wildlife Section);
- 63 coordinated by Hunter Education Instructors (volunteers); and
- 38 coordinated by hunter education staff.

To become a Hunter Education Instructor, one must be at least 21 years of age, have completed a hunter education course during the past four years, must complete an Associate Hunter Education Instructor application; undergo a criminal history background check that includes fingerprinting and provide two reference letters. Candidate Instructors must attend a hunter education certification workshop, successfully assist with two hunter education courses, and have the endorsement of the lead Hunter Education Instructor for those classes. The DCNR Web site contains information on becoming a Hunter Education Instructor and has downloadable application forms. The schedule for a hunter education instructor certification workshops are on an “as needed” based on number of applicants and area. However, at the time of the Peer Review, workshop information was not up-to-date on the DCNR Web site.

Based on interviews and survey results, the Team felt that Hunter Education Instructors in Alabama need some type of formal training. Hunter Education Instructors with five or more years of service could become trainers to teach others how to deliver the hunter education course to students. However, trainees are learning on the job in a classroom environment. After certification, there is no in-service or continuing education for Hunter Education Instructors. These types of classes not only ensure consistency of implementation of the ALHEP, but they also could use this as a recruitment and retention tool that can reinvigorate the Hunter Education Instructors. In addition, Alabama does not pay expenses for Hunter Education Instructors to attend any training workshops.

According to the survey, 53% of the respondents taught 1-4 classes per year while 29% taught 5-9 classes per year. During interviews, the Team discovered that majority of the students certified by the ALHEP used the alternative method of delivery (CD-ROM or Internet version). The Team also concluded that there was a need for more Hunter Education Instructors to teach the field day course to students that take the alternative method of delivery. Seventy- six percent of the Hunter Education Instructors surveyed indicated they did not hold the necessary credentials to teach the alternative method of

delivery. In addition, only 44% of the respondents to the survey indicated that they could teach bowhunter education. The ALHEP staff only provides outreach support for the Alabama Bowhunter's Association who administer the bowhunter education program statewide.

District Wildlife Biologists and LE Officers typically recruit Volunteer Instructors at the local level. The use of Volunteer Instructors varied with location and personnel. Many District Wildlife Biologists were supportive of the Volunteer Instructors and valued their help. On the other hand, several LE Officers stated that Volunteer Instructors recruitment and supervision of them was a burden and chose not to use them. These same LE Officers noted the requirement to teach the hunter education course, twice a year in every county and once a month in every district is a conflict, especially during the hunting season, where they feel that they have limited time and resources to devote to hunter education. Many expressed the opinion that an on-line hunter education class with a monitored written test similar to the driver's license requirement would be adequate.

Surveys show that Hunter Education Instructors are motivated to teach, because they have the desire to pass along positive, early life experiences to their children and others. They also want to ensure that the sport of hunting continues as a safe recreational pursuit, instill conservation in the student's mind, and ensuring that they are a responsible and ethical hunter. Regardless of their reason for becoming a Hunter Education Instructor, most volunteers perform their instructional tasks from the heart and not for awards and incentives. However, to adequately motivate and retain existing Volunteer Instructors, it is essential that WFF personnel thank them for their contributions in some manner.

Based on the survey and interviews, the ALHEP staff should recognize Hunter Education Instructors (volunteers) for their contributions to the program. Although the Alabama Policy and Procedure Manual has a policy for the use of incentives to recognized Volunteer Instructors based on service time, it is rarely adhered to because of a State law/policy that prohibits the use of State funds for recognition awards and incentives. In the past, funds to help recognize Volunteer Instructors came from ALHEA, but as membership to these groups changed over time, emphasis, and focus on Volunteer Instructors awards diminished. The ALHEA does host an annual recognition banquet, where they present Volunteer Instructors awards. However, the banquet is poorly attended (30-60 Instructors). The Director and the Wildlife Section Chief have both attended the banquet in the past.

Throughout the Peer Review, a majority of the Volunteer Instructors were happy with the courteous services provided by the ALHEP staff. It was also equally obvious that Volunteer Instructors wanted a new instructor training program (as opposed to a couple of hours - here it is, it is your program); and additional advanced instructor workshops and in-service training that meets the need for basic teaching techniques. Volunteer Instructors would also like to see workshops on how to use technology to become more effective in their teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Develop instructor marketing and recruitment plan to include training to Division staff on the techniques of volunteer management, recruitment, and retention. Some resources include www.volunteerpowers.com, www.nonprofit-champion.com/volunteermanagement.html, and www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/vlccamp.htm.
- B. Create new Hunter Education Instructor training protocol (i.e. new instructor academy).
- C. Consider in-service training mandatory to keep Hunter Education Instructor status.
- D. Schedule and provide list of in-service Hunter Education Instructor Workshops for calendar year.
- E. Recruit more professional educators as Hunter Education Instructors.
- F. Offer the hunter education course as an elective in all Alabama Public Schools, if applicable.
- G. Reevaluate the 1,700 inactive Hunter Education Instructors to determine if they would like to teach again.
- H. Hire a professional coordinator to teach the ALHEP staff and Hunter Education Instructors on how to recruit new Hunter Education Instructors and the manage them.
- I. Investigate the law/policy that governs monetary awards to non-agency staff to see if and how other agencies (within AL and if applicable in other States) address this issue.
- J. Evaluate the current Hunter Education Instructor recognition program and revise.
- K. Explore alternative monetary and non-monetary recognition of volunteers.
- L. Support and nurture the relationship with the ALHEA. Groups like this can be instrumental in raising funds and providing monetary support for Hunter Education Instructors.
- M. Invite WFF administration and staff to the annual banquet to show support.
- N. Encourage District staff to write articles in the Hunter Education Instructor newsletter including spotlighting Hunter Education Instructors' accomplishments.

IX. COURSE PROGRAM CONTENT/DELIVERY

The ALHEP offers a traditional ten-hour classroom course taught by a Hunter Education Instructor. In addition, the ALHEP provides two alternative methods of delivery by providing students a course through the Internet (www.Beasafehunter.org) or having students review material on a CD-ROM and participate in a regularly scheduled field day, as outlined in Appendix C of the Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual, March 2005. The field day is where the student demonstrates the required skills and successfully completes the written examination with a score of at least 70%. All methods are offered free of charge. All methods of obtaining a hunter education certification follow standards outlined in the Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual, March 2005 and standard guidelines developed by the IHEA. These

standards are available on the IHEA Web site at www.ihea.com. A traditional hunter education course includes, but is not limited to, the following subjects:

- Introduction and preliminary procedures;
- Ethics and hunter responsibility;
- Nomenclature and discussion of firearms and ammunition;
- Safe gun handling techniques;
- Wildlife identification;
- Wildlife laws;
- Wildlife management and conservation;
- First aid, survival, and water safety;
- Nomenclature and discussion of muzzle loading arms and black powder;
- Archery and tree stand safety; and
- Game care.

The ALHEP course materials ("Today's Hunter" copyright 2007) comply with the IHEA established standards. Students from alternative delivery courses receive "hands-on" experience and demonstration of skills during the field day. Live-fire is non-existent or rare in all courses regardless of curriculum delivery methodology. Public school classroom delivered courses may possibly demonstrate tree stand safety, but generally, firearms (even those designated as "dummy" models) are illegal within the confines of the public school.

During the interview process, several Hunter Education Instructors mentioned that students had difficulty obtaining the CD-ROMs from the agency. Students in some geographical areas where there is no Internet available or limited access need the CD-ROM version. Most Hunter Education Instructors approve of the alternative method of delivery. In 2008, approximately 50% of the students chose the alternative method of course delivery over the traditional hunter education course.

During the Peer Review, the Team observed a field day course for students that had taken the curriculum via an alternate delivery method (online or CD-Rom). It appeared this type of class is effective even if a live-fire situation is not available. Students reviewed several basic firearm safety principles in a classroom setting and divided into groups to demonstrate such practices as (but not limited to) identifying firearms, ammunition, and tree stand safety at various stations. Each station had at least one Hunter Education Instructor. This type of "classroom" involves the student in a more active, effective manner and enhances student learning. One survey respondent stated, "It was my original understanding that field day courses were for students to demonstrate what they learned by taking the on-line course. We no longer operate any 'remedial station' for those who do not learn the material (most of them) and we are not allowed to fail anyone, because they will call WFF and complain. So we spend all of our time walking them through every question and they leave certified knowing nothing."

An area of concern by survey respondents and during personal interviews was the reported size of some traditional classes (60+ students/class). This Hunter Education

Instructor to student ratio prohibits the ability to effectively deliver course curriculum and greatly restricts instructor interaction with the student. This could also be responsible for Hunter Education Instructor burn out or the inability to recruit new Hunter Education Instructors. This finding may be regionally isolated to areas of high-class demands (13,221 students certified in 453 classes equals an average of 28 students per class). As one survey respondent said, "We simply need more instructors--so an instructor can take more time with each student. This applies principally to field day classes with hands on instruction, but it would also allow for more traditional classes with a lower number of students." Another survey respondent stated, "Hunter education courses should be on-line exclusively. The 'feel good' image of the Hunter Education Instructor working hands-on experience with every student is not realistic. Too many students demand the course at times when WFF personnel have a full plate."

Hunter Education Instructor materials provided to the Team appeared to give the Hunter Education Instructor many options and instructional aids to give assistance on conducting a hunter education course. The course outline mirrors the student manual content and is comprehensive. The provided outline helps keep the Hunter Education Instructor on task. The segment on tree stand safety appears minimal. They should expand to include the next printing based on current accepted industry practice. Incident reports provided indicate the total number of reported tree stand related incidents (both fatal and nonfatal) has decreased since 2001-2002. However, as the incident charts dictate, this should still be a major area of emphasis in both the traditional class or at a field day class for the alternative content delivery student. When the Team observed a field day class for the alternative delivery students, the Hunter Education Instructor did an excellent job of conducting the tree stand safety station using up-to-date methodology. Each student participated in exercises demonstrating safe tree stand practices. Traditional class students need to benefit from the tree stand safety exercise.

The Team observed the necessary forms filled out by each Hunter Education Instructor. Resistance to online registration and online class record keeping is minimal although some still use older methods of submitting class statistics. The Team also observed the registration and record keeping system on-line. The system appeared adequate and statistics appeared accurate.

Several Hunter Education Instructors responded to the survey by stating that they would like to see more emphasis placed on survival, orienteering or outdoor skills (provide DVD's or resource information). Likewise, several Hunter Education Instructors stated they needed to know in a general manner what DVDs were available for classroom use. The Hunter Education Instructors also indicated they needed a better method of obtaining the equipment to show DVDs as well as demo "dummy" firearms.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. An elite group of Hunter Education Instructors could be organized and tasked with doing classroom evaluations and mentoring new Hunter Education Instructors placing less of a burden on the Regional Hunter Education Coordinators.

- B. Set class size limit (both for traditional classroom as well as non-traditional), according to an acceptable Hunter Education Instructor/student ratios.
- C. Use ranges while conducting field-day classes for alternative delivery courses as well as field experience during traditional style classes.
- D. Add the nondiscrimination statement to the Hunter Education Instructor Manual.
- E. Modify the traditional classes to allow for "hands-on" experience of handling firearms in a safe and responsible manner.
- F. Modify the traditional classes to allow students to conduct "hands-on" tree stand safety exercises. Can use videos or simulated tree stand demo.

X. INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

The ALHEP has a formal policy and procedure in place to evaluate its Hunter Education Instructors and course delivery; however, from formal interviews with personnel, it appears the procedure is not being utilized. Evaluations and classroom visits are reactionary and most often occur after someone files a complaint or an after an incident occurs. The Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual has a student evaluation form, which allows students to rate the course and Hunter Education Instructor with an opportunity to suggest improvements to the course or instructor. However, headquarters does not receive the student evaluation forms to review and evaluate the course and the Hunter Education Instructor. Without periodic evaluation of course content, course materials, course delivery, or the Hunter Education Instructors, there is no way to tell how many Hunter Education Instructors are in fact teaching the recommended standards. As part of the survey, Hunter Education Instructors noted that when Regional Hunter Education Coordinators were able to visit a hunter education class, they saw it as a "show of support for them and the program"; they "gave good advice and renewed the enthusiasm of the students and Hunter Education Instructors" and they were "very satisfied with past visits." One of the respondents from the survey stated, "The hunter education staff is there to help, listen, and also evaluate my performance and class activities. Good or bad criticism can help promote a better hunter education program and students. They are always invited to attend."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Develop and initiate a formal evaluation process for Hunter Education Instructors conducted by team evaluation (peers), students, and the ALHEP staff to assist the instructor in maintaining a quality course. Completed student evaluation forms should be mailed to the Montgomery office along with the student cards, class report form, and instructor class record.
- B. Visits need to be scheduled and on a routine basis and to appropriately provide feedback to the Hunter Education Instructors. This applies to the traditional classroom as well as the field day curriculum delivery.
- C. Support and nurture the relationship with the groups such as the ALHEA. A strong advocacy group is not only important in matters of policy and public opinion, they can also be instrumental in raising funds and providing monetary support to Hunter

Education Instructors for needed material, equipment, and recognition. An elite group of Hunter Education Instructors could be organized and tasked with doing classroom evaluations and mentoring new Hunter Education Instructors placing less of a burden on the LE Officers.

XI. FACILITIES AND TRAINING AID

The ALHEP has devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to shooting range development. These ranges are an asset to the public in providing access for shooting opportunities and can greatly assist with hunter education training. The Team commends the work WFF has done in shooting range development. Some geographic areas though are lacking in range availability and future plans for shooting range construction should focus on these sites. While the ALHEP has been proactive in range development, the Team found that shooting range facilities had minimal or no accommodations for classroom instruction. Development of facilities that contain both classroom and range accommodations allow for a comprehensive training program, which could be used for student instruction, and Hunter Education Instructor training and development. Addition of classroom accommodations to existing shooting ranges where feasible would enhance the usability of these facilities and provide expanded use as hunter education facilities.

During the Peer Review, the Team received feedback pertaining to the availability of training aids used in hunter education instructions. In both the survey and personal interviews, instructors and staff express concern for more firearms, computer equipment, projectors, and demonstration ammunition. Some comments detailed difficulty in getting equipment/supplies needed or some equipment/supplies that were in short supply. One of the respondents stated in the survey, "We purchase our own audiovisual equipment and are eager to help. If more audiovisual equipment was available to groups, it would help them a great deal." In addition, "A list of DVD's available and how to obtain them would help." Other respondents stated that the ALHEP should modify the hunter education manual and include a hunter checklist.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Identify geographic areas that are in need of shooting range development. Focus future range development in these areas of need.
- B. Identify potential sites for development of classroom facilities ideally in conjunction with existing shooting range facilities.
- C. Identify and pursue other teaching sites outside of the agency facilities that are available for hunter education instruction.
- D. Inventory supplies/equipment on hand for loan to Hunter Education Instructors to conduct hunter education and identify further specific needs.
- E. Produce policy, loan forms, and other documentation that enable the ALHEP staff to provide needed equipment to Hunter Education Instructors including firearms, which also addresses responsibility issues.

XII. OUTREACH

There are always financial constraints and spending regulations for government agencies. This is especially the case in Alabama where legal constraints limit State funding for Hunter Education Instructor recognition. Partnerships with conservation organizations and companies can help make the ALHEP stronger, as outlined in the Instructor Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Recognition section.

Hunter education programs offer an opportunity for the public to interact with local agency staff in a positive manner. Hunter education courses offer opportunities to market the agency, its mission, and the other programs it offers. Hunter Education Instructors have a captive audience at the hunter education courses and many students desire information on other programs and hunting opportunities.

As previously mentioned, Alabama has an opportunity to further expand the hunter education program into the Public School System similar to West Virginia. In 2008, West Virginia passed §18-2-8a that prescribe an orientation program for use in grades seven through nine of the public schools of this state in the safety of firearms.

Introduction of §18-2-8a, as amended in 2008 stated, "The State Board of Education shall, with the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools and the Director of the Division of Natural Resources, prescribe an orientation program for use in grades seven through nine of the public schools of this state in the safety of firearms. The orientation program shall offer over a two-week period during the school year and shall deal with the protection of lives and property against loss or damage because of improper use of firearms. The orientation program shall also include instruction about the proper use of firearms in hunting, sport competition and care and safety of firearms in the home and may utilize materials prepared by any national nonprofit membership organization, which has as one of its purposes the training of people in marksmanship and the safe handling and use of firearms. An instructor certified by the Division of Natural Resources shall conduct the hunter safety orientation program or who has other training necessary to conduct the program as determined by the state board. The county superintendent shall arrange for the orientation program in the safety of firearms and its use in each school in the county."

During the interview process, one individual stated, "According to the analysis by Southwick and Associates, blue collar workers purchased the majority of the angler and hunting licenses in Alabama". In addition, one individual stated, "Resident hunting license sales are slowly increasing but non-resident license sales has decreased in this past year. This is most likely due to economic factors forcing non-resident hunters to stay closer to home, but could also be attributable to the new mentor license program".

One instructor commented, "We need public announcements (i.e. TV, radio, newspaper) for the public at large, detailing our jobs and interaction with youth and adults." Because of this and a desire to increase outreach, the ALHEP staff plans to have a weekly segment on a local TV station to promote the hunter education program.

In addition, strategic planning should increase the exposure of hunter education and hunting recreation within the agency. The planning process should create public appreciation by informing them about the many benefits of hunter education. The Hunter Education Coordinator should meet with public relations, news and information, and marketing and/or media representatives (both internal and external) to encourage increased use of common and available communication strategies to increase public awareness and agency promotion of hunting and hunter education. Common strategies include (some previously mentioned in this section and in this report):

- Monthly press releases highlighting program successes;
- Web-based development, especially to reach younger and/or remote audiences;
- Marketing strategies that provides branding (positive view of the program in the general public's eye) for hunter education, hunting and conservation;
- Video news releases on "how to" in hunting, firearm handling, and conservation;
- Television interviews prior to major events or hunting seasons; and
- Internal newsletter for volunteer instructors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Seek sponsorship opportunities for area programs from NGOs, local businesses, etc. This can help with instructor recognition but could include other opportunities beyond financial support. Possibilities include hunter and instructor recruitment, marketing of WFF programs and hunter education courses, donation of teaching aids, use of classroom facilities, etc.
- B. Encourage participation and funding with AWF, ALHEA, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and the Foundation to assist with recognition and other programs.
- C. Display other WFF programs and activities through education staff at hunter education courses and other events.
- D. Explore adding hunter education to additional public school curriculum.
- E. Look into passing legislation like the West Virginia model to incorporate hunter education into every public school statewide.
- F. Field Educators could work at local level with school district administrators to include hunter education in those districts, perhaps incorporating it into agricultural programs.
- G. Direct outreach efforts toward blue-collar workers, if research indicates this social segment purchases the majority of licenses.
- H. Increase outreach to non-resident hunters to help promote more license sales.
- I. Determine mentor apprentice license effectiveness in recruitment.
- J. Advertise the hunter education course in local area on TV, radio, newspaper, and other local media venues.
- K. Continue public service announcements and deliver the message to encourage students to take courses during off peak times since classes often fill up before the seasons.
- L. Create and promote staff awareness on how important hunter education is to the agency.

XIII. TECHNOLOGY

The ALHEP staff has developed and implemented a database for storage of hunter education records. On the DCNR Web site, the public can request duplicate hunter education credentials and register for a hunter education course. All of these features meet current understood technological principles.

Respondents to the survey requested a desire for improved communications with Hunter Education Instructors, upgraded audiovisual equipment, and videos made available to loan to them. In some geographic areas of the State, the ALHEP appears technologically challenged. The survey showed a majority of the respondents felt it was important to upgrade technology (i.e. videos and video projections), while a few respondents felt it was unimportant.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Develop and implement electronic communications with Hunter Education Instructors (i.e. e-mail, blogs, and Hunter Education Instructor resource sites).
- B. Explore upgrades in technology for most current and practical audiovisual equipment.
- C. Provide training to staff and Hunter Education Instructors in the use of current audiovisual equipment and other means of electronic delivery.
- D. Investigate new technologies that will improve all aspects of the ALHEP.

XIV. LITERATURE CITED

Alabama Hunter Education Policy and Procedure Manual, March 2005

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation Survey

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation Survey

XV. APPENDIX

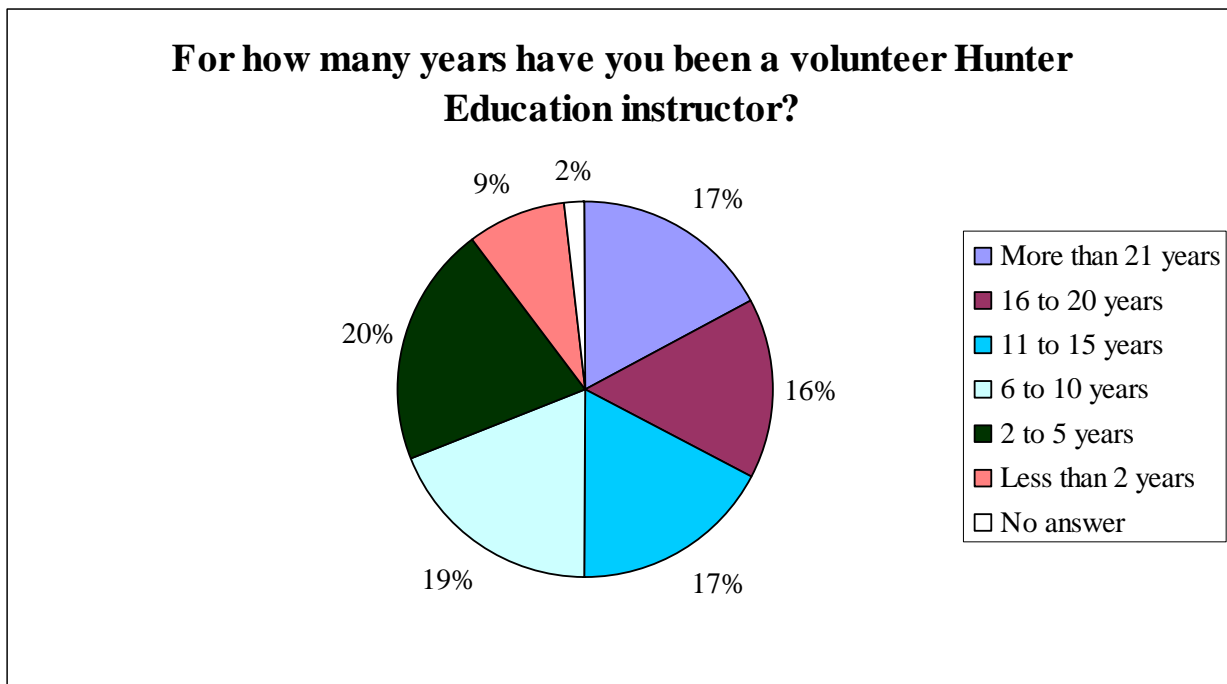
Alabama Hunter Education Instructor Survey Report

The Alabama Division of Wildlife mailed the “Alabama Hunter Education Instructor Questionnaire” to 750 Hunter Education instructors on May 11, 2009. An e-mail reminder was sent out on June 3rd. There were 58 questionnaires returned. Instructors were asked to return them to Wayne East, International Hunter Education Association, 2727 W. 92nd Ave., #103, Federal Heights, CO 80260 or e-mail to exdir@ihea.com, by June 12, 2009. The report was held open through the mail received on June 30, 2009.

Demographics of Respondents

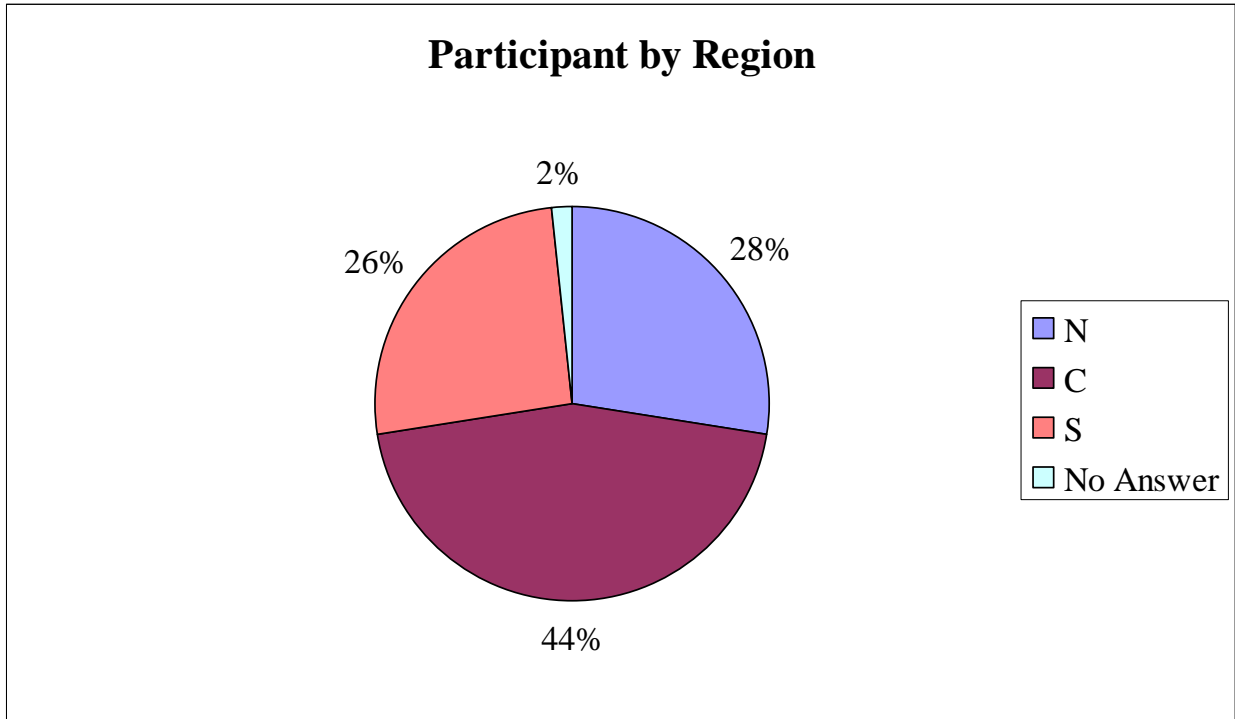
Years of Experience-

A good distribution of experience of instructors was noted with 50% of instructors having more than 10 years of experience and 48% having less than 10 years of experience. One instructor did not answer the question making up 2% of the total.



Region-

The Central Region had the largest response. Response from the North and South Regions were not as good. It should be noted that the Central Region is the most populated region of the state. There was one instructor not responding to this question making up 2% of the total.



The following map shows each of Alabama's Hunter Education Regions.

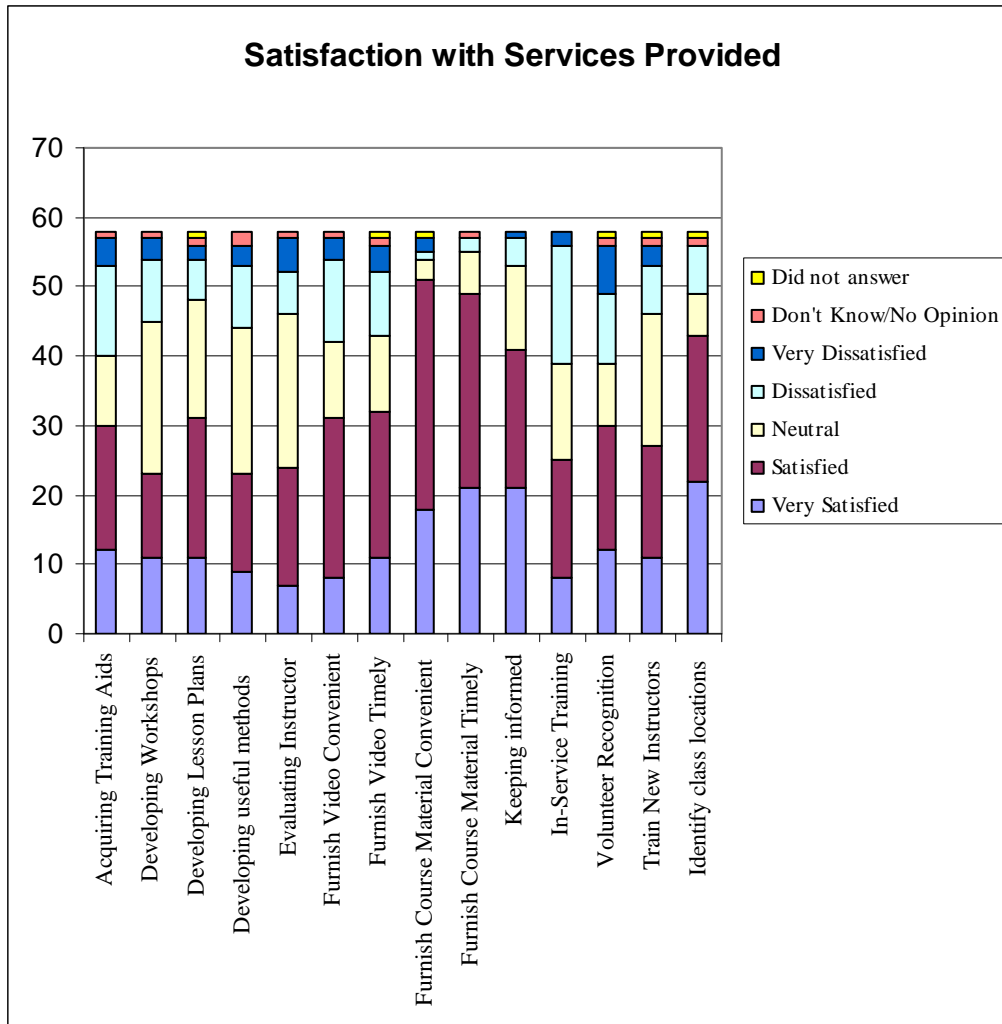
District 1 and 2 represents the North portion of the State.
District 3 and 4 represents the Central portion of the State.
District 5 and 6 represents the South portion of the State.



Services Provided by the Alabama Hunter Education Office

Instructors were generally satisfied with the services provided by the Hunter Education Office. The high points were furnishing course material both in a convenient way and in a timely way. The in-service training received 17 instructors choosing satisfied and 17 instructors choosing dissatisfied. (The difference of the sum of numbers in the table below and 58 reflect “neutral” votes or “did not answer the question” votes). The bar chart will show the complete breakdown.

Services Provided by the Hunter Education Office	Median Rating	Number of Satisfied or Very Satisfied Respondents	Number of Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied Respondents
Acquiring training Aids for class use	Satisfied	30	17
Developing workshops for instructors	Neutral	23	12
Developing lesson plans for classes	Satisfied	31	8
Developing useful methods to evaluate instructor effectiveness	Neutral	23	12
Evaluating my effectiveness as an instructor	Neutral	24	11
Furnishing videos and other training aids in a convenient way	Satisfied	31	15
Furnishing videos and other training aids in a timely way	Satisfied	32	13
Furnishing course materials in a convenient way	Satisfied	51	3
Furnishing course materials in a timely way	Satisfied	49	2
Keeping me informed about developments in the Hunter Education Programs	Very Satisfied	41	5
Providing in-service training that meets my need for basic teaching techniques	Satisfied/Dissatisfied	25	19
Providing recognition to volunteers participating in the Program	Satisfied	30	17
Training new instructors to deliver Hunter Education Programs	Neutral	27	10
Identifying class locations that are available for courses	Very Satisfied	43	7

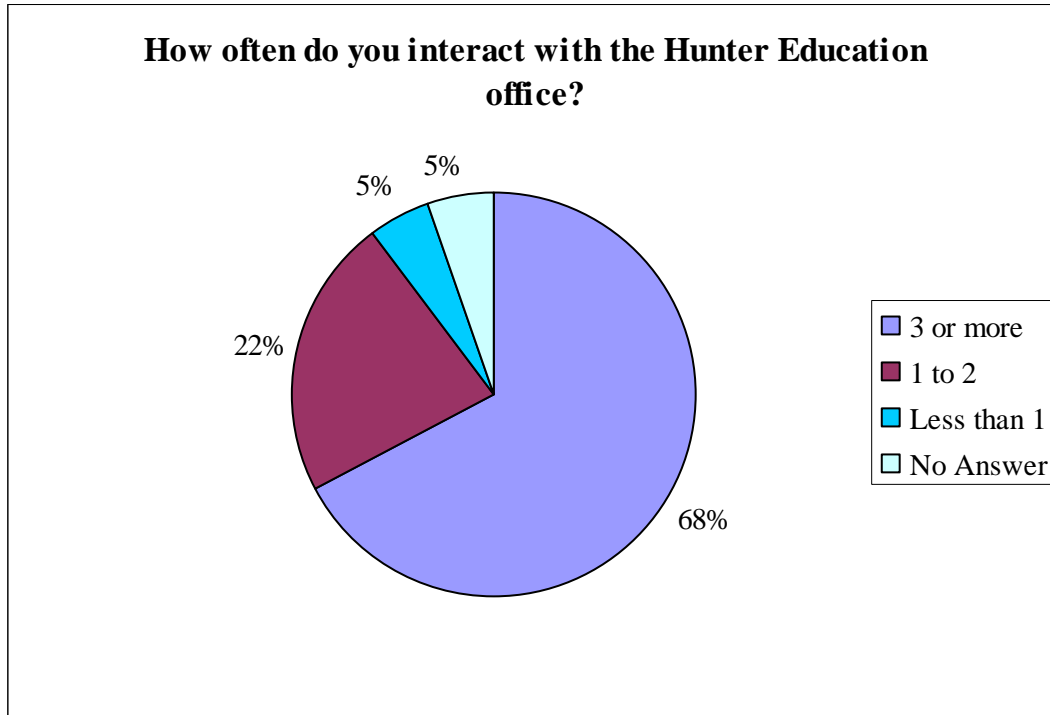


Six instructors provided comments regarding services provided by the Hunter Education Office. The comments are as follows:

- "Support from the Hunter Education office is very, very minimal."
- "I think with their resources they have done a remarkable job. I believe that a "uniform" (shirt and patches) that will ID instructors would provide a feeling of importance and pride."
- "Need firearm available to AHEA members/instructors to retain in their possession for class use instead of having to be on a state officials (DCNR) personal inventory."
- "We must and should give the volunteer instructors what they deserve when they earn it. They get nothing for what they give."
- "Set in on classes more often."
- "The office does nothing to recruit."

How often do you interact with staff from the Hunter Education Office?

Sixty-eight percent of the instructors interact more than 3 times a year. Twenty-two percent of the instructors indicated they interact 1 to 2 times a year. Three instructors did not answer this question.



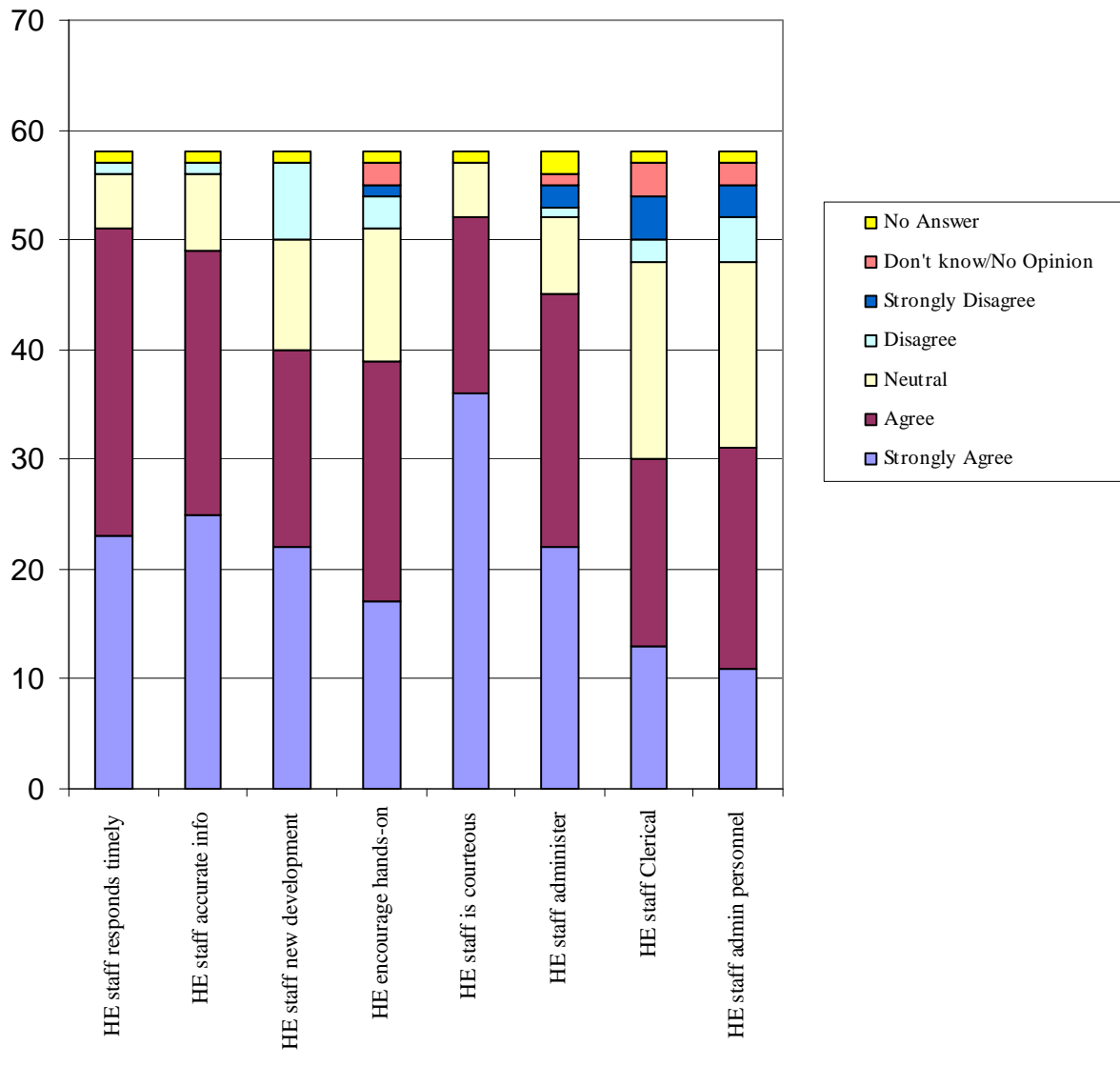
Leadership provided by the Alabama Hunter Education Office

Items in this section received a strong response of “strongly agree” or “agree”. There were no negative responses regarding the Hunter Education staff being courteous. (The difference of the sum of numbers in the table below and 58 reflect “neutral” votes or “did not answer the question” votes). The bar chart will show the complete breakdown.

Leadership Provided by the Hunter Education Office	Median Rating	Number of Agree or Strongly Agree Respondents	Number of Disagree or Strongly Disagree Respondents
The Hunter Education staff responds in a timely way to my questions about the Hunter Education Program	Agree	51	1
The Hunter Education staff provides me with accurate information about the Hunter Education Program	Strongly Agree	49	1

The Hunter Education staff keeps me informed about new developments or requirements for hunter education training	Strongly Agree	40	7
The Hunter Education staff encourages hands-on skills training as a part of classes	Agree	39	4
The Hunter Education staff is courteous in responding to my requests for information	Strongly Agree	52	0
The Hunter Education staff has the necessary training to administer the program	Agree	45	3
The Hunter Education staff has sufficient clerical personnel to support volunteer	Neutral	30	6
The Hunter Education staff has sufficient administrative personnel to support volunteer instructors	Agree	31	7

Leadership provided by the Hunter Education Office



How support for volunteer instructors from the Hunter Education staff could be improved.

Twenty-six instructors commented regarding how support from the HE staff could be improved. The comments are as follows:

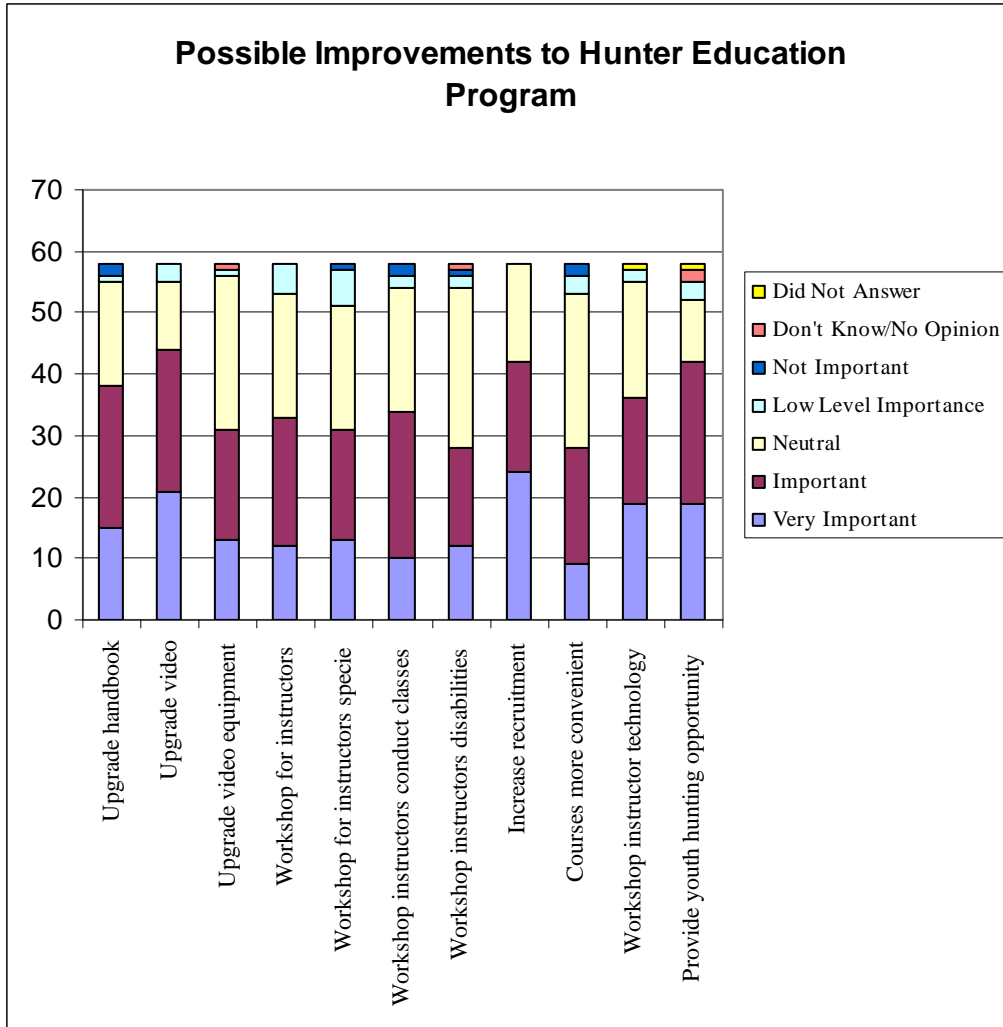
- "We have had no problems getting volunteers and the ones we have seemed to be very happy to do it. We do feed them before the classes and that's really good fellowship."
- "Too much time is spent on other activities. (Training of other officers, NASP, Building Ranges.) Time should be spent on advanced instructor workshops, instructor retention and recruitment and a "strong" new instructor training/orientation program (versus a 2 to 3 hour - here it is, it yours)."
- "No improvement needed. The entire staff from Ray, Marissa, Stuart, Jinks, and Karen is outstanding in supporting my instructional needs."
- "Let volunteer instructors know what is going on in the area they live. I am retired and willing to help out at most anytime but don't know what's going on."
- "Very little leadership is provided - more or less on my own."
- "I think that funding for this division along with better funding for DNR would greatly enhance HE's ability to support instructors."
- "Nothing really, anytime I have a concern or request, it is always handled quickly."
- "A list of DVD's available as well as how to obtain them."
- "The hunter education staff is very dedicated and professional employees of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries division. Unfortunately, like most employees in the wildlife section, they are involved with many activities (other than hunter education) and are unable to devote the time needed to adequately promote the HE program and recruit new and retrain experienced HE instructors."
- "I am very pleased with the support I have been provided by the Hunter Education staff in Alabama. I am privileged to have an education system in Lawrence County Alabama that allows me to have shooting contest, turkey shoots, archery contest, and instruction of gun use in the agribusiness department and non-school grounds. Some school systems are not as fortunate."
- "Basically our support comes from one person. We teach one class per month. He does most of the paperwork and delivers the trailer with supplies."
- "Hunter Ed staff members are helpful, but they need more support from the Department of Conservation. Being more focused on hunter education with better organization and training would allow the staff to be more supportive of volunteer instructors."

- "More personnel to train new instructors. Train the trainer with senior HE volunteer instructors. Boy Scout of America uses this concept very well. Need more trainers to train volunteer instructors."
- "Request for additional training on specific task - i.e. handicap assistance, trappings, etc..."
- "HE staff is an entry position. When support leaves, support is limited during training. Recommend HE staff position be such as to permit advancement in place to retain personnel."
- "After each year send out a survey asking the volunteers what subjects need to be covered/spend more time on. Example - very few attendees to the classes can correctly ID the difference between a flint lock and a percussion black powder rifle/firearm."
- "Add staff to cover smaller area."
- "Pay for more awards and incentives. Allow firearms to stay in the possession of a volunteer instructor as his or her inventory. Provide more laser, projectors, and other items per district - not just one! Alabama cannot and will not be able to sustain volunteer instructors unless more awards and incentives are given at the state level. My particular district is 12 counties."
- "They give time, gas, knowledge every year they earn different things and they get nothing for the most part in return. We need them! They are our life blood."
- "I think you're doing a great job."
- "I know funds are tight. We purchase our own A/V equipment and are very eager to help. If more A/V equipment was made available to groups, it would help them a great deal."
- "They should be looking for ways to enlist more volunteers and reward existing volunteers, i.e. dove shoots, caps, shirts, cook-outs. They are taking volunteers and officers for granted."
- "Sometimes better communication but most common problems seem to be funding for more personnel and materials."
- "I would love to see a jamboree for students to get together and have field days, outdoor classrooms, etc., as part of a Hunter Ed celebration."
- "HE staff is understaffed for the amount of work they perform. Additional staff is need to handle work load for the State."
- "The instructor certification classes could be held in varying locations to make it easier to take the course."

Possible Improvements to the Hunter Education Program

Most of the instructors ranked these questions as “very important” or important”. One category (Provide workshops for instructors on how to use technology for effective teaching of Hunter Education courses) had 19 instructors rate very important and 19 instructors rate neutral. (The difference of the sum of numbers in the table below and 58 reflect “neutral” votes or “did not answer the question” votes). The bar chart will show the complete breakdown.

Possible Improvements to the Hunter Education Program	Median Rating	Number of Important or Very Important Respondents	Number of Unimportant or Very Unimportant Respondents
Upgrade the instructor's handbook, lesson plans, and tests	Important	38	3
Upgrade the videos	Important	44	3
Upgrade the video projection equipment	Neutral	31	1
Provide workshops for instructors on how to lead small group discussions on topics like ethics, fair chase, etc.	Important	33	5
Provide workshops for instructors that are species or discipline specific	Neutral	31	7
Provide workshops for instructors on how to conduct classes to increase time for student /instructor contact	Important	34	4
Provide workshops for instructors on how to teach students with learning disabilities	Neutral	28	3
Increase the program's emphasis on recruitment and retention of volunteer instructors	Very Important	42	0
Make courses more convenient and accessible to more students, especially youth	Neutral	28	5
Provide workshops for instructors on how to use technology for effective teaching of Hunter Education courses	Very Important/Neutral	36	2
Provide new youth hunting opportunities for Hunter Education graduates	Important	42	3



The last item in this section was:

“Method to decrease the number of students that register and then don’t show up for class.”

This item received some ratings (general consensus “very important” or important”), Twenty-six instructors did not rate this one.

Rate from 1 being most urgent to 12 being least urgent.

There were 3 responses to this part of the survey.

Upgrade handbook	Upgrade video	Upgrade video equipment	Workshop for instructors	Workshop for instructors specie	Workshop instructors conduct classes	Workshop instructors disabilities	Increase recruitment	Courses more convenient	Workshop instructor technology	Provide youth hunting opportunity	Decrease number of students no show
1	8	9	4	3	10	11	2	12	7	6	5
2	7	9	10	4	3	5	6	1	11	8	12
9	2	11	10	12	4	5	1	6	3	7	8

Improvements Suggested by HE Instructors

Thirty instructors provided comments in this section of the questionnaire. The comments are as follows:

- "I like the idea of knives."
- "Record keeping for instructor incentives has been a joke, inaccurate and not up to date. State should provide uniform and awards, should not have to come from instructor association."
- "Don't loose track of volunteers, some never get recognition."
- "The Alabama Hunter Education Safety program working hand-in-hand with the Alabama Hunter Education Association has an outstanding awards and recognition program."
- "Unaware of any recognition programs."
- "Audio/visual equipment needs to be provided. Being available in the area office does not help much. Instructors should have access by having them signed out directly to the instructor."
- "I feel that the records need to be kept so that the instructors can get the awards in a timely manner."
- "Any uniform apparel."
- "I feel that the record for the amount of classes needs to be more accurate."
- "In Alabama they are no longer recognized. They should be recognized in a fitting manner based on number of classes taught and also based on number of students certified."
- "I don't need any other recognition other than the enjoyment I receive when I see the smile on a child's face after he/she has accomplished something they would

not have had the opportunity to do had it not been for the Alabama Hunter Education Program."

- "We have to buy everything we get or need. (Uniform - logos - pin - etc.)."
- "In Alabama we don't get recognized at all. Once a year we have a skeet shoot and lunch. Give instructors incentives to show up and be excited about what they teach. Then students will be excited also."
- "The recognition program could be improved with accurate, up-to-date information on course taught, activities, and participation of instructors. Sponsors could be found to provide awards."
- "Special hunts for instructors such as this years pig hunt and the above hunts. Possibly a bow hunt at Oak State park. Since there is a need to reduce deer population there."
- "Provide workshops for instructors on specific topic (request)."
- "HE states various award levels, but never has funds to award them. Recommend changing HE procedures not to over promise. Also, recommend awarding patches and rockers for longevity and special skills (HEIT, game expertise, etc.)."
- "I have been an instructor for a number of years and until now; I didn't know we were able to earn pins for the number of years we have instructed. Get the word out."
- "Recognized dinners paid for by W.F.F."
- "Provide more laser and projector equipment for any class. Alabama should pay for all instructor awards and not depend on AHEA paying for such at the awards banquet - as they are now doing. Without incentives or awards, there is no reward for a volunteer instructor; it's time for Alabama DCRN to start paying."
- "Give it to them Scott Stephens in Talladega has been teaching for years. He has gotten nothing I know of for the last 7 years!"
- "Certificate of recognition."
- "Anything will do."
- "I have been teaching Hunter Ed as a part of my 9th grade Agriscience program for several years now and have received no recognition in any way for my efforts. I received my certification on my own personal time and enjoy the work but I do appreciate being appreciated!"
- "Apparel, knives, pins, and logos are all nice and welcomed. Electronic training aids such as PP projectors and laptops with good software would be a plus. We own our own and it really helps in presenting topics."
- "Charge a nominal fee at registration. Co-op with local merchants and create a system that gives them privileges/discounts for each class taught. Utilize WMA's for special hunts."

- "How about those who don't register, they just show up and expect to be accommodated. Some instructors must travel quite a distance to assist with classes. Some sort of travel compensation would be a great way to show appreciation."
- "I feel that the volunteer instructors do get adequate recognition for their efforts."
- "At the state FFA convention for the Ag teachers who teach Hunter Ed., honor those instructors at that event. That would be one idea."
- "I think it is handled correctly."

Which instructor certificate is currently held and how many classes have been taught.

Basic Hunter Education

Yes 58 No 0 Did not answer 0

Number of courses taught in 2008

# of Courses	How many instructors
Over 20	0
10-20	7
5-9	17
1-4	31
0	1
No answer	2

Bowhunter Education

Yes 12 No 15 Did not answer 31

Number of courses taught in 2008

# of Courses	How many instructors
4	1
3	0
2	0
1	2
0	5
No answer	4

Alternative Delivery Hunter Education

Yes 6 No 19 Did not answer 33

# of Courses	How many instructors
8	1
5	1
4	2
2	1
No Answer	1

Visits from Hunter Education Program Personnel

Thirty of the fifty-seven instructors that answered this question had received a class visit by Hunter Education Program personnel in the last 5 years.

Satisfaction from the visit?

Very Satisfied	14 instructors
Satisfied	9 instructors
Neutral	4 instructor
Dissatisfied	3 instructors
Very Dissatisfied	0 instructor

Twenty-seven instructors indicated that they did not receive any visits. One instructor did not answer.

How important is it to have a visit?

Very Important	4 instructors
Important	4 instructors
Neutral	6 instructor
Low Level of Importance	8 instructors
Not Important	5 instructors
Don't Know/No Opinion	0 instructor

Twenty-two comments were made about the visit from the Hunter Education Program personnel.

- "Stuart Goldsby has visited our classes from the start. He is very professional and makes things fun."
- "Caused some conflict with other instructors. Took over class and left other instructors feeling like they were not important and left out. Changed schedule of activities without consulting other primary instructors."
- "By the Hunter Education program coordinators visiting my class, it showed me they are interested in the program and to ensure standardization and quality of the instruction was on track."
- "Personnel are always available to stand-in, assist, and participate."
- "No feed back. Also supervisor should visit once a year."
- "Stuart Goldsby was hands on and helped train during each session and to answer questions and concerns."
- "The willingness to help with class and help with paperwork."
- "Proud to have them there and assist with the class. It showed me they truly support us and the HE program."
- "Their active participation."
- "Very satisfied with past visits."
- "They don't interact much with the volunteers."

- "Gave good advice and renewed the enthusiasm of the students and the instructors."
- "No courses were held strictly by volunteers. All were handled by professionals, and only supported by volunteers."
- "Regional director - Stewart filled in for local game warden portion of class. Rules, regulations, and laws and their changes!"
- "Personnel (chief, HE) was knowledgeable and able to answer instructors questions."
- "I basically know all of them and we don't get to see each other except when we teach students."
- "They're there to help, listen, and also evaluate your performance and class activities. Criticism whether good or bad helps promote a better hunter education program and students. They're always invited."
- "There was interaction between instructors and program personnel."
- "The visitor participated and shared."
- "Rarely visit. They should be doing much more."
- "Their appreciation for the help you give them."
- "The individual who spoke to the students became bombarded with questions, but answered everyone's questions. I was very satisfied with that."

Visits from Hunter Education staff personnel

Fifty-one of the fifty-seven instructors that answered this question had received a class visit by Hunter Education Program staff personnel in the last 5 years.

Satisfaction from the visit?

Very Satisfied	35 instructors
Satisfied	9 instructors
Neutral	5 instructor
Dissatisfied	0 instructors
Very Dissatisfied	2 instructor
Don't know	0 instructor

Six instructors indicated that they did not receive any visits.

How important is it to have a visit?

Very Important	0 instructors
Important	2 instructors
Neutral	2 instructor
Low Level of Importance	1 instructors
Not Important	1 instructors
Don't Know/No Opinion	0 instructors

Thirty-five comments were made about the visit from the Hunter Education Program personnel.

- "Game Wardens have been in every class and are very informative and knowledgeable."
- "By request, if volunteers had not made the request for Officer to instruct the laws portion, they would not have attended. They were asked to teach the Alabama Game Laws portion of the course. They taught the 50 minute segment then left."
- "Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Officer is the key for students to learn who their County Officer is and let the students know that they are 24/7 to enforce the law. Rules and regulations and provide information on the latest changes in these laws, rules and regulations. An officer attends all my courses."
- "Officer took time to talk with students and instructors. Showed very good knowledge on subjects."
- "The Conservation Officer for this county and I get along extremely well. He includes a very important lesson on Alabama game laws."
- "During nearly all of the classes an officer attends and is part of the classes."
- "He was responsible for getting us involved to become instructors."
- "I teach classes in two counties. In one county I have all the support and help you could ask for. In the other county they either don't show up or they are late, and are famous for telling me they will be there and don't show up."
- "They have all been very professional."
- "Very good communication about class as well as very good course presentation."
- "We work in two counties and in one the help is wonderful and in the other you can't get them to do anything."
- "Any attendance helps."
- "The officer was a biologist and it was a very entertaining and informative presentation."
- "They come and talk about laws."
- "One is in attendance in every class. Alabama used online six-hour program, then students come to a four-hour field day. Sometimes I think it's about the numbers instead of education for the students."
- "At least one and usually both Conservation Officers assigned to county to assist with each course. Great relationships; officers are members of the team and always ready to assist in any way possible."
- "They administer and instruct the course."
- "Gave the class on rules, regulations, and laws and their changes and brought that look of state authority with his uniform."
- "The enthusiasm and positive attitude of them. They always speak well of the volunteer instructors."
- "Knowledge of program."

- "We use officers to provide laws and licensing instruction. Officers are knowledgeable and make a big impression on students."
- "I always look forward to them."
- "Geneva County officers are very dependable and easy to work with."
- "Knowledge of laws portion of class adequate."
- "Satisfied because we all have different techniques of teaching and learn from others. That comes from interacting with other instructors. They help us refine our techniques and classroom skills."
- "Professional instruction about laws and regulations."
- "The interaction of personnel."
- "Usually does not want to come - says he's too busy etc..., so I basically quite asking."
- "We always have an officer at all our classes, most of the time we have two. They are a great asset to the program. They give and give."
- "I am an officer. I am responsible for the HE program in a two county metro area."
- "They were teaching, not "visiting", and doing a great job."
- "Knowledge and enthusiasm for the sports they instructed in."
- "Very helpful on student questions, demonstrated techniques, overall great job."
- "Of the five officers that assist me, one local officer can speak and communicate well, the other four officers just help the class function and have poor communication skills if I didn't need those 4 on the field day, I would not use them."
- "It seems to take the fear away that some individuals have toward officers."

Opportunity for Additional Comments

Twenty-eight instructors took the opportunity to offer additional comments in this section of the questionnaire. They are as follows:

- "We are volunteers, but when we volunteer to serve in the position, the state should schedule 3-4 advanced instructor workshops per year. One in each region and require all "Active" instructors to attend one of the three. For our group to improve, the training is needed."
- "Contact with instructors in Alabama is by e-mail most of the time, if ever. I do not do e-mail. I am retired law enforcement, 35 years. I have been an instructor in many subjects, firearms, drugs, SWAT, and so on; I am a certified pistol and rifle instructor for NRA. I have conducted classes at schools, colleges, boy scouts, and police academy's. Master's degree in CJA. If contacted I would be happy to be of service."
- "More should be taught on survival and survival strategy. Overall course should be a minimum of 20 hours. Hands on training of firearms and actual shooting."

- "I think that if our hunter safety card is accepted by all states and international licensing units, that all instructors should teach the same thing instead of just training for their geographical area. There are many things that all hunters should know. Hunting in the south has different concerns than those hunting out west or internationally."
- "I feel that the officers spend more time on the enforcement side instead of the education side. They need to learn how to work with the volunteer instructors to educate people on what is right and wrong. The Officers look at Hunter Education as something that is required of them instead of using the opportunity to educate people about the law."
- "It would be nice if our workbook (the new one) talked about training in "outdoor skills" like some of the old books did. The old books called it "survival". We seem to have gotten away from teaching how to stay overnight in woods and to find our way back home. Also - tracking skills."
- "If the HE staff is going to continue to be involved in other non HE programs, they should be better staffed. HE program in Alabama, teaching topics, methods, and material should be more consistent throughout the State."
- "We simply need more instructors - so an instructor can take more time with each student. This applies principally to field day classes with hands on instruction, but it would also allow for more traditional classes with lower number of students."
- "Orientation in the woods (compass and topographic map use) GSP use."
- "Class registration and issuance of completion, ID cards need to be greatly improved."
- "With the economy the way it is, it is hard to get people to use their money for AHEA."
- "I believe learning needs to be fun. We need to devise a way to make it fun so the students will enjoy the experience."
- "More emphasis from the top down in the Department of Conservation, to include training of Conservation Enforcement Officers and Hunter Ed staff on the importance of, and organization and training of volunteer instructors would be a big step toward improvement of the Hunter Education program."
- "The curriculum needs a complete overhaul. Test questions are extremely out-of date. There is almost a total neglect of incoming students that there are federal laws to be aware of. I find this unacceptable, especially since the program is supported by federal money. The internet certification seems to be totally lacking in educating students, prior to a "field day". The above has caused me to lose interest in the program."
- "I believe we could teach individual courses on areas we do not have time to get into depth on a regular class. Knowledge of guns, archery, equipment, tracking,

and basic woodsmen ship (map reading, find your way in woods). Specific types of hunting duck, bird, squirrel and rabbit etc.)"

- "We need public announcements (i.e. TV, radio, newspaper) for the public at large, detailing our jobs and interactions with youth and adults."
- "Recommend that division officers not be required to teach HE except for law enforcement aspects. There are too few of them, and their instruction of students is poor use of resources. Their teaching duties should be limited to law enforcement aspects (1 hour per class)."
- "As previously stated - survey your volunteers 1-2 times a year and evaluate their remarks. Some will be good some will be bad. However, all should be evaluated. Thanks for this survey."
- "I think that "fishing" should also be added - especially boating safety."
- "Currently the Alabama DCNR only pays a small portion (incentive awards) at the State Awards Banquet each year. Volunteer instructors are made to pay even for their meals and AHEA pays a majority of the incentive awards presented. How can you retain or recruit new volunteers if that person has to pay for everything? And you ask why our numbers are decreasing."
- "If we don't keep the free (to us) Hunter Ed instructors happy they will leave."
- "At this time, keep up the good work."
- "Our county volunteer Hunter Ed group is self motivated and we sustain ourselves. We have the talent and are highly motivated. Some counties may need more help than us. Both in motivation and financial support or training aids. We make our own."
- "Refresher courses for instructors should be held."
- "HE courses should be offered completely on-line. It is 2009! The "feel good" image of the instructor working hands-on with every student is not realistic. Too many kids demand the course at once, at a time when WFF personnel have a very full plate."
- "It was my original understanding that the "field days" were designed for the students to demonstrate what they are suppose to have learned taking the online course. We no longer operate any "remedial station" for those who have not learned the material (most of them) and we are not allowed to fail anyone because they will call HQ and complain. So we spend all our time walking them through every question and they leave certified - knowing nothing."
- "Jerry Riley does a good job with managing our classes. We do need to improve on lesson plans and test station material."
- "Probably like everyone else, need more money, materials, and help for the courses."

Willingness for Follow-up Telephone Interviews

Thirty-six of the 58 responding instructors are willing to be interviewed in a follow-up telephone call. Follow up telephone numbers can be obtained from Wayne East, International Hunter Education Association, 2727 W. 92nd Ave, #103, Federal Heights, CO 80260 or a request can be sent by e-mail to exdir@ihea.com.

*Quotes have generally been cut and pasted in this report. Each bullet indicates all quotes per instructor by section. In some instances, grammar and spelling have been edited for clarity.