

# Happy Holidays from the Vermont Hunter Education Program!

## Thank you, Instructors!

Hello everybody!

Happy deer season and happy holidays! I hope you have had success in the deer woods! If you haven't yet, then you still have time. Rifle may still be open when you get this and Archery reopens from Monday November 29<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>. Of course, there is also Muzzleloader running from December 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. It'll only be getting colder, so make sure the camp woodsheds are stocked up and the snowshoes are ready to go. The deer will be moving, and winter is coming. While I couldn't be more excited about deer hunting, there is some excitement for me knowing the snowmobile trails open in less than a month as well!

I wanted to take a moment to thank each of you reading this for what you do for the Vermont Hunter Education Program. There have been a lot of tough decisions and barriers lately and you all have rolled with it and continued your high standard of courses. This is especially true for this fall when we had more in-person courses and students than we have had in a long while. We heard from so many grateful students this fall from around the state about their positive experiences with you all. This program would not be possible without you, and we are very grateful for your time and dedication. It doesn't go unnoticed. Please accept the enclosed tumbler as a small token of our appreciation and enjoy the exciting news we have to share about the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Hunter Education Department. We look forward to supporting you and your courses this spring and please feel free to give us a call or shoot us an email anytime to catch up or share your wild experiences from the woods with us.

Have a great winter and holiday season!

Nathan Lafont

Hunter Education Training Coordinator





# Welcome VTFW Commissioner Chris Herrick



As we wave goodbye and wish the best to our longtime commissioner Louis Porter, we are pleased to be welcoming Chris Herrick to Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) as the next Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner.

Chris has served as deputy commissioner at the Department of Public Safety, and prior to that as the Director of Vermont Emergency Management. Chris has also been a veritable force in coordinating logistics and supply chain issues necessary to support Vermont's COVID response. In total Chris has spent nearly 25 years working for DPS, and we are excited that he will be bringing his leadership skills and knowledge of state government to bear at ANR.

Chris is also an avid outdoorsman – enjoying everything from kayaking to fly fishing, hunting, mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking with his dog Lucy – and is active in his community (South Hero), serving as a volunteer firefighter, an EMT and as well as stints on both the Select Board and School Board.

Chris' first day in the office was Monday, November 8th.

Below is a message from Chris to all Hunter Ed volunteers.

“Good Day,

For most of the hunters in Vermont the first interaction they have with the Department of Fish and Wildlife is the hunter education course. Your work as instructors is critical to the safety of our hunting community as well as protecting the integrity and ethics of outdoor sporting in Vermont. For these reasons I want to thank you for your dedication and hours of instruction and guidance given to these folks who are being introduced to the sport we have all come to love and support. I look forward to meeting you all and thanking you in person for all you have done for the department and the people we serve.

Best of luck for a safe and fruitful November and December!

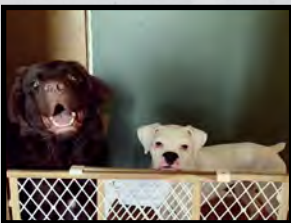
Respectfully,

Chris”

## Great Thanks and Well Wishes to Amanda

Hello Instructors,

I hope that you are enjoying the winter season and that you are able to get outside and do some of your favorite snowy activities. For me, this means gearing up for snowboard season, breaking out the cross-country skis, and watching my 11-month-old, 115lb Newfoundland realize that the snow (his favorite past time) does indeed come back!



First, I wanted to take this opportunity to let you all know that, after two seasons as the Hunter Education Technician, I have accepted a full-time, year-round position at the Catamount Outdoor family Center in Williston

Vermont. This means that I will not be returning next spring in the same capacity that many of you have come to know me in. Though I am very excited for this new chapter in my life, it is bittersweet to have to say goodbye to all the wonderful people (staff and volunteers) that I have had the privilege to work with throughout my time with the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife.

More importantly, I wanted to take a moment to sincerely

thank you all for the thousands of hours you have spent preparing and delivering courses, as well as mentoring and supporting new hunters in one manner or another. Your passion, knowledge, and dedication for keeping our wildlands safe for all to enjoy is really what makes this program so special; You are so appreciated by the Hunter Education staff and beyond. Not to mention, all the people that get the chance to hunt because of YOU.

It was a pleasure getting to know the instructors that I had the opportunity to meet and work with over the past two years. For the instructors I didn't get a chance to meet, perhaps our paths will cross in the future! I do plan on staying involved in Hunter Education in some capacity; So, if anyone needs a co-instructor for an upcoming course, I hope that you do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will be in the Lamoille and Chittenden County areas.

Hunt Smart. Hunt Safe. Wear Orange. Check for ticks!

- Amanda Preston





# Instructors Trek Through The NEK For Moose Opportunities.

Some of our instructors were lucky enough to be drawn for a moose permit this year. We heard from Paul Noel, who won an archery tag good for either sex and Nick Burnham who won an either sex regular season tag. Mike Kolsun also had the opportunity to guide a friend in their hunt. They have shared their unique experiences and photos below.

Paul Noel 10/11/2021

"Hey all,

Well I did not get my archery moose but came very close. Called in a really nice bull to about 28 yards but he did not offer a good clear shot at the vitals. He eventually wandered back to the cow he was with. That image of him is etched in my mind forever.

Saw a cow and calf another day and had a bull grunt back to us another time but would not come in. We hunted hard and had a great time. I knew it was going to be a tough challenge with a vertical bow.

Going to NY later this week for their early black powder season. But deer hunting seems rather tame after the moose hunt.



Nick Burnham 10/25/21

"Sending you a photo of my Vermont moose. It was a tremendous opportunity and a great time. My cousin from NY joined me as second shooter and this is the first time he ever has done anything like this. He had a blast and now will start applying in the lottery as well. After I applied for 20 years before drawing I could only say good luck. In the picture with me is fellow instructor Matt Rafus who acted as guide. We got him on the third day and this was the second moose we had seen. The first one was only a glimpse, you know, the southbound end of a northbound animal. This bull was spotted at 100 yards and we were able to sneak to 60 yards and then had to wait for him to turn broadside. While waiting for him at one point he shook all the water from himself and to watch that through the scope was cool. It is something I will never forget. While watching him we also noticed another moose to the side which turned out to be a calf. At the shot a third moose ran off as well. They say all the work begins after you shoot. For me on this hunt that

Michael Kolsun 11/12/21

"I chose to be the guide, having taken two moose in 2002 and 2013, plus the guide can continue to apply through the lottery. Not to mention that not carrying a gun allows you to carry more snacks!! On the third morning, good friend Dale Decker, who pushed a moose to me in 2013, harvested his first moose. Life is good."



part was just as enjoyable. Having the horse come in and pull the moose was an experience in itself. Anyways he is a



# Instructor Award Nominations

There are so many volunteers in our program that should be recognized for their outstanding service. In this vein, the Vermont Hunter Education Program will institute a new volunteer recognition/awards program.

Award winners will be announced this upcoming spring at the annual instructor recognition banquet (more information to be announced). Nominations will be accepted now through March 1, 2022.

We are now accepting nominations for the following awards:

**Instructor of the Year Award.** This award is given to a certified instructor who went above and beyond for hunter/bowhunter/trapper education in 2021.

**Teaching Team of the Year Award.** This award is given to a teaching team who went above and beyond for hunter/bowhunter/trapper education in 2021. The team must include at least one certified instructor.

**Volunteer of the Year.** This award is given to a non-certified instructor who went above and beyond in their assistance with hunter/bowhunter/trapper education in 2021.

**Outstanding Partner to Hunter Education in Vermont.** This award is given to any partner who went above and beyond for hunter/bowhunter/trapper education in 2021. Examples of partners include a local recreation department, local NWTf chapter, local food shelf, or any other organizations that partner with the Vermont Hunter Education Program. Please include the organization's name, a contact name for the organization, and let us know why they deserve this award.

**Outstanding Outreach/Innovation Award.** This award is given to any certified OR non-certified volunteer who has done a great job with an outreach program, such as mentoring, hosting seminars, etc.

Please submit your nomination here: <https://tinyurl.com/InstructorAwards21> or by e-mailing any of our HE staff.

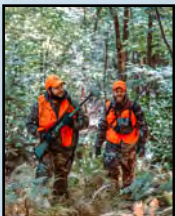


# Professional Development Events

This winter, the Vermont Hunter Education Program and Let's Go Fishing Program are teaming up to bring our volunteer instructors an exciting series of professional development opportunities. From November through April, join us for virtual seminars with topics ranging from teaching techniques to storytelling with a retired (and legendary) Vermont Game Warden.

To sign up for one or more of these workshops, please RSVP to Olivia Bussiere with your name, e-mail address, and the seminars you would like to attend. A link will be sent to you before the event. RSVP by calling 802-828-1193 or e-mail [Olivia.Bussiere@vermont.gov](mailto:Olivia.Bussiere@vermont.gov)

As a special treat, volunteers who attend five or more the virtual offerings will be entered into a raffle to win prizes! We look forward to seeing you! [See the full list of events on the following page.](#)





# Professional Development Continued

Topic	Presenter	Date
National Trends in Hunter Education	Alex Baer, International Hunter Education Association Executive Director	December 14, 2021 7pm
Fishing Regulations: Updates for 2022	Will Seegers, Vermont Game Warden	December 21, 2021 7pm
Tales from a Vermont Game Warden	Eric Nuse, retired Vermont Game Warden	January 11, 2022 7pm
Teaching Land Ethic	Andrea Shortsleeve, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Biologist	February 3, 2022 7pm
How to Teach Your Class in Schools vs. a Non-Traditional Setting	Panel discussion with a K-12 teacher and an informal educator	March 31, 2022 7pm
Advanced Techniques for Teaching Outdoors	Ashley Eaton, Watershed and Lake Education Coordinator, Lake Champlain Sea Grant & UVM Extension	April 14, 2022 7pm

To sign up for one or more of these workshops, please RSVP to Olivia Bussiere with your name, e-mail address, and the seminars you would like to attend. [Olivia.Bussiere@vermont.gov](mailto:Olivia.Bussiere@vermont.gov) OR 802-828-1193

## List of Chief Instructors By County

<p><b><u>ADDISON:</u></b></p> <p>Dennis Armell- N Ferrisburgh Wendy Butler- New Haven Peter Lossman- Bristol Brock Quesnel Sr.- Whiting Dave Sausville- Vergennes</p> <p><b><u>BENNINGTON:</u></b></p> <p>Monty Walker- Bennington</p> <p><b><u>CALEDONIA:</u></b></p> <p>Jeff Houde- East Burke</p> <p><b><u>CHITTENDEN:</u></b></p> <p>Randy Barrows- Milton Paul Conover- Milton</p>	<p><b><u>CHITTENDEN cont.</u></b></p> <p>Mike MacDuff- Colchester James Smith III- Richmond</p> <p><b><u>ESSEX:</u></b></p> <p>Molly Cook- Island Pond Mike Kolsun- Island Pond</p> <p><b><u>FRANKLIN:</u></b></p> <p>Mike Lafromboise- Fairfax Keith Sampietro- Montgomery Terry Tatro- Richford</p> <p><b><u>LAMOILLE:</u></b></p> <p>Bruce Emerson- Morrisville</p>	<p><b><u>ORANGE:</u></b></p> <p>Jeff Eastman- Chelsea Randy Keating- West Topsham Robert Raskevitz- East Randolph</p> <p><b><u>ORLEANS:</u></b></p> <p>Lisa Johnson- Orleans Steve Johnson- Orleans Paul Noel- Irasburg</p> <p><b><u>RUTLAND:</u></b></p> <p>William Pratico- Rutland Antje Schermerhorn- Rutland</p>	<p><b><u>WASHINGTON:</u></b></p> <p>Jeff Blanchard- Graniteville Rodney Elmer- Northfield Theresa Elmer- Northfield</p> <p><b><u>WINDHAM:</u></b></p> <p>Herbert Meyer- Guilford</p> <p><b><u>WINDSOR:</u></b></p> <p>Nick Burnham- Hartland</p> <p><b>*Grand Isle county currently vacant*</b></p>
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# IHEA Instructor Discount Changes

In case you are unaware, your IHEA-USA has recently made some changes around discounting for instructors. We had reports of misuse of the discounting program due to its unsecure nature on the website, and we felt the need to add extra levels of security to ensure ONLY active instructors had access to the program. We owe it to our vendor partners to only offer their special pricing to the expected audiences AND we owe it to active instructors to keep their earned opportunities exclusive. All active instructors are eligible to become members of the IHEA-USA. Follow this link to become a Member of IHEA-USA :

<https://www.ihea-usa.org/membership/>

IHEA-USA still offers discounts for instructors and will continue to grow these opportunities. We will be able to broker even steeper discounts with this new level of security for instructors. Some of the discounts are now exclusive to IHEA-USA members and many are still available to all instructors through ExpertVoice. Every instructor can sign up for the ExpertVoice discounts and IHEA-USA can help simplify the process to access these discounts working through their state hunter education administrator. Follow this link: [https://www.expertvoice.com/ihea/?utm\\_source=ihea&utm\\_medium=partner&utm\\_campaign=o62020&utm\\_content=ihea-general](https://www.expertvoice.com/ihea/?utm_source=ihea&utm_medium=partner&utm_campaign=o62020&utm_content=ihea-general)

**Use Code 3D7F-26Do-4489-61Eo (those are zeroes)** We understand uploading the required digital copy of an instructor's card is not always a simple matter, so let us know if you need any help.

**We strive to make IHEA-USA better for our members and have implemented several changes to our membership approach over the past 12 months.**

- We dropped the price for annual instructor membership to \$20
- We have added a full-time Membership Director to facilitate member needs
- There are several yearly membership giveaways that instructors members are automatically entered into
- We created an instructor member hunter education on-line library with digital and downloadable tools for the classroom
- Going forward, we will offer IHEA-USA members FREE registration to our Annual Conference and breakout workshops online

Please let us know if you have any questions or thoughts on this matter.

**Andrew Smith**, IHEA-USA Membership Director - [asmith@IHEA-USA.org](mailto:asmith@IHEA-USA.org)

**NOTE: IF YOU NEED AN INSTRUCTOR ID CARD, PLEASE EMAIL A PHOTO OF YOU TO INCLUDE ON YOUR CARD TO [OLIVIA.BUSSIÈRE@VERMONT.GOV](mailto:OLIVIA.BUSSIÈRE@VERMONT.GOV)**

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## The Journey of a Novice Trapper

If you can recall from our July newsletter, Chief Instructor and avid trapper, Paul Noel had spent time mentoring a new trapper. Youth Trapper, Will has been working with Paul since Fall of 2020 learning the regulations and the how-to's of trapping in Vermont. After numerous trips out together to check traps, Will and Paul finally had some luck mid-March. Now Will is out trying his hand at trapping on his own and has had success with his first beaver!

Will's mom says he was elated to spend the day deer hunting and skinning his beaver.

"So, so proud of him" she says.

Big thanks to all the educators who helped put the smile on this boys face!





# Year End Numbers

From Jan 2021 to today:

We have had 217 volunteer instructors teach.

Of those 217 volunteers, on average, each instructor taught or assisted in 2 classes in 2021

Total hours volunteered: 4,873.5

Special shout out to **Dennis Briggs**, who donated a total of 389 hours this year! Dennis and his crew in Milton did a lot of work on their new facility to teach hunter, bowhunter, trapper, fishing, and outdoor education. Congratulations!

We are still working to gather student data and will send that information along at a later date.



Dennis Briggs at Machia Wilderness Camp

## Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming events to mark on your calendar:

**Yankee Sportsman Classic:** January 14, 15, and 16th

**Vermont Wild Kitchen Show:** Every third Thursday of each month. Next Event



“Since April 2020, the Vermont Hunter Education and Let’s Go Fishing Programs have been working with partners like Rural Vermont to put on the monthly cooking show, Vermont Wild Kitchen. This show airs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month at 5pm on Facebook live. Each show features seasonal wild game and fish recipes, wild foraged foods, and locally farmed food. The goal of Vermont Wild Kitchen is to show Vermonters how accessible and fun it is to cook with local, wild ingredients.”

Episodes can be found at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) under Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s playlist for Vermont Wild Kitchen

**Chief Instructor Meeting:** TBA

**Volunteer Instructor Banquet:** TBA

## Send Us Your Photos and Stories!

We really look forward to hearing from all of you on your woodland endeavors. Help us fill these newsletters with your experiences in class, in the woods or wherever you prepare for the hunting season! Send all photos and stories to [huntereducation@vermont.gov](mailto:huntereducation@vermont.gov) or contact any of the Hunter Education staff!





## Contact Us!



**Alison Thomas**

Education Manager

E-mail: Alison.Thomas@vermont.gov

Cell: 802-371-9975

**Nicole Meier**

Hunter Education Program Coordinator

E-mail: Nicole.Meier@vermont.gov

Cell: 802-318-1347

**Nathan Lafont**

Hunter Education Training Coordinator

E-mail: nathan.lafont@vermont.gov

Main Office: 802-522-5580

**Olivia Bussiere**

Hunter Education & Licensing Admin

E-mail: Olivia.Bussiere@vermont.gov

Main Office: 802-522-4570

### Hunter Education Program Office: All Staff

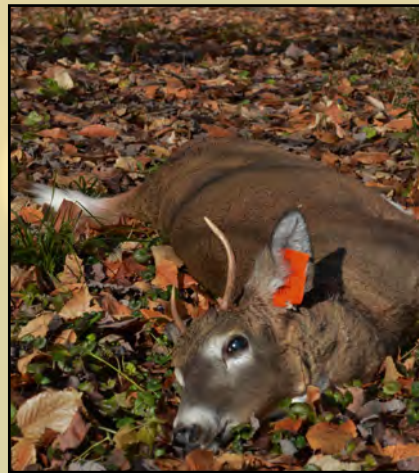
E-mail: HunterEducation@vermont.gov Main Office: 802-828-1193

Address: 1 National Life Dr, Dewey Bldg, Montpelier, VT 05620

## Send Us Your Photos To Be Featured In the Newsletters!



Nick Burnham



Paul Noel



Olivia Bussiere

**Don't forget to nominate outstanding instructors  
for five different awards by March 1st.**

<https://tinyurl.com/InstructorAwards21>