



P E N N S Y L V A N I A GAME COMMISSION

**YOUR STATE
WILDLIFE AGENCY**

Managing and protecting wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations.



**“I BELIEVE HUNTING AND
OTHER OUTDOOR PURSUITS
ARE IMPORTANT PIECES OF
OUR HERITAGE THAT NEED
TO BE PRESERVED!”**



RETURNING HOME TO TAKE ON ROLE AS HUNTER-TRAPPER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

Hello HTE Instructors! My name is Wendy Koons, and I'm your new Hunter-Trapper Education Programs Coordinator. After living “out west” for 20+ years, I'm very happy and excited to be back in my home state! I grew up in Waynesboro, PA, believing most everyone hunted, fished and enjoyed the outdoors. My dad was my number one mentor, and a bit of a celebrity within the local hunting community. His love of the outdoors was contagious, and it was imparted upon me at a very young age. Through observing his successful hunts, as well as his instruction, I learned a great deal about rifle, shotgun, archery and traditional black powder muzzleloader hunting, along with other important outdoor skills. Although I didn't start out studying natural resources, while attending Penn State University, I discovered Shaver's Creek Environmental Education Center. I became a volunteer there and it didn't take long for me to realize I'd found my calling – helping others to discover the joys and personal benefits of outdoor pursuits.

I landed my first natural resources job in Virginia as an interpretive park naturalist. After eight years in Virginia, I suddenly found myself moving across the country to the small town of Salmon, Idaho. While in Idaho, I worked in various positions for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the US Forest Service and the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program. Living in Idaho allowed me to discover the thrill of elk hunting, and new hunting experiences for mule deer, pronghorn, chukar, waterfowl and mountain lions. From Idaho, my next stop was Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a job with the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, as the agency's Injured and Nuisance Wildlife Biologist Technician. That position provided me with some up-close encounters and precarious predicaments with many different wildlife species.

After Wyoming, my next stop was Nebraska, where I served as the State Administrator for Firearm Hunter and Bowhunter Education with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Then, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, once again I

found myself on the move. This time I headed back to Idaho as the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Panhandle Region Hunter-Trapper Education Coordinator and Farragut Shooting Range Center Manager.

I absolutely loved the years I lived out west. I made some wonderful friends and had some incredible outdoor adventures, ones I never could have imagined I'd ever experience. But I often found myself thinking about the PA woods I'd spent so much time in growing up. I was feeling the need to be somewhere familiar, to be “home.” And so, here I am! Over the years I've met a lot of great folks who were an influence on me, but none so much as my wonderful dad. He never missed a chance to share his outdoor knowledge and hunting stories with his kids...or anyone else who cared to listen. But I learned so much more from him than just the skills for safe and successful hunting adventures. He instilled in me a reverence for the outdoors which I credit for the biggest successes I've had in my career. My dad passed away in the fall of 2014, so I wasn't able to share many of my career successes with him. But I think he'd be mighty proud of the work I've done. And I know he'd be grinning from ear to ear to know I'm back home in PA, leading the charge to pass on the great tradition of safe, ethical, responsible hunting. Like him, I believe hunting and other outdoor pursuits are important pieces of our heritage that need to be preserved! Hunting teaches us so much more than simply how to harvest game. It gives us patience, confidence, countless memories and the knowledge that we are all part of something much bigger than ourselves. It's my hope to honor his memory, as well as the PGC and all of you dedicated volunteers, by using my experience and abilities to help make the PGC Hunter-Trapper Education Programs the best they can be.

If you have any questions for me, or you'd just like to say “hello,” please feel free to drop me an email or give me a call. You can reach me at wekoons@pa.gov or (717) 874-4250, ext. 73302.

BECOME A MENTOR

PASS ON THE TRADITION OF HUNTING
BY MENTORING SOMEONE NEAR YOU!

SIGN UP AS A
MENTOR

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NEAFWA

SIX INSTRUCTORS RECEIVE AWARDS AT JULY COMMISSION MEETING



Pennsylvania's Hunter-Trapper Education instructors collectively donated over 17,000 hours of time and certified over 15,000 new hunters and trappers during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Your time and dedication to teaching safe, responsible, ethical hunting and trapping practices in our state is sincerely appreciated.

Among our state's dedicated instructors are those who go above and beyond. At the July 7th Commissioners meeting, six instructors, who had been nominated by their local game wardens, were presented with Outstanding Instructor of the Year Awards, with one instructor also receiving the award for Statewide Outstanding Instructor of the year.

Outstanding Instructor Award recipients for the 2022-2023 fiscal year include:

Back, left to right, Benjamin G. Halsted, nominated by SGW Justin Ritter for the SC Region. Ben has been an instructor since 2015.

Mike Griffin, nominated by SGW Dirk Remensnyder for the NC Region. Mike has been an instructor since 2014.

Thomas Markward, nominated by SGW Pete Sussenbach for the SE Region. Thomas has been an instructor for 35 years.

Erin Cunningham, nominated by SGW Ned Kimmel for the SW Region. Erin has been an instructor since 2016.

James Kirkpatrick, nominated by SGW Alex DiCicco for the NW Region. James will celebrate 50 years as an instructor this fall!

And front, Scott Dibble, nominated by SGW Benjamin Robuck for the NE Region. Scott has been an instructor for 20 years and also received the Statewide Outstanding Instructor of the Year Award.

A BIG CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE AWARD WINNERS!

NEW AND REVISED FORMS NOW AVAILABLE

Paperwork is certainly not the most enjoyable part of teaching a Hunter-Trapper Education class, but the information we collect is important for continuing to obtain the federal grant funding needed to provide high quality programs. In an effort to make things as easy and as stress free as possible for our instructors, we're in the process of revising some forms and developing what will hopefully be some new, helpful online tools. Two of these new/revised items are as follows:

Introducing the revised Instructor Activity Report Form!

(IAR) With this revised form, there should no longer be any confusion over filling out multiple lines, coloring in multiple circles or signing several places to record volunteer hours. All information for a single day (driving time, preparation time and instructional time) can be entered on one line, then sign and you're done! As a reminder, please **DO NOT RECORD PARTIAL HOURS** such as $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ etc. Please round down to the nearest hour. The goal of this revised form is fewer errors, less need to return forms for corrections, and more cost-share hours recorded. This new IAR form has been sent to all Regional Information and Education Specialists for distribution to and use by instructors.

The image shows a screenshot of the 'INSTRUCTOR ACTIVITY REPORT' form from the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The form is titled 'PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION HUNTER/TRAPPER EDUCATION' and includes a section for 'INSTRUCTOR ACTIVITY INFORMATION'. Below this, there are two columns for 'INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION' and 'DATE OF ACTIVITY'. The form also includes a table for recording activity hours and a section for 'TOTAL HOURS'.



Secondly, you asked for it and here it is! **The Electronic Fillable Flyer!** We've received a number of requests from instructors for an easy way to advertise HTE classes. Although we would have liked to have had a flyer that could be automatically generated when a class is posted, that option is not currently feasible. As a reasonable alternative, a fillable flyer has been created. All you need to do is enter your class date, time and location. Then add your contact information, print the flyer and post in your community. Prospective students can view and register for your class or any other available class by using the web address or scanning the QR code that's printed on the flyer. This new fillable flyer has also been sent out to all Regional Information and Education Specialists for distribution to instructors.

Both the revised IAR form and fillable class advertising flyer will soon be available on the Hunter-Trapper Education page of the Pennsylvania Game Commission website. If you have any questions about either document, please contact the Hunter- Trapper Education Program Administrator at wekoons@pa.gov or (717) 787-4250.



HELP PROTECT PENNSYLVANIA WILDLIFE

Wildlife crimes affect everyone. The Pennsylvania Game Commission's Operation Game Thief program serves to protect wild birds and wild mammals and encourages those who have information related to wildlife crimes to report details as soon as possible.

To report information, call the Operation Game Thief's toll-free hotline – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – at 1-888-PGC-8001 or fill out an online form at <http://bit.ly/PGCOGT>.

Calls to the Operation Game Thief hotline are always answered by a secure recording device. Although it is beneficial to provide contact information in case game wardens have follow-up questions, callers may remain confidential. Learn more about the program here: <http://bit.ly/PGCOGT>.



TUNE IN TO CALL OF THE OUTDOORS

Call of the Outdoors is the Pennsylvania Game Commission's podcast, hosted by Marketing Bureau Director Matt Morrett. New episodes featuring guests from within the agency, as well as hunters, public figures and more, are published each month.

The episodes feature unique and relevant issues, explaining Pennsylvania hunting and wildlife-related subjects and provides listeners with better ways to explore, promote and understand our natural resources. Call of the Outdoors episodes are available on www.callofthe-outdoorspgc.com, Apple Podcasts, Google Play Store, iHeartRadio, Spotify and Stitcher.



REMOTE LEARNING RESOURCES AVAILABLE: WILDLIFE ON WiFi

Wildlife on WiFi (WoW) is the Pennsylvania Game Commission's award-winning virtual wildlife education program and is available [by clicking here](#) or visiting www.pgc.pa.gov. The program's vision is to connect Pennsylvania residents to their state's wildlife agency from anywhere.

WoW provides wildlife enthusiasts – especially educators, students, parents and high-risk health communities – with home-based conservation and wildlife science education activities and lessons, virtual field trips and events, and social media games.



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Pennsylvania Game Commission

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION: YOUR STATE WILDLIFE AGENCY

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Phone: 814-432-3187

SOUTHWEST REGION: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland counties
4820 Route 711, Bolivar, PA 15923 | Phone: 724-238-9523

NORTHCENTRAL REGION: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Union counties
1566 South Route 44 Highway, Post Office Box 5038, Jersey Shore, PA 17740-5038 | Phone: 570-398-4744

SOUTHCENTRAL REGION: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, York counties
8627 William Penn Highway, Huntingdon, PA 16652
Phone: 814-643-1831

NORTHEAST REGION: Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming counties
3917 Memorial Highway, Dallas, PA 18612-0220
Phone: 570-675-1143

SOUTHEAST REGION: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill counties
253 Snyder Road, Reading, PA 19605 | Phone: 610-926-3136

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