

# County Hunter News

February 2019  
Volume 15 Issue 2

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation.

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz. The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at [ch.W6RK.com](http://ch.W6RK.com)

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:

<http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm>

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

<http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm>

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can

find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://marac.org/awards.pdf>

The CW net procedure is written up at:

<http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm>

There is a lot more information at [www.countyhunter.com](http://www.countyhunter.com) . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at [www.CHNewsonline.com](http://www.CHNewsonline.com)

De N4CD, Bob Voss, Editor (email: [telegraphy@verizon.net](mailto:telegraphy@verizon.net) )

## Notes from the Editor

### **N4CD Rumblings**

Winter is definitely here – with major snow storms across the midwest and east coast reining in mobile activity quite a bit from summer months. Heck, many of the northern parks are 'closed for the season' or have limited activities – including snowmobiling and snow-shoeing and cross country skiing for the day. Most of the campgrounds are snowed in. Roads have not been in great shape up 'north'. However, soon we'll have some interesting state QSO Parties in Feb – beginning of QSO Party season with several good ones coming up. Those folks in MN will be out on the icy/snowy roads going hundreds of miles!

Many days there have been just one mobile out – and a few state parks on the air from around the country. Weekends have seen more park activity. We have another couple months of winter up north, maybe 2 months down south before 'spring' arrives. The leaves have finally fallen off the big oak tree out front – all 50,000 of them it seems. Next up is stringy yellow pollen season here.

I'll be out mobiling around the area on some trips – but nothing major till the MI Mini is planned. Hope we get a good crowd again up north.

I've made plans for Dayton Hamvention. How about you? It's a shame we don't have a county hunter forum but no one volunteered to pick it up so it died a few years ago. Maybe we can still meet at the Golden Corral Friday afternoon? Who knows?

Dennis is once again collecting CW Stats at year end 2019. Send him your end year stats soon. He'll compile them by the end of Feb, say Feb 25, and you'll see them hopefully in March. Don't delay – get them in pronto.

## On the Road with N4CD 1

A month had gone by with no serious road trip, so the time was ripe for a good jaunt over to Louisiana for some counties and parks. Folks always need some of the counties north of the interstate (I-20) so I'd try and hit all of them along with parks. Luckily there is a park or National Wildlife Area in just about each of the parishes in LA, sometimes more than one in the parish. LA doesn't have 'counties' – they call them parishes and you'll see signs like 'Bossier Parish' as you enter it!

The Democrat Government “Shutdown” would continue as Pelosi and Schumer, despite their previous great support of building 650 miles of wall under Presidents Clinton and Obama, would keep things in limbo for the National Wildlife Refuges as they refused to negotiate one bit. It is 'no no no' to anything President Trump wanted to do. From the government website:

“ Due to the lapse in federal appropriations, this website will not be updated until further notice. Where public access to refuge lands does not require the presence of a federal employee or contractor, activities on refuge lands will be allowed to continue on the same terms as before the appropriations lapse. Any entry onto Refuge System property during this period of federal government shutdown is at the visitor's sole risk. Please read this important updated message about the closure of National Wildlife Refuge System facilities during the shutdown, and refer to alerts posted on individual refuge websites for the status of visitor facilities and previously scheduled events that may still occur during the shutdown.”

I was hoping that would not impact my plans. I don't need 'visitor centers' as I seldom stop at them.

Some of the National Parks did indeed shut down – due to piles of garbage and in some cases vandalism at Joshua Tree out in CA. Others had volunteers helping to haul the mounds of garbage out like in Yellowstone.

## **Sunday Jan 6 2019**

I packed up the car and headed out on a Sunday morning early – over to the I-20 headed east after I got out of the Dallas Ft Worth Metroplex. Since it was a weekend, traffic was light and moving well. Two hours later I was right near **Tyler State Park** – KFF-3059/K-3059 so I stopped by for a short visit there in Smith County, TX. No need to get 44Qs. Anything over 10 counted as an 'activation' for the Parks on the Air program. For WWFF, you don't get credit for more than one activation. This has been well run with hundreds of QSOs made from here. Weather was good – sun and no rain in forecast for 4 days. This park was built by the CCC folks back in the 1930s. Short time visit here – time to get to LA for the parks there!

Most of the 'state parks' in LA had been well run. Someone must go camping and set up – and put out the parks. Most have 100+ QSOs so they weren't rare or needed. Most of the Wildlife Refuges were ATNO's. Never run and 'All Time New Ones' for the park chasers. That can be fun as many try to work you for that entity.

Next up 2 hours later was **Soda Lakes NWR** – KFF-4083/K-4083 in Caddo Parish LA. To date, this had all of 2 'activations' with a total of 6 QSOs. Sounds like someone went there and worked a buddy on 2M FM – hi hi. I'd get it 'activated' with many more QSOs I hoped!

From the LA website:

“Soda Lake WMA was historically a seasonal lake that flooded during late winter and spring. A similar water regime continues today, but only the bluffs located on the western edge of the WMA remain above flood level. The lower elevation habitat is a broken woodland consisting of willow, cottonwood, ash, hackberry, and overcup oak. Due to annual flooding, the understory is very sparse and contains rattan, peppervine, dewberry, and sawbriars. Open areas support wild millet, smartweed, and several species of grasses.

The rugged escarpment of Twelve Mile Bayou on the western edge of the area supports a diverse, old growth forest. Approximately 35 acres in size, this forest is a unique natural upland plant community of shortleaf pine, sweetgum, and white, post, cherrybark, shumard, and cow oak. The dominant trees are estimated to be 100 to 130 years old. Two rare plants, American alumroot (*Heuchra americana* L.) and lowland brittle fern (*Cystopteris protrusa* Bernh.) have been found growing on the north and east-facing bluffs.

LDWF manages Soda Lake WMA primarily as a refuge for migrant waterfowl and songbirds. The WMA also provides year-round habitat for a diverse population of resident songbirds, mammals, and insects.

Soda Lake WMA is located about 15 miles north of Shreveport, approximately 1 mile east of LA Hwy 1. There is a public boat launch which can be accessed through the WMA parking area on the south side of LA Hwy 169”



Ah.....Louisiana – land of bayous and swamps. You need to pick your spots carefully as often the road to and through the NWR (which might be on both sides of the road) is elevated and there are no turns offs. If you go off the two lane road, you go into the swamp, and that might be 2 feet off the side of the road with a steep bank. If you are going to activate any of these, check out the LA website and look for parking areas, boat ramps (usually very good with parking and open areas), etc. Check the map ahead of

time and plan your route otherwise, you might get there and be 'looking at it' from the road, unable to stop or find a place that is 'in' the NWR/WMA other than the highway.

Got my 44 plus so headed on out to the next which was the **Red River National Wildlife Refuge** in Bossier Parish, LA.

From the fed website:

“Red River National Wildlife Refuge is made up of four units in the Red River Valley in northwestern Louisiana. ... The refuge is important to waterfowl, wading birds and songbirds especially.

The Red River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was created legislatively by the Red River National Wildlife Refuge Act - signed into law on October 13, 2000. According to legislation, the refuge shall consist of approximately 50,000 acres of Federal lands and waters along that section of the Red River between Colfax, Louisiana and the Arkansas state line, a distance of approximately 120 miles.

Red River NWR is located in the Red River Valley which historically was forested with bottomland hardwoods, cypress sloughs and shrub/scrub swamps, providing a variety of habitats for wildlife. In the early 1800's, settlers began clearing land for homesteads and farms after the Louisiana Purchase. The mid-1800's brought more clearing for cotton farming and during the mid-1900's, deforestation accelerated with the increase in soybean prices.



In 1870, Captain Shreve began clearing log jams to make the Red River more navigable and attempts to improve navigation continued with the completion of the lock and dam system in 1994. Completion of the Red River Waterway Project in 1994 led to higher and more consistent water levels in the river which has greatly reduced the turbidity. Water quality has improved and with the seasonal retention of water levels, a rich diversity of aquatic plants has developed.

Increased water levels on the river also improved conditions for some wildlife. Flooded timber and farm fields with wet, depressional areas are now more common and are being used by wading birds, waterfowl, and other animals. USDA programs such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are restoring valuable wildlife habitat through the reforestation of marginal farmlands and highly erodible lands in the Red River Valley.

Once the 50,000 acres has been acquired, the refuge will connect with other conservation areas reducing habitat fragmentation and providing wildlife corridors and stop-over areas for migrating waterfowl and songbirds.”

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There's a unit close in to Bossier City and I stopped by. Again, if you are going to do these, print off the maps, write down instructions on how to get to the various units and make your decision – and have a back up plan, too! I found the close in unit, and had a good run even though it was getting later in the day. There's a bit of QRN there but you can work through it easily on, not so easily on 40M cw.

Now I know why they call it Shreveport – from the old days of river boats on the Red River over 100 years ago.....and Captain Shreve. You learn something new every day.

After this run, I headed on in to the Super 8 in Bossier City. Dinner at the China Flag Buffet – very good. Drove 265 miles today, most of them just getting to LA from home, and ran 3 parks.

## **Monday Jan 7 2019**

Today it was off to the south of I-20 to **Bayou Pierre**, KFF-4046 in Red River Parish. This was an ATNO so I hoped it would be popular. Part of this is in Red River Parish, part in Desoto.



From the LA state webpage:

“Located in the Red River Alluvial Valley, Bayou Pierre WMA has flat terrain with only a 5-foot change in elevation across the entire area. Bayou Pierre bisects the WMA. With poorly draining soil, the area is subject to periodic annual flooding.

During the mid-1900s, farmers cleared the area’s bottomland hardwood forest and drained the area. After several failed farming attempts, the property was deeded to LDWF in 1992.

Bayou Pierre WMA has drainages, wet weather ponds, sloughs, reforested areas, grasslands, and wildlife openings that create habitat favorable for a diverse wildlife community. LDWF has developed four distinct types of wildlife habitat on the WMA:

- A 160-acre moist soil waterfowl refuge
- 800 acres in ridge and swale topography/reforested bottomland hardwoods
- 200-plus acres in reforested hardwood
- Planted dove fields and open grasslands.”

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I found a nice access point and ran the park/parish with a good run. Only a few DX stations made it through so it was mostly US stations and mostly county hunters that provided most of the contacts. After the run, I looked at the map, and heck Desoto Parish was a few miles away on highway 82 going east – so I zipped over to the parish line, crossed it....and serendipity, found another parking lot for the Bayou Pierre WMA



right there, so stopped there and added in a few more people to the count for the park! Think some of the county hunters were snoozing as they figured same park -same parish.....but it wasn't!

Getting to the next park was not so easy. It was only 10 miles away as the birds fly, but they can go over miles of swamp and open water. Not me! It was over an hour to get those 10 miles by heading either 20 miles north, then 20 miles back south on the other side of the bayou, or heading 22 miles south and 22 miles back north to reach it. Less traffic to the south so that's the way I went to Loggy Bottom WMA.

This turned out to be a big mess for me. I followed the directions from the web site for access from the south. You head off on a smaller road, that leads to a smaller road, that gets you to Swan Lake Road and into the Wildlife Management area. OK....zip on along and you find that when you get to the turn for Swan Lake Road....it's CLOSED! 300 feet ahead is a bridge totally under reconstruction – and no way to get through. Hmm....backtrack 15 miles and head to the 'north part' which supposedly has access. Time lost. More frustrating it's still in Bossier Parish which I already ran yesterday.

So I head another 20 miles to the north around things to get to the north access. I drive down the main road highway 154 and you can see the WMA to the south of the road. No obviously way to get there. No signs either! I drive a few miles each way scanning for an access road and a way in. The website says there's access 'just past the bridge'. I see zero signs for it nor anything resembling a typical road in.

After 30 minutes of hunting finally pull up the WMA map (big file to download mobile) and see there is a road of sorts just past the bridge – Houghton Road. Looks more like a driveway but, heck, I've run out of options. I head on it....a few houses and it turns to narrow lane with some trailers along it for the next 2 miles. Drive another few miles and, OK, I guess I'm in the NWR signs as there is a self check in station. Find a spot to run it.....now an hour or more behind planned schedule, and fortunately have a good run otherwise I'd be ticked off. About 50% county hunters, 50% park chasers. I appreciate those contacts even if it is the same county/parish as I need 44 to qualify for the park run. I'm trying to recruit some of the park chasers into county hunters, and get some of the former county hunters back into county hunting – a few are around but seldom work 'just counties'. With not all that much activity though for county hunting, it's a tough call. Many do show up in the state QSO parties to make them interesting. On the other hand, there's usually a couple parks a day on the air, and on weekends, maybe 4 to 8 different parks – mostly on SSB, mostly on 40M back east.

From the LA state website:

“**Loggy Bayou WMA** lies between Loggy and Red Chute Bayous and Lake Bistineau in the Red River Alluvial Valley in northwestern Louisiana. The WMA is one of the few remaining bottomland hardwood areas in northwest Louisiana. The WMA’s terrain is flat with approximately 90 percent of the area subject to annual flooding from backwaters of the Red River.

When it was purchased, the WMA consisted of approximately half overgrazed cattle pasture and half severely overgrazed, poor quality, bottomland forest. Several hundred acres of agricultural fields were planted in the early 1970s and 1980s in preferred oak species. Seedlings planted over two decades ago are now producing quality habitat for a variety of wildlife populations.

Today, dominant tree species are hackberry, ash, elm, honey locust, pecan, and overcup, water, willow and nuttall oak. LDWF plants several hundred acres of the open fields and forested areas in pecan and nuttall, water, and cherrybark oak seedlings. The understory consists of red haws, rattan, trumpet vine, and dewberry. In the field areas, the main understory species are poison ivy, vetch, and fescue along with hardwood and honey locust sprouts. Every year, LDWF fallow disks or plants wildlife openings on approximately 50 acres.”

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OK....when one of the main understory specie is 'poison ivy' I'll think I'll avoid heading deep into this area off the road! Yuck!

Next up was **Lake Bistineau State Park**. Most of the state parks have been well activated, with over 237 QSOs made from here by Norm, N9MM, a fellow park activator. He takes his motor home and spends a few days at each park. I added in another bunch, got enough contacts to get my 44+ Qs.

From the LA website:

“Lake Bistineau dates back over 200 years. It began in 1800 when several thousand acres of land were flooded due to a gigantic log jam in the Red River. Gradually, however, as the area was dredged, the lake began to drain. Then in 1935, a permanent dam was built across Loggy Bayou, creating the present-day Lake Bistineau. The dam has since been enlarged, giving the reservoir a surface area of 26.9 square miles, with an average depth of seven feet and maximum depth of 25 feet.”

One of the nice things about LA state parks is that the \$3 entrance fee is waived for those over 62! Free.



Nice park and a many nice places to run it in Webster Parish LA. Today I didn't get very far west – so had to backtrack to Bossier City and the same Super 8 motel for another night. Also, another visit to the China Flag Buffet!

### **January 8 2019 Tuesday**

Today, several of the YL operators would work me on CW. These include Julie, K8VOX (near Traverse City MI), and Kerry KB3WAV – big time park activator back MD way, and Judy, AA5UZ. And maybe AB7NK, Mary, or AG6V, Donna would be in there from the county hunter side

First up – **Bodcau NWR** in Bossier Parish (again!).....sometimes there are multiple parks to run an a county – KFF 4051. However, no one had been here before – virgin territory!

“Bodcau WMA gets its name from Bodcau Bayou, the major bayou that bisects it from its northernmost point at the Arkansas-Louisiana state line to its southernmost tip nearly 30 miles to the south. The area is long and narrow with an average width of 1-1/2 miles. Ivan Lake is on Bodcau WMA, and there is also a manmade dam and seasonal flood reservoir which were built to control downstream flooding.

Bodcau WMA contains a wide range of wildlife habitat ranging from cypress swamps to upland pine and hardwood forests interspersed with grasslands and open fields. Many species of grasses and forbs typically found in states west of Louisiana can be found growing in the grassland areas. There are numerous seasonally flooded sloughs, beaver ponds, and large areas of flatland, bottomland, hardwood forests. The bottomland forest rapidly merges with the upland forest on a series of ridges that extend into the bottomland area.

The main bottomland tree species include bald cypress and water, overcup, willow, and cow oaks. Shortleaf and loblolly pine; white, red, and cherrybark oaks; sweetgum; and elm trees dominate upland forests. Understory species in the bottomland area include poison ivy, honeysuckle, rattan, buttonbush, and swamp privet. Upland understory species include blackberry, honeysuckle, poison ivy, beautyberry, and sawbriar.

LDWF, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, manages and develops habitat on Bodcau WMA through prescribed burning, fallow disking, supplemental food plantings, water level manipulation, and timber harvest. These practices help to provide quality habitat for game and non-game species.”

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Had a good run. More poison ivy so needless to say, I didn't wander off into the woods!

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Next was **Lake Claiborne State Park**, KFF-2366 in Claiborne Parish. Norm, N9NM, had already been here with 188Qs made there in 2 days. He goes camping, but uses a portable setup – KX3 and a tall vertical on a tripod with one radial – essentially a full size vertical for 20m. Same for 30 and 40m. I'd add another 74.



“Lake Claiborne State Park is a popular recreation site located in Claiborne Parish, northwestern Louisiana, USA. It was opened in 1974 and is 643 acres in size. The park provides access to scenic Lake Claiborne, a 6,400-acre man-made water body formed by

damming Bayou D'Arbonne”.

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Had a good run – lots of county hunters, some DX but not many, and good runs on 20/30/40m. Ran 20m SSB in some of the parks but few chasers – too close to the east coast for it to catch the majority of CH who seem to congregate there.

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Next up – another state park – **Lake D'Arbonne** in Union Parish, LA. Over 260 QSOs made already from here by W5LA, K5BIU and Norm, N9MM. I'd add a few more and most of the county hunters didn't catch those activations.



Hmmm...my picture taking through the front windshield sometimes doesn't yield a nice picture!

70Q went in the log over the next hour or so. Could I get in one more today? Off to D'Arbonne NWR KFF-0307. Parts of it are in Union and Ouchita. I headed for the Ouachita part!

From the LA website:

“**D'Arbonne NWR**, located north of West Monroe, Louisiana, lies on the western edge of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. It was established in 1975 to protect bottomland hardwood forest and provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. Additionally, the refuge provides habitat for alligators, bald eagles, the little known Rafinesque's big-eared bat, and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. The refuge is bisected by 13 miles of Bayou D'Arbonne, a stream in the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System, and is crisscrossed by numerous creeks, sloughs and oxbow lakes. Cypress

swamps, bottomland hardwood and upland forests complete the landscape that is habitat for a diverse group of plants and animals.

In years of normal or above rainfall, the refuge's bottomland hardwood forest is a very important overflow area for the Ouachita River floodplain. High water levels, which usually occur between January and May, can flood up to 87% of the refuge. The wetland forests not only provide habitat to wetland dependent wildlife, they also reduce damage from flooding in developed areas, filter silt and other particles from the water, help neutralize pollutants and provide recharge areas for aquifers.”

There are half a dozen good spots to run this along the main highway with pull offs and signs! Very nice! Some in Union Parish, some in Ouchita.



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61Q were entered into the log – so I was a happy camper. I headed in to the Super 8 in West Monroe. Dinner at a nearby Mexican place.

### **Wednesday Jan 9, 2019**

First up today – and EARLY – is **Black Bayou Lake NWR** – KFF-0301 in Ouachita Parish LA (again). However, it is Wednesday and time for the early session CWT at 1300z. Now all I have to do it get up at 5:37am, get to breakfast at 6am, and be on the road at 6:30 headed for this NWR. If I get there before 7am local time, I can get the hour of the CWT to rack up contacts for the park.

In the morning, most of the activity is 40 and 80m. I don't carry an 80m antenna – guess from TX, 80m gets you barely to the edges of the state, so I don't bother with one.

There should be some good action on 40m. No one has activated this one either for the parks.



From the web:

“Black Bayou Lake is a 5300 acre refuge providing habitat for waterfowl, endangered wildlife, neo-tropical migrants, and resident wildlife. Located within the city limits of Monroe, the refuge provides easily accessible opportunities for local residents to spend time in nature as well as options for fishing and hunting. A variety of habitats are represented at the refuge. Bottomland hardwood forests provide habitat for a variety of species including prothonotary warblers. A cypress swamp showcases the stereotypical Louisiana of swamps and bald cypress that shelter a variety of species from broad-banded water snakes to a multitude of frogs. The 1600 acre lake provides a variety of recreational opportunities including fishing and canoeing. Through a strong environmental education program, we also serve as a destination for field-trips for local students. A variety of interpretive programs provide opportunities for visitors to learn more about the ecosystems represented at the refuge. The lake is the back-up water source for the City of Monroe and is managed under a 99 year lease by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure water quality. “

OK....neo-tropical migrants....new term for me – hihi. I get there just before 7am (1300z) and get into the fray for CWT – which zips along at 25+ wpm – but just calls, name and CWO number (or state if none). I work it for 1 hour – just a few QSO on 20m at this time of morning.

At 1400, the CWT ends and the bands go quiet – very quiet. I start on 40m cw and work

my way up to 30 and 20m. After another 40 minutes, a bunch of county hunters and park hunters are in the log, too. Leave with 100 QSOs. Success!

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I'm headed to **Upper Ouachita NWR**. Missed it on the west side, but you can run it both east and west sides according to the web. OK.....I follow the instructions and head to 'Hang Out' road. GPS lady knows where it is at. Wow....bumpy horrible road getting to it - 25 mph and full of potholes to dodge – then it gets worse once you find Hang Out road. 15-20 mph and it still rattles the bones. It's 1 ½ lanes, half paved with major large potholes, half gravel sections a few hundred feet long with potholes, too. Not much traffic. None. I'm it. I'm looking for Meter Station Road which should take me into the NWR. Well, dang.....Here's what the road should look like:



Seems like the bayou has it's own mind and extends all across the road a couple feet deep! Oops.....Plan A doesn't work and there doesn't seem to be a Plan B. I turn around and head to the next. 10 miles of horrible road to get back to the main highway. 45 minutes wasted. Had to skip this one. I'll run it from the west side if I ever head back this way!



Some you win. Some you are flooded out! Happens with county hunting too – been on many detours when roads are closed due to 'bridge out' or construction in OH, WV, KY and other places!

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Well, let's try another NWR – they are not always so easy to find Handy Brake NWR KFF-0310 is up next.

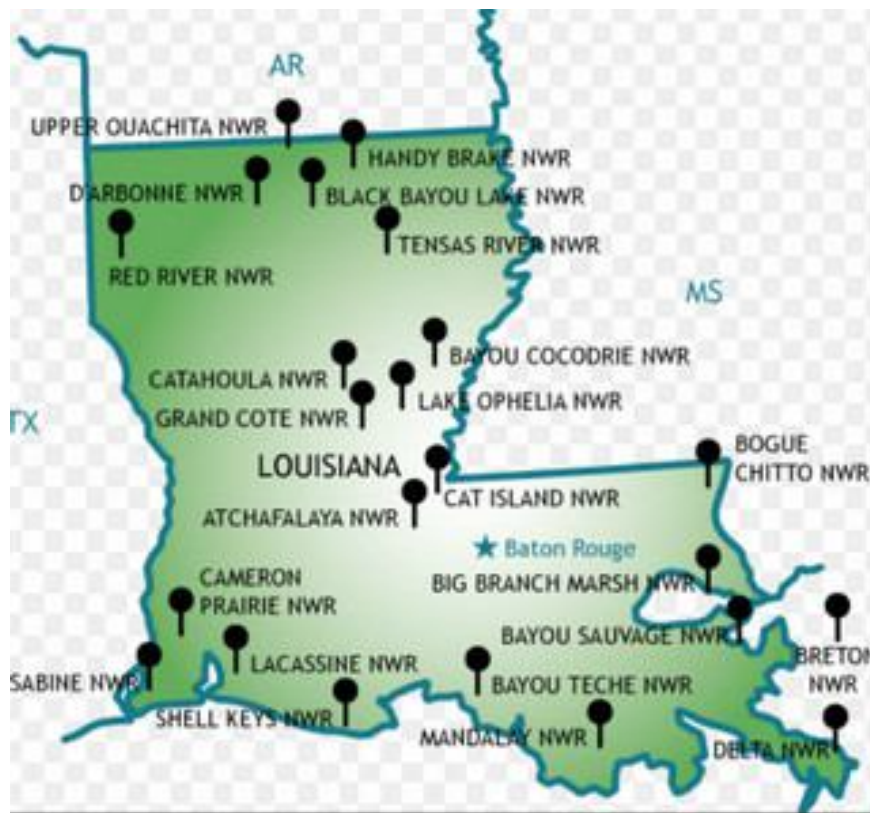
I finally get there and put it out.

From the web:

**Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuge** is located just north of Bastrop in Morehouse Parish, north central Louisiana. The refuge was established in 1988 with the southeast's first fee title transfer of a Farmer's Home Administration tract (466 acres) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A free lease of 38 acres from International Paper Company increased the refuge to the current 501 acres. An observation platform overlooks a permanent wetland, which is excellent habitat for wintering waterfowl, wading birds and many other wetland dependent species.

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In case you get park activation fever, here's a pictorial of the National Wildlife Refuges in LA



There's a bunch of them – but the south ones likely are tricky to get too. Some actually require a boat to get into! Not all are valid for parks but most are.

Then you can add in Wildlife Management Areas and State Parks and a few historic sites for others to run!

Here's a map of the LA State Parks



So far, I've just hit the top row or so – even after this trip! Lots for the LA folks to give out.

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Next up is an easy to find state parks. Nearly all of them are where they are supposed to be! And have good signs getting you to the park, plus the GPS lady knows where they all are located! However, it's in the same parish – not good, but the county hunters helped me out – reaching 44+ QSOs.

**Chemin-A-Haut State Park** , KFF-2358, is in Moorehouse Parish, LA

from the web:

“Chemin-A-Haut State Park is a 503-acre site located in northern Morehouse Parish, Louisiana. Visitors may access the park from U.S. Highway 425 about 10 miles north of Bastrop. Chemin-à-Haut means "High Road" in French. Much of the park is on a high bluff overlooking winding Bayou Bartholomew”



Hmmm....sun glare didn't help the picture.....had good weather so far – temps in the high 60s and at 70 so far on the trip. Not bad for January!

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Next up – **Big Colewa Bayou WMA** in West Carroll, LA. KFF – 4048 in the system. The CWT was raging. I'd missed most of it, but caught the last 15 minutes or so and racked up 20 QSO to get a head start toward the 44+ Q requirement. It runs at 1900-2000z on Wednesdays as well as the early session at 1300z. An hour each time. So folks work 100 stations in that hour. I usually can do about 45 or 50 as I search and pounce.

“Received as a donation through federal bankruptcy proceedings in 1994 and 1998, Big Colewa Bayou WMA consists of six separate units:

- Bearskin (borders the Boeuf River with about 4,715 feet of frontage)
- Big Colewa (straddles Big Colewa Bayou)
- Redwing
- New Prospect
- Plum Grove
- New Hope.

On all units except Bearskin, the terrain is basically flat, varying only 10 feet in elevation—85 to 95 feet above sea level. Most of the Bearskin unit is also flat, but elevation changes abruptly near the banks of the Boeuf River, from 70 to 100 feet above sea level. Roadways, pipelines, sloughs, and bayous provide some diversity throughout the area's terrain.

Timber species on the various tracts include willow, water, and delta post oak; sweetgum; hackberry; sassafras; cedar and American elm; and pignut hickory. Bald cypress, green ash, bitter pecan, overcup oak, and black willow are found along small stream drainages. Principle understory and mid-story species include palmetto, rattan, greenbrier, trumpet creeper, **poison ivy**, peppervine, Japanese honeysuckle, hawthorn, deciduous holly, and swamp dogwood. LDWF has planted approximately 400 acres of agricultural land in hardwood trees.”

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Wonder if the IRS had anything to do with this – hi hi. I visited the Bearskin unit as it was conveniently in West Carroll, LA. Found the place, but never found a sign for it. Asked the mail lady along the way, and she said – go to the stop sign, turn right, and you are there – but she didn't know the name of it or if there was a sign. Found it – found a spot to run it – and did. Success here with enough QSOs.

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It's getting late in the day. There's another park unit in West Carroll. Dragan, K0AP, needs this parish. Maybe he'll show up so I head to **Poverty Point National Monument** FF-0958. . This was well run in 2016 during National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) but not since. OK....some new park chasers are in the game, and it's in West Carroll, LA – a tough one to get sometimes for the county hunters. Can't hang around long, though.

From the web:

“Poverty Point State Historic Site is a prehistoric earthwork constructed by the Poverty Point culture. The Poverty Point site is located in present-day northeastern Louisiana though evidence of the Poverty Point culture extends throughout much of the Southeastern United States

The culture extended 100 miles (160 km) across the Mississippi Delta and south to the Gulf Coast. Located in the Southern United States, the site is 15.5 miles (24.9 km) from

the current flow of the Mississippi River.

The Poverty Point site is made of earthen ridges and mounds, built between 1700 and 1100 BC during the Late Archaic period in North America. Archaeologists have proposed a variety of possible functions for the site including as a settlement, a trading center, and/or a ceremonial religious complex.

The 402-acre site has been described as "the largest and most complex Late Archaic earthwork occupation and ceremonial site yet found in North America". The site was discovered in the modern era in the early 20th century and has been the focus of professional excavations since the 1950s .

Now a nearly forgotten culture, Poverty Point at its peak 3,000 years ago was part of an enormous trading network that stretched for hundreds of miles across the continent. It was - and is - also an engineering marvel, the product of five million hours of labor. “



OK....I'd skip the sight seeing and try to get runs in before the band shut and the sun disappeared. I don't like driving at night on strange roads!

Since I had run this before successfully, I just zipped along on 30m and 40m, with only 1 QSO on 20M – N6PDB. 20M was essentially gone this time of the afternoon. Maybe I could get one more park in if I hustled.

Ah, but first a few mile detour to East Carroll, LA. No park – just put out the county fast- 40/30/20 then got outta there pronto.

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Down the road 15 miles or so now to **Poverty Point Reservoir State Park**, KFF-2373 in Richland Parish. Again, others had run the state parks – over 200Q here including 90 on cw by N9MM. Maybe I could get my 44Q? I get there at 4:10 local time. The park closes for day use at 5pm! Oh, I've got to hustle. Can I do it? You've got to check in. Do it quickly. “Over 62” gets you in free! Head for the first open area I see and start the run at 4:15pm. Only 45 minutes to snag 44 contacts. Going to be a nail biter!

From the web:

“Poverty Point Reservoir State Park is a state park in Richland Parish in northeastern Louisiana located along a 2,700 acres man-made reservoir offering camping and watersport activities, swimming, hiking, and fishing.”

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20m is dead this time of day, so start on 30m. 20 QSOs go in the log. Then to 40M for more. It's a new parish so the county hunters are showing up. One QSO on 20M with the west coast in the log. At 5pm, I've reached 45 QSOs! One spare! (or if I counted wrong).....the log has a few cross outs and corrections – and I'm busy working folks, not keeping track too well of how many. If I don't get my 44, I'll come back the 20 miles out of the way tomorrow – but I'd rather not do that.

Leave happy and head to the Days Inn in Rayville – a strange place – 17 miles west. Seems not too many staying there but I'm in an upstairs room. Nice room. Head to Little Johnny's Steakhouse – one of the few sit down places in town to eat – despite 10 fast food places from Burger King, McD, Popeyes -Fried Chicken, etc. Even at Johnny's, most of the menu is 'fried this' or fried that. Fried shrimp. Fried chicken nuggets. Fried 'seafood bits'. Way down at bottom of menu in smaller print is rib eye steak – 6oz, with sweet potato and trip to salad bar (limited stuff). I opt for that and it's decent. I thought this was a 'steak house' – hi hi. Few eating steak here. Head back to Days Inn a mile away. It gets dark here early by 5pm at this time of year.

### **Thursday Jan 10, 2019**

In the morning, there's no breakfast at the Days Inn! They give you a coupon for the McDonald 400 feet away for a breakfast sandwich and coffee. That's it. OK, I wander over there and have my breakfast. No fruit, juice, but I can do McD Egg White Delight McMuffins fine. Decaf coffee.

It's cold outside! The days of 60s and 70 high temps are over for a while. Now it's 32 F and COLD! It's not going to warm up too much today but it's not raining – just lots of clouds and some sun. The rain comes tomorrow and I plan to be gone.

So far there had been no other mobile out running on any cw band. I could sit on the CHN frequencies to keep them clear of random QSOs and CQ'ers. The SKCC folks often wander onto the 20m net freq, and you hear folks using 10.124 for QSOs, too. If no one else is out running, might as well 'occupy' the net freq, even though some runs on 20m might go 15 or 20 minutes. Today, W8OP would run a few counties up in WV so I'd check the spots first to make sure we didn't collide. It appeared he was spotting himself as well. On SSB, AB7NK and K7SEN had been working their way from AZ to TX and I caught up with them, or vice versa, a few times on CW. They only run on SSB (and CW by request only).

In the early mornings, 20M is open to EU and maybe the coasts, but not much in between. So you start on 40 and 30m and maybe by the time those runs are done, 20M is perking up a bit. You never know these days. Sometimes 20M goes entirely flat mid day with it tough just getting 10 QSOs there from central US locations as the skip is 'too long'. If the SFI is 68, 20M is poor. It's better with SFI of 70 or 71 and low A and K indexes.

**First up is Russell Sage WMA.** Interstate I-20 runs right through it, but no way to stop and run it that way. So I headed off to local route 80 which parallels the interstate – I guess it was the main route 50-60 years ago before the interstate was done. I get off I-20 about 5 miles west of Rayville, head north one mile, and see a sign as I turn on 80 westbound. “Road closed 5 miles ahead”. Hmmmm.....is that before or after the access road to the south off of Route 80? The web page says it's 8 miles east of Rayville on this route. Hmmmm...check GPS lady and she says it's 6.5 miles back to center of Rayville, airline miles. However, likely the miles are from the border of Rayville. Hope my luck holds as I head west. Sure enough, five miles later, the bridge is out and under construction. Just before you can't go any further, and think you're out of luck, you see a small dirt road headed south at the barricade. Take it and it leads right into the WMA. Yippee. Find a spot not too far in, next to the sign and run it. Some QRN from somewhere but not too bad. When you find the sign like this, you know you've reached the WMA.





A few DX, mostly CH, and a good bunch of park hunters allow me to reach 44Q+. K5BIU, a local, has been here a few times. I added to the total for the park in Richland Parish.

Some info about the park from the LA website:

“Russell Sage WMA forms one of the largest remaining tracts of the vast bottomland hardwood forests that historically composed the lower Mississippi River floodplain from lower Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico. Russell Sage WMA was the very first LDWF-owned WMA. LDWF purchased 15,000 acres of the property in 1960. . In total, LDWF owns 34,018 acres of the property, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owns 2,955 acres, and the Ouachita Parish School Board owns 1,240 acres.

Located within the Bayou LaFourche floodplain, Russell Sage WMA is flat, poorly drained, and subject to annual winter and spring flooding. Elevations range from 55 to 63 feet above sea level. Numerous sloughs and shallow bayous meander throughout the property, and there is annual backwater flooding. Abandoned and active mineral exploration and production sites, roadways, pipelines, open water lakes, sloughs, and bayous provide diversity throughout the area.

The forest canopy contains a mixture of bottomland hardwoods grouped into two major timber types: oak-elm-ash and overcup oak-bitter pecan (water hickory). There are smaller areas of cypress-tupelo, gum, and black willow. Individual tree species include

honey locust, cedar and winged elm, sweetgum, sugarberry, green ash, red maple, cottonwood, nutmeg and bitternut hickory, and nuttall, willow, and delta post oak. Common woody understory species include peppervine, deciduous holly, **poison ivy**, rattan, swamp privet, buttonbush, climbing dogbane, palmetto, greenbrier, dewberry, roughleaf dogwood, trumpet creeper, persimmon, box elder, grape, and hawthorn.”

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Never heard of this Russell Sage dude? Ah, he was one of the wealthiest folks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and made a fortune as a financial guru buying up the beginning railroads. He bought smaller railroad lines and consolidated them into larger systems. He often partnered with Jay Gould. He served in Congress as a Representative in the House and bought a stock market 'seat'. When he died, he left his fortune to his second wife, who used the fortune for philanthropic purposes, including founding Russell Sage Women's College in Troy, NY and funding buildings and labs on the RPI Campus. There's the main EE lab building she donated the funds for – as well as dorms and a dining hall. The foundation she set up is still funding research around the country over 100 years later. It's got an endowment (as of 2015) of 275 million and 15 million a year in income and gives out 14 million a year in grants.

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I'm headed west today – maybe even get home if my luck holds. The weather forecast for tonight and Friday is rain and gloom all day. It's no fun driving in drizzling rain on strange roads hunting for park entities. So my time in LA was about up. I'd hit two more parks today – and either find a motel to hunker down, or zip on home.

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Next up – another state park – **Jimmie Davis** down south of I-20 in Jackson Parish. Looks like Norm, N9MM was here for 3 or 4 days and made 250 plus QSOs on cw. Over 380Q from the park total. Maybe I could add in a few more – hi hi.

Started off on 20M and a good pileup ensued. 8 DX stations and lots of US stations on 20M cw. Then hit 30/40m and tried 20m SSB for six more. 99 total Qs here! Over half from county hunters.

From the web:

“Jimmie Davis State Park is one of twenty-two state parks in the U.S. state of Louisiana. It is located near Chatham in Jackson Parish on the northern shore of Caney Creek Lake, a 5,000 acres reservoir. “

I head to the boat launch area – which usually has a wide open large parking lot for the boat trailers/cars - usually deserted this time of year, especially with 40F type temps! No one there but me for 2 hours – and there's a porta potty there as well when you 'gotta go'. Nice lake – and probably great and popular in the summer time.

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Off to the last for this trip – **Kisatchie National Forest** in Webster Parish. I've run that Parish before, but who knows? Hope the county hunters show up. KFF-4577 or K-4486 and it looks like two others have been there for 80Q to date. Worse, there are different numbers between the two systems to make it a real mess! Above 4446, things can get messy between the two different systems – WWFF and POTA. This park spans half a dozen counties/parishes so you can run it from a lot of different places.



As I head north from Minden, just off I-20, you see the sign for the NF about five miles later. There's a recreation area ahead a few miles ahead likely a great spot to run it. I pull over to check internet connectivity. It's usually not great in 'forests' as no one lives there and the cellular folks won't waste resources covering 'trees'. Hmm...2 miles in and no internet. Nice road to the right into the NF, but won't work easily without spotting. I backtrack to near entrance and there's a gravel road off the main road but not

the best spot – hill to NE. I go in just a bit and check. Weak, weak, weak signal but it seems to just work. OK...this will be it. I spot myself on the various sites – POTA, WWFF, W6RK, and DX summit for 20m. It works. Success in reaching 44Qs as county hunters and park hunters show up on 20/30/40m cw. I'm done in 45 minutes and not going to stick around. It's either full speed ahead toward home, or plan on staying overnight and driving home in the rain tomorrow.

From the web:

“Kisatchie National Forest, the only National forest in Louisiana, United States, is located in the forested piney hills and hardwood bottoms of seven central and northern parishes. It is part of the Cenozoic uplands and has large areas of longleaf pine forests”

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Yep, those long leaf pine trees have just the right length to quickly absorb the 800 and 1800 MHz cell signals – hi hi.

It's now 2PM local time- and it's 4 hours to home if I hustle. Should I zip on home the couple hundred miles? It's all interstate and speed limit of 70 in LA and 75 mph in TX. If no accidents or slow downs, I'll be home by dinner time. There's nothing new to run nearby.

I've done 19 different parks, plus several county only runs – so I guess I've done enough for this trip. I put the pedal to the metal and head on west. I'm zipping along at 80-82 mph in TX with the traffic flow on I-20. Run two counties on the way home in TX but just green stampers. I'm busy driving – things fly by at 82 mph. At 125 feet per second speed, you've got to watch the road.....There's Tyler State Park but no time for a quick visit. That would take at least 30 minutes. Time is short.

At 5:00 pm I hit the Dallas FT-Worth Metroplex and the rush hour traffic. All moves well around the I-635 'beltway' till US-75 north when it gets to be creep and crawl, really for no reason at all, but it's always this way. I creep north for 10 miles and decide to stop at the Asian Buffet for dinner. Grab a quick dinner and head out to home. Home at 6:20pm. Whew!

Drove 380 miles today – including 3 parks with stops – and the trip was 1136 miles in five days. Fun with 19 park units activated (17 new ones for me). Over 1000 QSOs.

Thanks for riding along.

**Friday Jan 11, 2019**

The logs need to get done. So I type them in to Fast Log Entry, save the file, export an ADI file and send them off to the two database entry folks – one for WWFF, one for POTA. It takes a good part of the day to get them all done – over 1000 QSOs. Then I can rest for a while. Uploaded all QSOs to LoTW but only with location designator of Louisiana in case anyone is tracking WAS on multiple bands/modes there. .

Added 5 new 'Ninth Time CW counties' contacts to the N4CD logbook – self credit – and 3 new Double Diamond contacts. Three new Third Time Xmit counties were logged.

More trips in the planning stage here!

## North American QSO Party - CW

**Saturday Jan 12, 2019**

Decided to do my 100+ QSOs in the North American QSO Party on Jan 12. It runs from 1800z for 12 hours , or 12 noon till midnight central time. I was sort of 'radioed out' from the trip and logging, but heck, about 2:30 pm I decided to put the antenna on the car, head a few miles to the local town park (not a POTA) and see what I could work.

Zipped off 180Q in 3 hours. Heard only a few county hunters on – N8II was in there. Maybe missed the others if they weren't calling CQ. I did the search and pounce bit on 20m mostly, some on 40m as the afternoon wore on. About 5:30 local time I got hungry so pulled the plug on further operation, and headed to the Boston Market for dinner. My memory was fading too with all the calls. Had no check sheet here. I don't want to be working the same station twice... hihi. It helps to have a computer to do your logging/duping. After 100Q on a band, my 'buffer' runs out and it's time to move on. I forget who I've worked, who I tried to work but didn't make it yet.....

Worked HI and AK, an HC in South America, NP2 Virgin Islands, DC, Puerto Rico, a

dozen Canadians, 47+ states including HI and AK.....missed OK. Power is limited to 100w output. Your score, if you are keeping track, is the sum of multipliers per band (50 states, DC, 13 Canadian Provinces, and 'North American DX' per ARRL) times total QSOs. I wasn't interested in doing it for the score. There were half a dozen MT stations on, plus several SD, ID, DE, and other 'rare' states if you were hunting for them for various awards.

When home, typed in the written log to Fast Log Entry. Uploaded log to LoTW.

'Twas fun. If you operated from a home station, you could probably do 300-600 QSOs with not too much effort in the 12 hours. Who knows how many new band/counties you could work in 12 hours?

## Michigan Mini

The MI Mini hosted by Ed, K8ZZ, and Joe, W8TVT, will be held in Traverse City, MI

**April 25 – 26 & 27th..**

<http://michiganmini.superhosts.net/>

Time to sign up now if you already haven't done it. Last few years attendance has been near 100 folks.

## Mobile Activity in January

On Jan 1, KC7YE participated in the Straight Key Night – Snohomish County

Mike, NF0N, made a run in NE and SD

Kerri, KB3WAV and OM Ray, KC3RW ran parks/counties in MD, PA,

Seth, N3MRA, ran counties in IL and IN.

Ed, N8OYY, ran counties in WV on several different days. Then up to Elk, PA on a trip.

Bob, N4CD made a trip over to LA.

Mary, AB7NK, and Neil, K7SEN headed to TX from AZ.

Alan, W8OP was running counties in VA

There were four days with no mobile runs!

Fred, K0FG spotted out and about in MO then headed to TX and points south and west along the interstate , to AZ..... later in the month headed back to MO.

Kerry, W4SIG, made a multi-day trip to MS zipping through dozens of counties. He noted: "Over 2,000 contacts in 2 long days! Although condx were very challenging, I had a blast!! Thanks for those who rode along on all the bands"

Rick, AI5P, noted out in NM running parks.

Donna, AG6V, ran counties in CA.

Peter, KQ6QB, noted in parks in CA.

Ed, K8ZZ, noted in parks/counties in KS and MO.

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Mobile on the road most often during the month – Ed, N8OYY. Longest trip – K0FG.  
Most contacts – W4SIG.

# On the Road with N4CD II

**Friday Jan 18, 2019**

The Cowtown (Ft-Worth) hamfest was coming up so it was time to put out a few counties and parks. Why not? The weather would be good but COLD and windy for part of the trip. Winter Storm Harvey was wreaking havoc from CA – where it dumped up to 2 feet of snow in the Sierra Nevadas – to IA with a foot of snow – across IL, IN, OH with a good foot or more of snow and blowing winds – then on to NY and New England. Some places got 1/3<sup>rd</sup> inch of ice.

I packed up the car for a couple day trip on a nice balmy 70F Friday (15 deg above average for Jan) and headed out via Cedar Hill State Park just SW of Dallas. Took about a hour to get there. Sat there for 2 hours and put 76QSOs in the log from Dallas County. I've run this a few times. A few new calls from park chasers showed up but mostly it was county hunters and old time park chasers. Not so many around on week days to chase parks – a lot more show up on weekends. Same for county hunting trips as not all county hunters are retired – but probably a very good percentage are! There was a EU contest – think it was HA – going on but nearly impossible to work them. Put one in log and that was it. Heard a lot of good DX working them, and some of the US big guns like K1BV, N8BJQ, K4BAI were in there working them left and right. 100W and a mobile antenna just doesn't hack it! Hi hi.

After a few hours enjoying the weather at the park, I zipped over the remaining miles on I-20 to the hamfest location and the Comfort Inn for the night (\$80). Unfortunately, it's the only motel nearby and the price is a bit high. This hamfest starts at 3pm on Friday, runs till 9pm, so there was plenty of time to check in at the motel, then head over to see what goodies could be found at the hamfest. There are maybe 75 tables and probably 1,000 people show up – mostly on Saturday from 7am -5pm. Let's see. You could buy a 1936 car radio for a Pontiac if you had one needing a radio(\$60) , or a nice Zenith table radio from the late 40s for a couple hundred bucks. You had HQ-100s, S-38 receivers, Knight T-60 transmitter, some Collins gear, an ICOM IC-7100 new in box for \$700, Kenwood TS-2000 for \$850 (2000w version), and handfuls of 2m FM stuff. Some of it was the same stuff that hadn't sold at other hamfests making the rounds and priced too high.



Let's see...what followed N4CD home? I bought a brand new Rauland 1920s interstage transformer in the box – used in the 'battery sets' for \$7, a Heathkit manual 5 position antenna switch (5 bucks), a couple alligator clips, a military box for holding crystals (\$5), and that was about it. One fellow had a Hustler mast with 6 Hustler resonators and wanted \$110 for it. Think he had them there last year, too! Newcomers think only screwdriver antennas! Hi hi

You can see everything here in an hour...then take another 20 minutes and look again. No treasures to be found. The flea market outside was going with half a dozen sellers on Friday afternoon.

I headed back to the motel and ate dinner at the Denny's within walking distance. Had the Sizzling Bourbon Chicken Skillet dinner (chicken, broccoli, mushrooms, onions).

Then at dinner time, the wind would shift from the south to the north and begin to howl. By morning it was 30 degrees out with a 30-50 mph wind! You can bet I turned up the heat at the motel.

### **Saturday Jan 19, 2019**

The Cowtown Hamfest starts again at 7am. The wind was very strong – you knew it as you tried to walk in the bitter cold dark morning. After breakfast I loaded up the car and was over there at 7:15 before the sun rose. Not much had changed since yesterday – a few more sellers showed up inside, and there was no outside flea market! There aren't too many crazy people braving 40+ north winds at 30F temps – at least not in TX! I didn't find anything new to buy in an hour – mostly the same stuff as Friday – just a lot more people wandering around. Usually I meet up with Bob KK5NA and Barbara KK5QA, but didn't see them. He's sold all the stuff he had squirreled away in the garage and basement before the move to the retirement community so no more need for a flea market table. Well, there wasn't much reason to stick around. There are one or two programs but not worth hanging around for them, so it was off to run counties and parks.

First up was **Cleburne State Park KFF-2998 in Johnson County TX.**

From the web:

“A spring-fed lake, trails through the forest, quiet campsites – what more do you need? Get away from hectic city life at Cleburne State Park, just 30 minutes southwest of Fort Worth on the northern edge of the Hill Country.

On the lake, you can canoe or kayak, fish, swim and boat (no wake). On land, you can explore nearly 13 miles of trails on foot or bike, set up camp, look for geocaches, and nature watch. The park surrounds the clear blue water of 116-acre Cedar Lake. Try your luck fishing from our ADA-accessible, covered fishing pier. We loan fishing gear for use in the park. You do not need a license to fish here. The park has a boat ramp and no-wake boating is allowed. Hiking Trails range from easy to strenuous. Mountain bikers: Experience challenging downhills, fast smooth flats, and everything in between. Our technical and wooded trails form a 6-mile loop.”

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OK...it was 30F with strong winds – not a person in sight was out on the lake or in it! What you need is nice weather for the lake part and that was missing. A few folks were out hiking but it was VERY cold.

76 QSOs went in the log.

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Next up was **Dinosaur Valley State Park in Somervell County TX, KFF-3004.**

From the web:

“Long ago, dinosaurs left footprints in the mud at the edge of an ancient ocean. Today, you can walk in their tracks in the bed of the Paluxy River. This long trip to the past is just a short drive from Fort Worth.

Things to Do

Find dinosaur tracks, camp, picnic, hike, mountain bike, swim and fish in the river, watch for wildlife, look for a geocache, ride your horse, or visit our interpretive center. Stay at one of our regular or backpack campsites. Explore 20 miles of trails. Shop our park store for souvenirs, camping and fishing supplies, books and much more.

Ride your horse

Bring your own horse to explore the 100-acre South Primitive Area. The river runs through this wooded, semi-rocky part of the park.

Eagle Eye Ranch Carriage Company offers a variety of equestrian services from guided

horseback riding to horse drawn wagon rides, and wrangler assisted trail rides for children 3 to 14 years old. To saddle up and enjoy some spectacular views along the park's scenic trails”

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Not many were around and about on this cold day. Usually there's loads of kids here. I did see about 20 folks coming off a bus carrying full camping gear - hardy folks headed for the primitive camp sites. Brrrr!

I sat in the car and it was running keeping me warm. 85 QSOs went in the log in 2 hours then it was time to move on as the bands were depleted of contacts. I ran 20/30/40 and 17m cw, and 17 and 20m SSB.

Off to the next. It was up to all of 36F. I usually catch up with Clarence, VE5XU way up north. He was at 32C, or 26 below zero at his QTH – or 60 degrees colder than Texas. Ouch!

I ran the bands dry. I guess if you sit and call and call, a few more go in the log, but one QSO every couple minutes isn't worth the effort. When the callers top, I change bands or head out of the park.

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**Meridian State Park, KFF 2029 is in Bosque County TX.** It's one of the smaller state parks and few park activators have been here. For some reason, only N4CD has been here twice before! Some TX state parks have had half a dozen folks activate them.

From the web:

“Nestled among limestone bluffs at the top of the Hill Country, you’ll find a tranquil place to unwind with your family. We’re 50 miles northwest of Waco.

For a small park, Meridian has lots to offer. On 72-acre Lake Meridian, you can cool off with a swim, drop a line, or go for a paddle. On land, you can picnic, explore our trails, watch for wildlife, camp overnight, and admire historic structures that the Civilian Conservation Corps built over 80 years ago. Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1827(V), made up of World War I veterans, constructed this park in 1933 and 1934. They built the dam for the lake, as well as the cut-stone refectory and open-air pavilion.

Hiking - Explore five miles of trails on foot. The 2.2-mile Bosque Hiking Trail circles Lake Meridian, taking you past limestone outcroppings and scenic overlooks. If you are quiet, you might catch a glimpse of wildlife, too.

Fishing - Try your luck fishing in the no-wake lake. We provide shoreline access and an ADA-accessible fishing pier. We loan fishing gear for use in the park. You do not need a license to fish from shore, pier or boat at Meridian State Park. Rent a watercraft year-round at headquarters. We provide life jackets and paddles with all rentals. Choose from: three single kayaks, three double kayaks, four standup paddleboards, four canoes, one Jon boat (no motor).

Camping - Choose from primitive up to full hookup campsites. Gather your group at one of our group campsites. We also have screened shelters and three cabins.

Birding - Watch and listen for endangered golden-cheeked warblers, who nest here from March to July.”

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Needless to say, there were white caps on the lake with 2-3 foot waves and not a soul was out in a boat or in the water, or fishing off the pier! There were some folks around and quite a few RV campers in the park waiting for a warm up (that could be 2 weeks away). It was in the 30s with a very strong north wind (30-50 mph) that never let up!

The NAQP was going on. This is a 12 hour contest that is held one weekend for CW, one for SSB and runs from 1800Z for 12 hours. I caught just a few on 20M SSB. In the CW version a week ago, I managed to put 180Qs in 3 hours in the log. Here, the competition was fierce and I was lucky to work one station every 4-5 minutes. Dang...not worth hollering away trying to beat the horrendous pileups. I had all of 11 QSOs on SSB here – and of course, there was no clear spot to call CQ Parks on the Air so it was mostly CW for the 62Qs. My mobile signal just wasn't going to beat beams, and the rules only allowed 100W output levels but I'm certain some must have been running more – signals were 40 over at times. Oh well. I was hoping to do better but it was not to be! No need to stick around and I could get in one more park today.

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Next up was **Lake Whitney State Park KFF-3032 in Hill County TX.**

From the web:

“We offer water activities galore, from fishing and swimming to boating and skiing. On shore, you can explore our trails, see the stars, try geocaching, or set up camp.

A wide variety of wildlife lives in the park. Watch for deer, raccoons, snakes, armadillos and opossums. Wild turkeys and bald eagles have also been sighted here.

Fishing - Fish for largemouth, striped and white bass, or bring home a prize blue catfish.

Camping - Choose from campsites with water only, water and electricity, or full hookups. We also have screened shelters, many with a lake view.

Hiking and Biking - Explore our trails, or get in your steps on park roads. All trails are open to hikers and bikers.”

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Well, white caps on the lake and no one out there! Cold – lower 30s and strong winds. Folks were about in the campground, a hardy few were walking along the lake shore but attendance was way down from warmer weather. It can be 70 in January for weeks at a time. Not this week! Only 47Q went in the log. The NAQP was raging and messing up the SSB bands. I wasn't going to fight it and it seems few needed Hill County TX. That's on the interstate and run frequently.

So it was time to head on in to the motel for the night in Hillsboro. If it were later in the year, I could have zipped on home – a bit over 2 hours but it was coming up on 5pm by motel time so I crashed at a Days Inn there for \$54. Dinner at the Golden Buffet Chinese place across the street – good. Hit the hay at 9:45pm. Sun went down at 5:40pm.

### **Sunday – Jan 20, 2019**

After breakfast at the motel, I headed on home about 7:30. Sun comes up late in Jan – after 7am - at 7:28 pm now. Just before I get home, I can take a detour to **Spring Creek Forest Preserve KFF-4423** and I do.

Whoa...what's the big noise on my radio? K5WZS is running the park! He's in the other parking lot running on 40m on 7280 and creating havoc on my radio on 14336. Hmm...well, I work him with a watt, then drive on over for an eyeball QSO. He's been running around a lot of the local parks. Runs a Yaesu radio with a screwdriver antenna

while mobile and does have a separate vertical he sometimes sets up. With the 36F temp he elected to just do mobile.

I sat for a good 3 hours – ran some 20 and 17m SSB - and 17 and 20cw. Worked 11 stations between SSB and CW on 17M. West coast and New England/Ontario – that was it. Ran naturally 30 and 40 cw and a few on 40M SSB but it's noisy here.

Left with 170 QSOs and headed on home 30 minutes away!

Looks like about 530 QSOs from the parks, another 30 or so from working a mobile here and there and some DX.

On the trip, worked SM, DL, F, I, HA, UY, HR, HK, J68, G, VE9, VE4, VE5, VE6, VE7, VE2, VE3, XE, for DX. Tried busting the 9G2(Ghana) and 9V1(Sierra Leone) pileups on 20 and 30 but it was hopeless as hundreds (thousands?) were trying to work them and my mobile signal wasn't going to crack the KW/beams pileups! Tried for 20 minutes then gave up. Oh well.

Hope you caught something you needed and thanks for all the contacts.

## CW Stats to Dennis KK7X

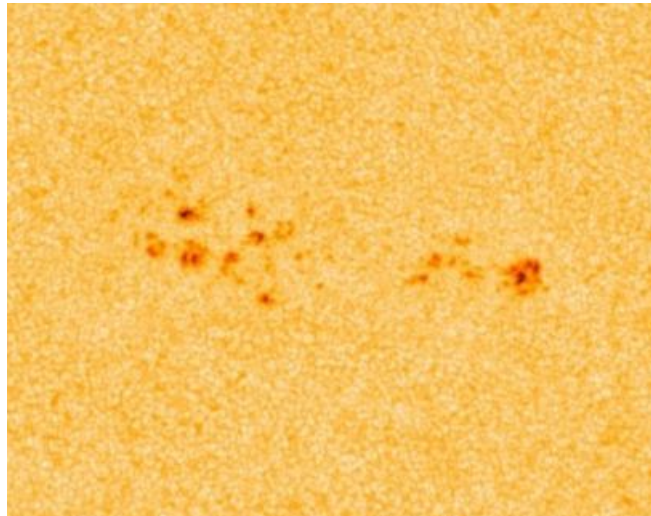
Please send your year end CW Stats for 2018 to Dennis, KK7X, for compilation and then publication in the County Hunter News and likely the MARAC RoadRunner.

Send to my email [dennis@kk7x.us](mailto:dennis@kk7x.us)

## Sunspots ?

Sunspot group 2733 appeared on Tuesday with a sunspot number of 18,

and on Wednesday it increased in size with a sunspot number of 19, which was also the sunspot number on Thursday, January 24.



Sadly, group 2733 is a remnant of old Solar Cycle 24. Not a new cycle.

## On the Road with N4CD III

The weekly Wednesday CW Open Test comes up every week. It's a good excuse to put the antenna on the car, drive 25 minutes to get to the local 'Park on the Air' and make a few contacts. I arrived a few minutes ahead of the 1900z start time (1pm here in TX now) and worked Terry, KK1TLS at a park in FL on SSB. Not much else happening on the bands.

At 1900z, 20 and 40m CW bands fill up from 025 to 045 with CW activity – maybe 120 stations participate each week.....maybe 150. I manage to work about 60Q in an hour if conditions are good, and they were decent today with a sunspot number of 18, SFI of 72 but A and K at 3. No DX coming in – F6HKA is a regular and just not there. The CWT zips along at 25+ wpm. I set my ICOM keyer at '29' but the RBN says that's

really 25 wpm! Usually for county hunting I set it at '26' which is probably about 22 wpm.

After I scanned the bands and spots – hmm....W4SIG was down in MS running counties. Missed him – 30m weak and I missed him on 40m. No way on 20m or 17m. Heard FK4QX on New Caledonia in the Pacific on SSB with a nice pileup. Tried few times but the pile up got bigger and bigger and not going to win against KW's and beams. He was S5-7 here in TX. Worked K3Y/KH6 – special event station, Work HI4LT and J68GD in the Caribbean. Did work N4T during the CWT – he was calling CQ and likely at the Dry Tortuga National Park KFF-0023. Maybe. I need that park – hi hi.

Left after 90 minutes and headed back home – 41F and sun and 10mph 'breeze'. Chilly, but too bad when you see it is 55 below zero in Fairbanks AK (4<sup>th</sup> district), 15 below in VT with 2 feet of new snow, and cold all over the 'north' with oodles of snow to plow and shovel.

## New ARRL CEO Speaks

### **New ARRL CEO Wants to "Start a Conversation"**

In his first appearance at a ham radio event, ARRL CEO Howard Michel, WB2ITX, told Ham Radio University 2019 attendees on January 5 that he was there to initiate a dialogue on what will make ARRL more successful in its missions amid a changing Amateur Radio environment. Michel became ARRL CEO about 3 months ago. "What I'm here for is to start a conversation," Michel told his audience at New York's Long Island University. "I'm starting conversations everywhere I go to find out, by talking to people, what's really important."

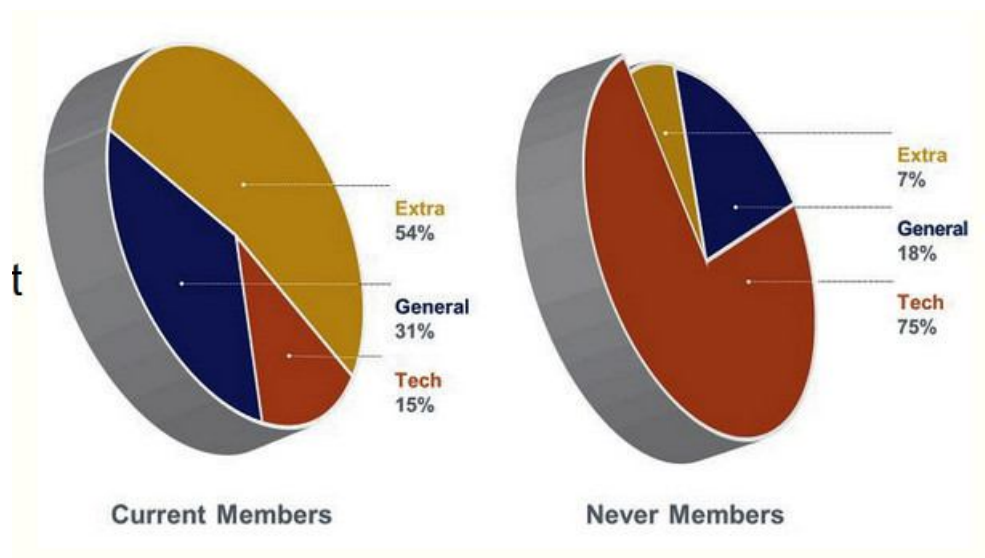
In his view, Michel said, ARRL is a membership organization, a business, and a 501(c)(3) public charity that exists for the public good. "All three of those must exist in balance," he said, adding that the balance has been lost. He said changes need to be made in how ARRL is organized and how it operates, and he made clear during the post-presentation Q&A that he sees himself as an agent of change.

In terms of a membership organization, Michel said ARRL's some 157,000 members, local clubs, and Headquarters staffers should form a three-way partnership, but, he



conceded, that the links among those components "are shaky at times," due to a lack of understanding and differing expectations.

Citing ARRL publications as an example, Michel pointed out that the way people get information today is far different than what it was 50 years ago. ARRL's business of the future will be based upon the creation of value. "If we don't create the value and deliver the value, then we're not really an advocate," he said. "ARRL is uniquely positioned to create, curate, and deliver information about Amateur Radio. The way that information is created and delivered is changing, and if we don't change with that, we're not going to be the dominant provider."



ARRL membership is falling behind in terms of a percentage of licensees. "We need to turn that around," Michel said.

In terms of numbers, out of some 30,000 new licensees each year, some 17 - 18% join ARRL, and after 1 year, 61% remain. "Why are we not getting 100% of those new hams?" Michel said. Because 80% of the new licensees took their exams through ARRL VEC, Michel said their lack of interest in joining ARRL suggests "something is wrong in the value proposition." More telling, he continued, is the fact that ARRL membership is falling behind in terms of a percentage of licensees. "We need to turn that around," he said, if ARRL is to continue representing itself as speaking on behalf of Amateur Radio. Part of the problem lies in current demographic trends in membership. Most ARRL

members are Amateur Extra-class licensees, while a larger majority of those who have never been members are Technician licensees. Active radio amateurs are 33% more likely to join ARRL, Michel pointed out. He said a significant majority of non-member Technician licensees have indicated they would like training and support for newcomers, courses for licensing and practical radio operating, training for public service and disaster communication volunteers, and continuing education on technical topics and "online live help" to learn more about ARRL and ham radio.

"We've got them through the test to get their license, and then we've dropped them," Michel said. "We've got to fix that."

The planned approach is recognizing that ARRL members do not represent a monolith, but that each has their own Amateur Radio persona. The spectrum of hams, Michel said, spans communications, service, technology, and hobby.

"Let's think about an average person with some kinds of traits and how you market material to them," Michel proposed. "I'm trying to start a conversation with everybody about how to start something new."

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Courtesy ARRL Weekly News

## On the Road with N4CD IV

**January 26, 2019**

Another weekend was coming up and N4CD had 'mobile fever' so time to head to southeast OK and clean up some needs, finish getting to 44 QSOs in two parks, maybe making a few contacts in the Winter Field Day, and getting out from the cold weather at home. It would just be an overnight trip up to Broken Bow, OK for the night, then back home on Sunday. Nuked an Egg McMuffin in the microwave, added some siced tomato, and had a cup of decaf for breakfast early.

I loaded up the car and headed to Choctaw County OK via Fannin and Lamar TX. Not too many county hunters around in the early morning. Continuing up into OK gets you to Choctaw County with two parks. I skipped the first one (Hugo Lake) and headed to **Raymond Gary**, KFF2798. This is a small park – with a lake, beach area, camp and picnic sites and a 'day use' area. The whole road around the park is probably 4 miles. As you drive in along the road to park, the S9 meter is up at S9 on cw from the power line noise. It isn't much better in the park. I drive around the entire park hunting for the least worst place to sit and operate. For the 'best' site, the S meter was S7 on 20M and S9 on 40m cw. That's why I only managed to make 20 contacts the first time I ran it. Now, could I get 24 more?

There was a big French DX contest (REF) underway – with some LOUD signals – probably from KW stations with BIG stacked beams. I caught 8 of them by search and pounce and had luck getting through in one or two calls. Then I hit 40M – 4 county hunters and 10 park chasers there – off to a good start! 30m yielded another 10, and could only scrape up 4 QSOs on 20M CW. That band would prove to be a big disappointment during the whole weekend. Forget SSB here with a vertical antenna. Maybe a magnetic loop would work or horizontal antenna? Success – I reached the total 44Qs for this park. I won't be heading back here soon – they aren't likely to fix the noise situation.

Unfortunately, OK has a bad reputation for noisy power lines. Much of the state is “Indian Nation” and they barely tolerate roads and power lines. Though much of Choctaw and McCurtain Counties, it looks like the power poles were installed about 1880 and never replaced – along with all the hardware on them including the insulators. Just about everything like the transformers contain a nice coat of 'rust'. Outside the few 'towns and cities' – most of the land is rural and 'tribal' except for small pockets here and there and what houses there are are owned by “Native Americans” of the right tribe.

Soon it was off to the next. Just before Broken Bow, north of Idabel, you can get to Little River National Wildlife Refuge, KFF-0486 in McCurtain County. On my last visit here, I had success reaching 44, so today it would just be a repeat visit for 'activation' credit for Parks on the Air – just need 10. Well, when Mother Nature and the Propagation gods are throwing DX at you, work 'em. Five French Stations and a FG (Guadalupe – part of France) operating in the REF contest go in the log quickly on 20m. Caught another 20 or so, including 'park to park' contacts with VE3IHX, KN4MQR N6XDX and N2ZN. Filled out the log with mostly park hunters as I didn't spot myself on the county hunter site. I'd be running McCurtain many times in the next few parks!

Left the park then caught Rick, AI5P running park KFF-4515 in Sierra County NM on 30M. Yeah! Nice to catch a fellow county hunter/park activator.

I stopped by the Microtel in Broken Bow – no room ready yet at noon time, so headed on to **Hochatown State Park** – KFF2785 in McCurtain County OK. Last time I was here I was 13Qs short so a repeat visit to add that many or more was in order. Added in 28Q which only included about 10 county hunters. Seems that many were off for the weekend or maybe getting ready to participate in Winter Field Day. The temperature wasn't too bad with high of about 60F. Up north it was a lot colder – in the teens and shortly headed to sub-zero in a day or two! Brrr. The DX window was shut by this time – 1pm local so no DX made it through. In this neck of the woods, locations with internet are hard to find – it's highly forested and other than along the main highways near town, there is not much internet coverage in the parks a few miles off the main drag. It sure helps when someone spots you! Success – now this park is fully activated by N4CD. Others have been here as well.

OK – lots of daylight left so off to a 'new' WWFF park – WWFF KFF-4601 the **Ouachita National Forest**. There are two parallel systems for parks – WWFF and POTA. POTA can handle parks in multiple states with just one number. WWFF assigns a different number for a park in each state. Confusing but that is the way it is. A KFF number can only be in one state. So this would be a new one for me in WWFF, but a repeat of one for POTA. Confusing? You bet. So I'd need 44Qs to get credit in WWFF. For POTA, it was simply another 'activation' of 10 or more. As you head north on the main highway you see the sign for the National Forest – which is huge in AR, but not so huge in OK. No place to pull off for a mile – and off on a logging road that goes ¼ mile then blocked off from further access. No internet. Dang. Will it work?



Now I went hunting for Winter Field Day stations – WFD. They weren't all that easy to catch on 20M SSB. The band was flakey to say the least. Giant QSB that would take S9 signals down to S2 in 10 seconds and back up – a roller coaster. As I had moved 200 miles to the northeast from the home QTH, 20M only seemed to work to New England, FL, and west coast and the very north US. . Switched to 14336 and added in 21 stations there – half WFD – half park chasers. One Park to Park with K7CAR who stays in his mobile home in various parks all winter along! Added in another 20 on cw on 20/30/40m ending with 45Q in the log. Whew! Success but really had to work at it. I thought it was going to be easy. The QRM level on 20M SSB must have been horrendous on the coasts. At times, I could hear 3 people calling CQ WFD on the same frequency and nobody working anyone with mutual QRM. At least the weather was decent – up near 60F.

I could hit Beaver Bend State Park Kff-2771 for a quckie 'activation'. Same county so who knows who would show up. Didn't sit around long – 13Q in the log then headed back to the Microtel 10 miles away. \$86 for the night including tax. Not many places here to stay – unless you like unknown quantities with much older motels or stay at the casino hotel. Yes, there's a giant casino here run by the Choctaw Nation. I did buy gas at their gas station ( a few pennies less per gallon) but that's all the money I spent there!

Dinner at the Sunrise Buffet (Chinese). Adequate but not 'great'.

**Sunday January 27, 2019**

Temp = 27F. The windshield had a good coat of frost that required scraping. Where's my scraper? Haven't needed it in a year or two. Finally found it behind the front seat in the pile of 'stuff' and spent a few minutes scraping away. Definitely chilly outside at sunrise time.

Today I'd do a repeat of the same couple parks – hoping to catch some DX with the early morning DX window. First up – a repeat of KFF-4601/K-4424 the **Ouachita NF**.

Next up – **Beavers Bend** 2771 again. What's coming in? You guessed it – French stations – six go in the log. Not much else! Caught 3 DX park chasers – DL1EJA, F1BLL, DL8NDG and just one USA station. Disappointment but no way to spot at this park – no internet. With the loud French stations likely tearing up the band end to end in EU, likely DX found it hard to find me. Oh well. At least I got enough for another 'activation' in POTA.

Off to **Hochatown SP** - for a repeat. More French stations in the log – worked about 20 this trip. Caught a few WFD on 20M SSB, a few DX on 20M CW (DL8USA PA1H, ON4ON), and half dozen county hunters. Enough for an 'activation' credit. For POTA, every time you run a park on a different day and make 10 Qs you get another point. I mainly hit these parks early in the morning trying to work the EU park chasers who lose the DX window about noon time.

Time to head home - enough fun in McCurtain OK....what was that, nine runs and the same county? Hi hi.

I took a 40 mile detour to get to Pushmataha County which had a bunch of needs posted. Half the folks didn't show up. Oh well. I'll be back through there again in a few months.

On the way home, it **Hugo Lake State Park**(which I had skipped on the way up) in Choctaw County for a 'quickie'. Mostly park hunters showed up – had internet and left with 30+ Qs. Nice quiet place to run! Temp in 50s.



Now it's a few hours from home, but one more detour to Cooper Lake State Park FF-3000 in Delta County TX. This park has two parts – one in Delta, one in Hopkins. Usually folks need 'Delta' and that was the closest to me, so that's where I went. Nice quiet park – sat at the boat ramp parking lot – actually a few people out boating with the 62F weather and bright sun. Had a good run – over 30. WFD was over and more folks were at home on the radio. I sat for a while – enjoyed the sunshine – making Q, then headed on back home to Plano TX, arriving at 4PM. 10 park activations, 441 miles driven. Now getting set for much colder weather as tomorrow might barely get out of the 30s for a high. Winter is here. The folks up north are looking at 20 below zero in Chicago and 40-50 below 'wind chills' and worse further north! Ouch!

Hope you caught something you needed. Appreciate the Qs wherever I am in various parks – even if the third time or fifth in Mc Curtain OK – hi hi. More trips planned to more counties/parks. Headed south in two weeks to Houston area.

## If there are no mobiles running....

If you are sitting by the raadio, waiting for a mobile to run, you might have a long wait with the winter weather. You've got some good QSO parties coming up. Activity often spotted on [ch.W6RK.com](http://ch.W6RK.com) for those mobiles (and fixed stations) in the state QSO parties. Don't expect too many mobiles in VT QSO party though, hi hi. MN, despite snow, ice, bad weather, always has mobiles out! For them, it's a challenge!

Otherwise, you might start hunting parks. Note the following sites that often have park runs.

[Www.Dxsummit.fi](http://www.Dxsummit.fi)

for parks, you can check the Facebook pages for WWFF/KFF and POTA , plus the POTA spots page at:

<https://stats.parksontheair.com/spotting/>

For POTA most of the activity is SSB and much of it is 40M. There's a cross reference to KFF parks and counties here

<http://countyhunter.com/Toplist/KFF-County.htm>

For numbers below 4600 or so, the numbers are usually the same. Above that, they often diverge and so far no cross reference list above that, but you can Google the park name and find out the county usually. Or ask the park activator on the air!

## Awards Issued

|       |            |            |
|-------|------------|------------|
| W8OP  | RAS WV #26 | 12/29/2002 |
| KB0BA | ME #36     | 6/12/2018, |
|       | NH #38     | 6/13/2018, |
|       | VT #38     | 6/15/2018, |



|        |                                      |   |
|--------|--------------------------------------|---|
|        | ND #31                               | 7/24/2018   |
| N0XYL  | ME #35<br>NH #37<br>VT #37<br>ND #30 | 6/12/2018,<br>6/13/2018,<br>6/15/2018,<br>7/24/2018 |
| N8OYY  | RAS WV #25                           | 7/18/1996   |
| WA9DLB | RAS MO #27                           | 8/1/1997  |

## Events for County Hunters

Feb 2 0000z to Feb 3 2359z

**Vermont QSO Party CW Ph Dig**

RS(T), county or SPC

[www.ranv.org/vtqso.html](http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html)

This is often mostly 40/80m but some 20m SSB

Feb 2 0001z to Feb 3 2359z

**10-10 International Winter Contest, SSB Ph**

Name, mbr or "0," SPC

[www.ten-ten.org](http://www.ten-ten.org)

Feb 2 1400z to Feb 2 2359z

**Minnesota QSO Party CW Ph Dig**

Name, county or SPC

[www.w0aa.org](http://www.w0aa.org)

Feb 9 1500z to Feb 10 1500z

**OMISS QSO Party Ph RS, SPC,**  
mbr (if any)

[omiss.net/Facelift/qsoparty.php](http://omiss.net/Facelift/qsoparty.php)

Feb 16 0000 z to Feb 17 2359z

## **ARRL International DX Contest, CW**

RST, SP or power

[www.arrl.org/arrl-dx](http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx)

Feb 23 1500z to Feb 24 0159z

**South Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig**

RS(T), county or SPC

[scqso.com/rules](http://scqso.com/rules)

Feb 24 1500z to Feb 25 0059z

**North Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig**

County or SPC

[ncqsoparty.org/rules](http://ncqsoparty.org/rules)

Info courtesy of ARRL monthly Contest Corral

More contests/events here

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2019/February%202019%20Corral.pdf>

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## **Calendar Planning**

Orlando FL Hamfest – Feb 8-10

MI Mini April 25-27

**Dayton Hamvention**, Xenia - May 17-19

That's all this month! 73