

County Hunter News

February 2020
Volume 16 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. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. 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.

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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

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>

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – there we go again – another couple weeks of NO sunspots. At the end of the year/beginning of January, we had some new cycle 25 sunspots appear – sunspot number up to 13 (one group, 3 spots). They didn't last long, and now we're back to a string of spotless days toward the end of the month. Then one group – 4 spots appeared for a sunspot number of 14 – which didn't stick around long!

2) QSO Parties! We are into QSO Party season again with VT, MN, NC and SC coming up in February.

3) CQ Magazine – I subscribe to CQ Magazine mainly because it sponsors the USA-CA award. They finally 'caught up' to getting issues out in a timely fashion, but now they seem to be slipping again. My 'December 2019' issue arrived on January 21. Should have been November 21 or earlier. It doesn't do much for contest and event calendars that are obsolete when you get them.

4) Winter Season

Winter is definitely here – with major snow storms across the midwest and east coast reigning 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 – but dozens of parks get activated each month – and they're in counties!

However, soon we'll have some interesting state QSO Parties in Feb – beginning of QSO Party season with real 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. 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. Have you made plans for that?

I am headed to Houston for the Vintage Radio Convention/Auction there in early February. The plans are being worked up for the big trip to the MI Mini. 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.

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. dennis@kk7x.us

On the Road with N4CD I

There was a day before the bad weather was moving in – and it would be up near 70 for the trip and probably no rain. I headed out at 6:45 am – before the sun was up on a foggy morning with plans to head to Oklahoma to some new parks only in the World Wide Flora and Fauna (WWFF) system. While Parks on the Air (POTA) has well over 6,000 entities, WWFF is still under 5,000 and can only add 250 new entities per country each year. The trusty 2016 Malibu Limited had 111,306 miles on it.

POTA added many more but now is in a 'hold pattern' waiting till at least half the existing parks in the system are 'activated' (ie, someone has gone there and made at least 10 QSOs) before adding more. But they just added another 500 in January now..

These would be 3 new parks just added to WWFF. First up would be Love WMA in Love County OK - KFF-4815. You head north on I-35 and take the first exit (Exit 1) and it's no more than half a mile to the WMA. Nice – no sweat finding it! The paved road turns into a nice gravel road as you enter and there is a sign. It's a bit more than an hour and a half from home.

To qualify for an activation at a WWFF park, you need to make 44 QSOs. I'm hoping for a nice DX opening to EU for the park chasers there – but not too much luck. Only 4 DX stations go in the log and a handful of others on 20M. It's 1408z and should be good but band not cooperating for hearing them. I move to 40M CW and have an OK run – then 30M CW. Folks are working me for the county as much as the park. I try 20M again and put 3 more DX stations in the log. It's new for everyone.



One of the problems of an only WWFF park is that you can't spot yourself on the POTA spotting page which most of the park chasers use! This park doesn't have a POTA number (yet) – may never have one, but likely will at some future date. So you can spot on the county hunter page, DX summit, and if you have enough mobile signal and bandwidth, on the KFF-WWFF Facebook page. While WWFF always has a 'start date', the POTA site doesn't so if they add it, contacts from this trip will count.

To finish off, I go to 40M SSB and put another 8 in the log ending with 50 QSOs. Just a few to spare!

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Up next is one 15 miles further north on I-35, then 15 miles west on highway 32. OK....there's the sign on the southeast corner of the WMA off in a fenced in area. Now to find a point where I can actually get in it. Do find a spot and run it successfully. A few more DX stations make it in the log. Wind up with 53 QSOs and that is good since it is still 'Love County'. It helps if the good folks in the state put them all in different counties – Hi Hi! .



One spot you can run is by one of the 'quail check-in' station. I guess if you catch quail, you've got to report each one taken. In TX, you've got to leave one wing at the bird check in station in the box – so they can count and verify how many taken by hunters.



Quail check in station

Now to backtrack 15 miles to the east, then head further east to the next. I'm zipping along and a text message shows up. Sometimes they can take five or ten minutes from the time they are sent to the time they arrived if you are out of your local area. Sometimes hours! Seems Barry, N0KV needs Love OK for a LC and I just left the county and now in Marshall on my way to Johnston County. So turned around and zipped back two miles to get back into Love, and had a quick QSO on 40M for a LC. Barry is working on fifth time. Turn around again after the QSO and head back east.

About 20 miles later I arrive at Washita Arm WMU. Hmmmm..this is a bit confusing. The directions off the web take you into the Tishomingo NWR (KFF-0491). What's going on? I double check my map. Continue a few miles further and you go into now the Washita Arm WMU. OK... I stop and put it out, KFF-4834 in only the WWFF system at the current time. Have an OK run from Johnston County.

I'm a few miles from the Tishomingo NWR main HQ entrance. I decide to head there and find the HQ locked up tight. Hasn't been open in months due to flood damage and the HQ is actually run out of a small trailer now. While I'm sitting there a park service truck pulls up along side to the loading dock. I hotfoot it over and talk to one of the folks in the truck. Seems both know the difference between the NWR and the WMU. Since they are interconnected, it's a bit of pieces here and there, but you'll see the NWR signs even though the WMU (Wildlife Management Unit) is a separate entity. It's surely not clear from the map on the web. They give me a more detailed map. OK...I was in the right place before. A bit confusing.

While I'm there, I put out KFF-0491 Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge which is in both systems.





The green-yellow is the WMU. There is a lot more of the NWR not shown on this partial map to the left and below.

Time to be thinking about getting home. A one mile detour off the main route home gets me to Lake Texoma State Park – KFF- 2791 – in Marshall County OK and I make a short detour there for a 'quickie'. Listen for other parks and catch two of them, but most are on 40M and too weak to work. Then I make tracks to home. Days are short this time of year.

Arrive home at 4:30. Sunset is 5:12 or so here at this time. 290 miles for 3 new parks and two repeats. About 250 contacts. Dinner was a chicken salad at home.

Thanks for riding along.

Michigan Mini 2020

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.

On the Trail of Regens

Sadly no old tube type regens showed up anywhere to be added to the N4CD collection. However, I did see another solid state current kit you can buy from the QRP guys.



It's a traditional design using a grounded base RF stage for gain control, along with an input attenuator when needed, an FET regen detector, followed by an audio amp module

For tuning, it uses a varicap diode. Fairly simple but would be a decent SWL receiver and with a good antenna, copy CW, AM, and SSB signals – although you wouldn't have great selectivity. Feedback is controlled by 'shorting' the feedback level to ground. It looks more like a tube circuit than a solid state circuit!

<https://qrpguys.com/>



On the Road with N4CD II

The weather was decent so I could take another short trip up to OK to run two new Wildlife Management Areas. It would be an overnight trip. It would be a very long day to get to both WMAs and a state park or two along the route so I'd make it a day and a half. The solar flux was up at 70-71 and we had low A and K indexes.

Tuesday December 31

I headed out around 11am on Dec 31 for Atoka, OK and the Super 8 there. 50F outside and sunny. It would be cooler up 'north' into OK. I don't do much on New Year's Eve other than go to bed early these days. Hi hi. It's a two hour trip up to Atoka, OK. I arrive a bit after one o'clock, check in, then head to **Atoka Wildlife Management Area** KFF-4794 ten miles to the north. This is one of the 'new ones' only in the WWFF system. It might be a challenge to get to 44 Qs as you don't have the main POTA spotting page (it's not a POTA park and thus you cannot spot there) to get the folks aware you are there. Your options are Dxsummit.fi – good for DX mainly and the County Hunter spot page at CH.W6RK.COM. If you have a good enough internet signal, you can try the WWFF Facebook page but it is usually painfully slow from a mobile connection. Otherwise, it can be tough to get the SSB folks involved – even though at some point this might be a POTA park and the folks that work me would get retro-active credit. It makes it tougher and a challenge.

The Atoka WMA is easy to find – 500 feet off highway 69. So far, every WMA in OK has been a gravel road to it and in it. If you want to run WMAs there, expect gravel roads – sometimes miles and miles of gravel/dirt roads to get to them. Pulled in and had a good run – got to 44Q with the county hunters and park chasers. Barely. It was too late for the DX – none in the log. A few of the old time county hunters were around for the holidays and dropped on by. Nice to catch up with them. W2WC (USACA #675) and W3DQT among others in the log. There were at least six other parks on air at the time – nearly all on 40M SSB back east. Over the two days, there would be over 30 on the air.



Plan B was to run this early on Wednesday in the weekly CWT at 7am. Didn't need Plan B here as reached 47Q today. Thanks all for working me. Headed back to the motel after two hours.

Dinner was at Moe's restaurant – part of the Pilot Truck Stop in Atoka. Chicken Quesadilla. Not good for the waist but it was so good for the tummy! Grabbed a container of assorted fruit to balance it out. Was back at the motel just after dark – which is not much after 5:30 this time of year

Watched a bit of TV and hit the hay early. Seen enough balls drop and fireworks displays so no need to stay up!

Wednesday January 1, 2020

OK...got to get used to writing Year 2020.

There's something new for the WWFF program this year in 2020. Norm N9MM has dreamed up the KFF-Challenge – where the counters are reset to zero for activations. To get a qualified run, you need to get 44Q – even if you have been there before. I'll be visiting many of the parks run before – and new ones – trying to make a decent showing on the leader board.

Up early at 5:45 and over to breakfast at 6am. Good breakfast here with scrambled

eggs, sausage, oatmeal, apples and oranges, coffee for me....plus all sorts of sticky buns and biscuits and gravy, cereal, waffles, etc. for others. Finished quickly and on the road at 6:30 headed to the next park 35 minutes away – a bit north then east to McGee Creek WMA. The sun doesn't show until well after 7 am here so it was all in the dark on strange roads. I'm not a fan of 'night driving' but if you want to be in the park at 7am, this time of year you don't have a choice! First part was all 4 lane divided highway.

You take highway 43 east from Stringtown for less than a mile, then get on Greasy Bend Road going east for 11 miles. I have no clue where that road name came from! The first part is a winding paved road – then it becomes a winding gravel road for the second half. Driving conditions OK – you could do about 35 mph on it and it was in good shape. Don't try this after a couple days of heavy rain though – it might be not so great. You take a turn on Cane Break road and arrive after a mile or two. You might not make it during a heavy storm as you have some low spots – stream overflow? - where water has run across the road frequently. Not too hard to find but the GPS lady is ignorant of WMAs so be sure to write down directions. Google Maps will get you there only part of the time.



KFF-4818 at 7am – still sort of dark

It was Wednesday and the CWT 'hour' so quickly piled up the contacts at 25 wpm. I'm one of the slower ones, too. Folks zip along at 30 and 35 but the exchanges are easy. You send your name and CWT number – and 'copy' their name and CWT number. If you don't have a number, you send your state. Some of the county hunters are regulars

including KN4Y, N8II, KM4FO, and K4BAI. After the first hour, CWT ends – the cw band go silent. Caught a few EU on 20M CW but most contacts on 40M this time of day. Then I ran the CW bands and 40M SSB for the other folks. Again, some former county hunters or seldom heard ones showed up to say hi. Nice to run into them.

Now, McGee Creek WMA is not a POTA park – but someone 'figured out' that KFF-4818 was probably also McGee Creek State Park K-2795 and spotted it as such. Well, it wasn't and some are likely to be disappointed not to get credit for it. Some thanked me for K-2795 here. Oh, well, I made sure to say KFF-4818. (a brand new addition to WWFF system, with number starting with KFF). Still Atoka County, too. Made it easily to 44 here with the CWT and help from the county hunters and park chasers.

After 2 hours I decided to head to the real McGee Creek State Park. Band conditions were OK – 40M was 'long' but not much happening on 20M.



The GPS lady is silent on McGee Creek State Park – but Google Maps will get you there without total backtrack. It's mostly gravel roads for 20 miles at 30-35 mph with sections of paved road – but the paved roads not in great condition – the gravel road are better! Arrive 1530z and proceed to put out the real KFF-2795/K-2795. Hope those that need it worked me again here – hi hi! It's really in the middle of nowhere.

Do OK and reach 44Qs so I'm a happy camper. Previously, only 4 other 'activations' for 337 QSOs had taken place – one by N4CD, two by N9MM, and one by W5DON. Not much recently.

From here, it's over 2.5 hours to home. To get out of here, you basically wind up going around in a loop, winding up right where I started this morning after driving 50 miles. Back to Atoka then south on Highway 69 to the TX border an hour and a half. If I watch my time, I'll get to **Eisenhower State Park KFF-3005** in Grayson County TX for the 1900-2000z CWT and put a pile of contacts in the log quickly.

Get there and find that W5KZJ is 'activating' this park. He's from the DFW area and went out to 'activate' for the day here. He's probably a half mile away and 60 over S9. Hmmm....work him on 40M SSB for a Park to Park contact the easy way. Work some on 30M and then run the CWT. W5KZJ comes by 30 minutes later for an eyeball on his way out of park. Reach 44Q for the KFF-Challenge easily with CWT – make some regular 20,30,40m QSOs then head on home. Arrive by 3:30pm after 309 miles. 55F in Texas at the house.

Now to do the logs and paperwork.....

Thanks for riding along. More OK trips planned – there's 39 never run WMAs up there to visit!

Ran All USA

Wow! It's been a long time since someone took on the challenge to run all US counties. The last person to finish was K3IMC, Don, back in June 2016. Before that, someone finished up about every 18 months or so.....18 folks have done it so far.

The first was KB7QO back in 1988- all SSB. That was followed by W1TEE – all CW in 1991. Over the past 30 years, it's been a year or two before some else finishes up.

Who has done it?

18 K3IMC 6/10/2016
17 N4JT 3/5/2016
16 AB4YZ 10/16/2013
15 AF3X 7/12/2013
14 AI5P 6/21/2012
13 N9QPQ 6/3/2011

12 AA9JJ 6/3/2011
11 KL1V 8/6/2010
10 N8RLJ 10/26/2009
9 N8KIE 10/13/2009
8 KK0L 6/19/2007
7 N7ID 4/19/2006
6 N7AKT 2/24/2006
5 K0GO 10/15/2002
4 N4CD 7/20/2002
3 WA0SBR 11/22/1998
2 W1TEE 6/29/1991
1 KB7QO 7/25/1988

Now it's been three and a half years since an award for this. It's overdue. Mary, AB7NK and Neil, K7SEN have been zipping all over but getting to all 3077 counties is not easy – many many days on the road plus airplane trips to those HI counties and either a long, long drive to AK or airplane trips there. Lowell KB0BA and Sandra N0XYL have made lots of trips. Ron, KB6UF has been here and there putting them out.

Who is going to be next to finish? Who is working at it hard?

USACA Awards

Some interesting USA-CA statistics - de K2MF, Barry January 6, 2020

There have been 1268 USA-CA awards issued by CQ Magazine between 15-Aug-1965 and 27-Jul-2019, representing a span of 54 years (or 648 months).

On a smoothed average, the number of USA-CA awards that were issued during this period of time is 23.48/year (or 1.96/month).

The list of 1268 USA-CA awards issued can be further divided up as 1179 US, 50 DX, 34 VE and 5 SWL.

There are a total of 526 silent keys and another 140 who have expired licenses without any other explanation (total 666), divided up as 636 US, 15 DX, 14 VE and 1 SWL.

This leaves 543 US, 35 DX, 20 VE and 4 SWL USA-CA holders remaining not reported as being silent keys or having expired licenses.

Of the very first 119 awards issued during the first 9½ years of the USA-CA program (Aug-1965 through Feb-1975), only the following 13 award holders still have current amateur radio licenses, three of whom are still active mobile operators and county hunters:

K1QZV (#7), K4JP (#13), K5DRF (#18), **K5KDG (#45)**, W5VD (#49), **NFØN (#53)**, K7NN (#54), WAØJRZ (#61), NA5AR (#73), W6TCD (#76), K5FBS (#87), **K5VYT (#112)** and KØARS (#119).

Special Needs – OM2VL

Please help a European County Hunter finish up. He's right at about 3000 worked and needs the following counties. He's one of the LOUDER European stations with a big signal – both SSB and CW. He goes to the big station on weekends – not available during the week as he has no home station.

AL Conecuh

AR Ashley

AR Cleveland, AR Drew, AR Greene, AR Chicot

CO Bent, CO Crowley , ,CO Dolores, CO Fremont - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL
CO Gunnison, CO Hinsdale , CO Jackson, CO Las Animas, CO Moffat, CO Otero
CO Routt, CO Saguache, CO San Juan, CO San Miguel, CO Summit

ID Caribou, ID Gooding, ID Oneida

IL Hardin, IL Kendall

IN Newton, IN Owen

KY Ballard, KY Barren , KY Bath, KY Breckenridge, KY Carlisle, KY Carroll
KY Clay, KY Elliott, KY Green, KY Hancock, KY Hart, KY Jackson - CFM on eQSL,

need paper QSL, KY Magoffin, KY Martin, KY Meade, KY Mercer, KY Metcalfe
KY Montgomery - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL
KY Owen, KY Owsley, KY Powell, KY Rockcastle, KY Rowan
KY Simpson - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL
KY Trimble, KY Union, KY Wolfe

LA Cameron

MD Allegany, MD Caroline - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL

MS Alcorn, MS Benton, MS Bolivar, MS Calhoun
MS Claiborne - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL
MS Holmes, MS Issaquena, MS Kemper, MS Lauderdale, MS Lawrence
MS Marshall - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL
MS Scott, MS Tunica

MT Beaverhead, MT Big Horn, MT Garfield, MT Glacier, MT Granite, MT Chouteau
MT McCone, MT Meagher, MT Powell, MT Sheridan
MT Silver Bow - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL

ND Adams, ND Barnes, ND Bowman, ND Kidder, ND McIntosh, ND Ransom
ND Slope, ND Stutsman

NE Adams, NE Banner, NE Box Butte, NE Burt, NE Clay, NE Cuming, NE Dawes
NE Dawson, NE Dixon, NE Garden, NE Gosper, NE Chase, NE Cheyenne
NE Jefferson, NE Madison, NE Nemaha, NE Pawnee, NE Pierce, NE Richardson
NE Saline, NE Sioux

NM Harding, NM McKinley, NM Quay, NM Sierra, , NV Lincoln - CFM on eQSL,
need paper QSL, NV Mineral, NV Pershing

OH Fayette, OH Hardin, OH Pickaway,

OR Douglas, OR Gilliam, OR Morrow, OR Sherman

SD Brule, SD Buffalo, SD Campbell, SD Edmunds, SD Sanborn, SD Tripp

TN Claiborne, TN Johnson, TN Lake, TN Lauderdale, TN Meigs

TX Atascosa, TX Calhoun TX Cochran, TX Culberson, TX Falls, TX Goliad

TX Hudspeth, TX Live Oak, TX Loving, ,TX McMullen , TX Mitchell, TX Willacy

UT Daggett, UT Garfield, UT Kane, UT Morgan, UT Piute, UT Wayne

VA Buchanan, VA Grayson, VA Greensville, VA Highland, VA Charlotte

VA Lancaster - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL, ,VA Lee, VA Middlesex

VA Page - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL

VA Rappahannock, VA Russell, VA Southampton, VA Surry, VA Sussex

VA Tazewell - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL, VA Wythe - CFM on eQSL, need paper QSL

WV Calhoun, WV Clay, WV Fayette, WV Tucker, WV Tyler, WV Webster, WV Wetzel

WY Uinta

check out his QRZ.com page for the latest updates to needs.

Wildlife Area Permits

If you are going to activate Wildlife Management Areas, some states require that you have a 'permit' to enter. OK, TX, and VA are some of the states I've been in with WMAs and you'll see signs that say 'read regulations before entering' at most of them. Some do not require a permit.

For those that do, the 'permit' can either be a valid hunting or fishing license, usually, or you can get a 'other land use' permit - in OK it is \$26 for out of state residents and TX it is \$12 or so for a one year pass. I think VA was \$32 for locals or something like that.

Some have visitor centers or headquarters (can activate there usually in the parking lot/nearby usually without hassle or a permit) and some have 'parking areas'. If your state has WMAs or equivalent listed for WWFF or POTA parks- read the state web site and go from there.

National Wildlife Refuges usually are no hassles and usually have a visitor center/ranger

WWFF Wildlife Management Areas – plus put out some of the southeast OK counties for the county hunters. The tornado sirens sounded Friday evening at the QTH, but only severe t-storms with high winds, lots of rain – and minimal damage across the DFW area. One EF-0 tornado confirmed in the DFW area. Ten in Texas – mostly southeast.

The weather should be 'mostly out of the area' by mid morning on Saturday with clearing and return of the sun by afternoon – that was the prediction. Had the itch to go mobile after two visits in past week to dentist, new refilled filling, and other activities kept me busy and at home. Those dental bills add up! Ouch!

Those storms after Dallas moved east – clobbered LA and MS with storm damage and some tornadoes on Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday January 11 2020

Early Saturday I peeked out and the heavy rain had ceased. I grabbed a quick breakfast, loaded up the car, put the antennas on it in a weak drizzle and headed out up the roads to Hugo OK – 2 ½ hours away. It was right at 32 F when I left at 6:33am. Still very dark and sunrise not expected till 7:30am but all good 4 and six lane highways headed north. Traffic was real light on Saturday morning as I zipped along on route 121 (60-75 mph speed limit) to Bonham TX (Fannin County) then across to Paris TX (Lamar County) on 82 – and up into Choctaw County OK on US 259.

KFF-2787 – Hugo Lake State Park

First stop was a 'quickie' at Hugo State Park KFF-2787 a few miles off the route two plus hours after leaving home. Only needed 10 for a quickie and ran 30M CW with a dozen or so quickly in the log in 15 minutes. Been there twice before. No time for full activation for the WWFF Challenge. New ones had priority



KFF-4810 – Hugo Wildlife Management Area

The real first stop was at Hugo WMA KFF-4810 Choctaw County – and only in the WWFF system. That's ten miles north of Hugo, OK. What's this stuff bouncing off the windshield? It's frozen sleet.....hmm....26 degrees here. Fortunately, the previous days had been warm (50s and 60s) so the roads were also warm and no problems driving. No accumulation fortunately but it persisted for a long while.

I could spot it on the county hunter site – CH.W6RK.COM and on the DXSummit.fi site, but not on the main park spotting site POTA.US where 90% of the park chasers watch. Some watch the KFF page on Facebook. My goal was to get to 44 QSOs in a reasonable amount of time.

Things worked out well between county hunters for Choctaw OK – and 3 bands – 40,30 and 20cw and park chasers. Squeaked by with 45Qs. The A index was 12 and K=2. Hardly any DX from Europe making it through. Caught only a handful of DX the entire trip. Caught two park to park contacts by watching the POTA spot site – but I wasn't in a POTA park. Maybe these will get added to POTA some day and folks will get retro-active credit. OK – hope everyone caught Choctaw County. On to other counties and parks!

From the state web site:

“Total WMA is 19,227 acres. The Hugo WMA is located along the Kiamichi River with the majority in Choctaw County. The northern portion is in southern Pushmataha County.

Habitat consists of mature stands of hardwoods in the bottom land areas to hardwood/pine tree mixes in some areas. Much of the area is old farm field habitat that is maintained through intensive management practices as prescribed burning, disking, and mowing operations. The variety of trees include six species of oak as well as ash, hickory, pine, river birch, willow, as well as sand plum, holly, sumac, and a great variety of grasses and legumes. Soil types vary from deep sand to alluvial plain type habitat. The average annual precipitation for the area is 49 inches.”

Checked the weather back home. OMG – it was a surprise snow storm at home! Saturday morning 2 inches of snow fell in Plano!

Pine Creek WMA – KFF-4826



Note the 'Consult Regulations Before Entering'.....present at every WMA. The regulations can run from days when closed for 'closed hunts' or 'permit hunts', to whether you can primitive camp, use ATVs(usually no), fish, hunt, boat, etc. In most cases, they expect you to have either a state hunting license, fishing license, or 'land use' type permit.

from the state web site:

“Pine Creek WMA covers 10,280 acres and is located in McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties approximately 7 miles North of Valliant, Oklahoma. The WMA is adjacent to Little River and Pine Creek Lake. Habitat consists of mature stands of hardwoods in the bottom land areas to hardwood/pine tree mixes in some areas as well as large stands of mostly pine located through the area. Some of the area is old farm field habitat that is maintained through intensive management practices. The variety of trees include six species of oak as well as ash, hickory, pine, river birch, willow, as well as sand plum, holly, sumac, and a great variety of grasses and legumes. Soil types vary from deep sand to rocky and the area is part of the Kiamichi Uplift. The average annual precipitation for the area is 53 inches.”

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A good place to run it is at this park above although you only have to go one mile to be in the WMA on the road to it.

I ran the section in Pushmataha County – some folks needed that one. It was a LC for K0MAF who is getting close to finishing up first time now. This is what he needs now:

IA: Cherokee, Emmet
KY: Mclean, Monroe, Owsley
MN: Pennington
TX: Hamilton.

See if you can help out. The MI Mini will be coming up in a few months....maybe you can plan your route to hit them?

Do print off the maps of the WMAs as this actually is in 3 counties for different sections of it and the directions sort of get you there but the place has several spots to run it. I use my spotting pad and the 'what's my county?' app to verify my current county. There are no county line signs in the WMA's. Sometimes you can't get to the part that is in different counties unless you walk or have a boat!

Conditions cooperate and get my 44+Qs and run the bands including 20M SSB for a couple. 20M CW seems the best band mid-day.

Off to the next in McCurtain County OK. Wow! Lots of swamps headed down toward the next. Both sides of road severely flooded. Of course, the 3-5 inches of new rain in

the last day didn't help matters much!

Red Slough WMA KFF-4828



I didn't venture too far into the WMA – as you can see, the road was flooded both sides and 300 feet ahead covered with water – and I wasn't about to find out if 3 inches or a foot. Steady rain didn't make picture taking through the windshield at high magnification work well either (see pic above).....

from the state website:

“Red Slough WMA covers 5,814 acres in McCurtain County in southeast Oklahoma.

Located 6 miles south of Haworth, the area consists of consists of about 2,400 acres of wetlands, 1,600 acres of shrub/scrub habitat, 1,100 acres of bottomland hardwood reforestation, 414 acres of reservoirs, and 300 acres of woodlands. In addition Push Creek intersects the entire WMA.

Habitat consists of reclaimed rice farm fields, bottomland hardwoods, small areas of open prairie, and replanted hardwood areas. The area also has a waterfowl refuge. Non-toxic shot is required for hunting with deer archery hunting allowed. All waterfowl hunting is closed after 1:00 pm local time. The average annual precipitation for the area is 54 inches. “

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I've never realized how much of southern McCurtain County is swamp! As I head south from Idabel on 259, both sides of the road are flooded. It rained 3-5 inches here the day before and it shows – massive flooding both sides – and the whole area seems flatter than a pancake. It's not all that far to the Red River – and if you head further south, you cross into TX. OK and AR are a few miles further east. The main roads are raised so no problems there although I suspect a good part of the 'wetlands' of the WMA are flooded, too. And the roads.....with the rain in the past day or so. Before they built Lake Texoma dam, likely the flooding was a lot worse here as the Red River would rampage at times – and now restrained by the large Lake Texoma (20+ miles long) and the dam.

I found the WMA and a parking spot – and make good use of the North American CW QSO Party to quickly pile up contacts toward the magic 44 number. After reaching 44Qs, I head on down to 30M for some county hunter/park chasers. 20M and 40M are very busy with contesters filling up the band all the way up to 100 Khz above the bottom of the band so difficult to run there. This is a contest that runs from 1800Z till 0600z – 12 hours - with folks trying to work others exchanging name and S/P/C. There are 50 states (and DC), the US territories like KP2, KP4, North American DX entities, and the 14 Canadian provinces and territories to work. No other multipliers. You can work the same station on different bands. Multipliers are per band. Stations are only allowed to run 100w output. The SSB version is later this year. Leave after an hour and a few minutes.

I head north and make a quickie stop at **Little River National Wildlife Refuge – KFF-0486** and work 10 contest stations. That's it. Same county so no need to put it out for county hunters. I'll do the same county next and will be in the county tomorrow for several parks!



It's time to be heading to the motel to check in – then I can do one more full activation this afternoon after that. I would spend the night at the Microtel Inn in Broken Bow, OK - \$85 including tax. Not many cheap motels here and it's cold so I want a place with good heat!

After check-in, I head 7 miles north to **Ouachita National Forest** which has two **different numbers – KFF-4601 and K-4424**. I've run this several times already in the past couple years. Since this forest lies in two states, WWFF has to assign a different number – one for each state. In AR, it's KFF-4424. Confusing? Yep, different numbers for the same thing for each state.

I make a quick ten (contesters) and move on to a new one next.



Not far away is **Ouachita McCurtain Wildlife Management Area – KFF-4824**. It's not in the POTA system now like most of the WMA's in OK. Maybe someday. Again, I work mostly testers on 20M and then 40M to quickly reach the magic 44Qs the easy way. Do try 30M as well for park/county hunters. It will soon be dark so back to the motel, gas up the car, and grab dinner. I ate at the Alambra Mexican place (good). It never got above 40 degrees today despite forecasts of sun and 50+F temps. Brrr. I'm not enjoying the freezing cold, drizzle and wind!

Ouachita – McCurtain Unit WMA covers 131,000 acres in central and southern McCurtain County in the southeast corner of the state. Loblolly pine plantations and upland hardwood forests dominate Unit. This area contains the Ouachita Mountains foothills and also surrounds the Lower Mountain Fork River.

Game Species of Interest:

Quail: Bobwhite quail are present in low numbers.

Deer: White-tailed deer are present in good numbers but are highly sought after.

Turkey: Eastern wild turkeys are present in good numbers but are highly sought after.

Rabbit: Both cottontails and swamp rabbits are present with cottontails being more common.

Furbearers: Coyote, bobcat, fox, beaver and raccoon are available.

Bear: Present in low numbers.

Sunday January 12 2020

Outside it's 26F and overcast. Hmmm.....winter trips to here are no fun with this kind of weather. I head out before 7am (still dark) for **Ouachita National Forest** (at the ranger station) **KFF-4601/K-4424** again which is 7 miles north. Run it on 40M and catch 10 park chasers and county hunters for a quickie activation on a new day. Then I head to a new one – same county – McCurtain.

Three Rivers WMA KFF-4835 has many places you can run it- it runs parallel to highway 259 for at least 10 miles with 6 or 7 entrances – easy to find and run!



From the state site:

Three Rivers WMA covers 216,503 acres, McCurtain and Pushmataha counties in southeast Oklahoma. Located north of Hwy. 3/7 and west of Hwy. 259 (north of Broken Bow), Three Rivers WMA is a mixture of pine and hardwood forests.

Loblolly pine plantations of various age classes predominate the majority of the WMA. Interspersed within the pine plantations are hardwood benches and streamside management zones dominated by oaks and hickories. The Glover River runs through the WMA.

Game Species of Interest:

Quail: Present in moderate to good numbers.

Bear: Present in good numbers.

Deer: Present in great numbers.

Turkey: Present in good numbers

Rabbit: Both cottontails and swamp rabbits are present with cottontails being more common.

Squirrel: Fox and gray squirrels are present in good numbers.

Furbearers: Coyote, bobcat, opossum, gray fox, beaver, and raccoon are available.

Dove: Present in great numbers.

Waterfowl: May be present in low numbers along the creeks and rivers.

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The contest is long over – ended at midnight - so it is back to working the bands to try to get 44Q. Since it's not a POTA park, that eliminates lots of chasers who are only interested in POTA parks(at least 80% of them). Fortunately conditions are decent and 40M works well early in the morning. Work 21 on 40M CW, a handful on 40M SSB then 14 on 30M, then 11 on 20M CW. Good – got my 44+ and head out. I stick around on the band till there is no one calling then switch bands.

- - -

Hmmm...I'm looking for a road into Broken Bow WMA. The directions are:

“From Broken Bow: From U.S. Hwy 70, approximately 20 miles north on U.S. Hwy 259, turn east at the Mount Herman store, 8.5 miles on the Holly Creek Campground Road to the area”

Sounds easy. I finally figure out that the store with no name, roughly 20 miles north of Broken Bow (depends where you start calculating since Broken Bow is five miles long) is probably the Mount Herman store. Dang....it's locked up tight – and sign on door saying 'Due to weather we are closing early and will re-open at 10am’. It's only 9am. Not many people needing beer, fishing supplies,bait, hot coffee, etc, when it is 30 degrees outside with wind!

Well, I wander down the road going east – and it comes to a 'tee' in 1000 feet. Neither paved road at the 'tee' is Holly Creek Campground Road. Follow each for a mile or two and no turn off for Holly Creek Road. Backtrack to the 'tee'. There is a teeny weeny one lane road - dirt/mud – with no sign – looks more like a driveway at the 'tee'. No one to ask. Mapquest doesn't show any route into it from here. Mapquest shows no route at all! It gets a zero on this one and there is no 'directions' button to click either! Oh, well, I'll skip it. If you start down the narrow one lane muddy (5 inches of rain in

past 2 days) road you might get stuck or have no place to turn around for miles – and I'm not even sure it is the right road! Another day for that one.

Don't have too much time to waste and need to get back home by 4pm for an evening event in TX which is about 4 hours away! Dang. Well, maybe another time. This one got away. Fortunately there's a Plan B.

I head another 18 miles north on highway 259 – good road – about the only north/south road in this neck of the woods that's decent – and hit Honobia WMA KFF-4809 still in McCurtain County. Parts of it are in other counties but further away – and I don't have the time to spend today getting there – and back. Next trip!

Honobia Creek WMA – McCurtain County – KFF-4809.



From the state web site:

“Honobia Creek WMA covers 91,721.18 acres in Pushmataha, Leflore and McCurtain counties in southeast Oklahoma. Located North of Hwy. 3/7 and East of Hwy. 271 (northeast of Antlers) and East of Hwy 259 and North of Hwy 4 (North and East of Smithville). Honobia Creek WMA is a mixture of pine and hardwood forests.

Loblolly pine plantations of various age classes predominate the majority of the WMA. Interspersed within the pine plantations are hardwood benches and streamside management zones dominated by oaks and hickories.”

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That's over 130 square miles of WMA! Big. 640 acres= 1 square mile

OK...this one relatively easy to find – and I'm still in the same county after driving 50 miles! I start on 20M SSB for a change and 18 QSOs go in the log. One QSO on 17m CW – still not much happening there despite a 'sunspot or two'. A=12, K=2 and SFI=12. We've had many days of one group of sunspots with 2 sunspots. That's encouraging news for a new cycle beginning. Run 20,30, and 40CW and reach the magic 44Qs. Thanks all for working me. It's now a bit after 11am and I better be heading home soon. I'm done in hour and gotta go!

First its the 40+ miles south again to Broken Bow. Along the way, stop for a few more fast QSOs from Ouachita National Forest KFF-4601 and KFF-4424. There are a few logging roads into it you can stop at right off the main drag – for a quick dozen. Real Quick! Then pedal to the metal to zip on home with no further stops – nearly 4 hours at 65-75 mph most of the way. Still under 40F in Oklahoma!

The GPS lady says head south to TX and I do....winding up in Red River County TX after 60 miles - then west through Lamar to Fannin and my home county Collin.

Whew....reach home at 3:45 pm after a long drive. I put 520 miles of driving on the car in two days with a whole bunch of park stops. There's residual snow along side the house and on the back side of the roof of the house. 50F at home so I can defrost. Definitely winter time and I missed the blizzard of 2 inches of snow at home on Saturday morning – hi hi. No accumulation up in OK, just drizzle, sleet, snow flurries, cold and no sun – the entire time.

The new WMAs in OK are a challenge – only in the one system (WWFF) and no big POTA pileups like back east on 40M SSB to fill out the log. But it's still fun and folks need the counties, too! More trips to come.

Thanks for riding along

Mobile Activity in January

At the end of December:

Mike, NF0N, was running counties in NE and lower SD.

Bob, N4CD, made several trips to OK

Karl, K4YT, was noted in MD, DE counties

AB4WL spotted in AL counties

W8OP, Al, was out on several trips in WV and OH putting them out.

Ron, KB6UF was noted in NM and headed east through TX to home.

KA3QLF, Scott, noted out in a park in PA.

Now in January 2020

KB6UF continues to head east

Lowell, KB0BA/Sandra, N0XYL, spotted in IA counties

Bill, NU0Q, left IA, spotted in OK and KS counties, then into LA, into TX, and across to FL on multi-week trip.

Don, K3IMC, noted in GA and AL counties

Many days here in January with only one mobile out. (NU0Q)

Fred, K0FG, left MO and headed to OK – running many there, then back to MO.

Jerry, W0GXQ, headed out on a trip around southeast CO – and more including to the west.

Mike, KA4RRU, noted out in eastern part of VA on several weekends.

Fred, K0FG, popped up in NM and was running around there. Ran some TX panhandle

ones, too.

Jim, N9JF, popped up in NC and was putting them out there (including some parks). Later headed south to GA then into FL. Ran counties/parks in FL.

Rick, AI5P, busy running parks in TX and NM

Ed, KN4Y, ran some counties in FL on the way to/from bowling tournament.

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Most active mobile this month? NU0Q, Bill, by an overwhelming majority of counties run!

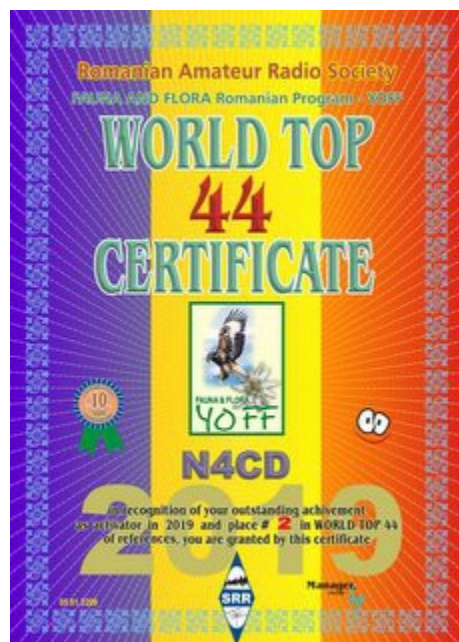
1/27/2020

2019 Was a Good Year

N4CD had a good year last year running parks and counties. In early January, the following certificates from the Romanian WWFF Group showed up in my mailbox. These are the folks who track everything and issue yearly awards (44 in each category).

It reads:

In recognition of your outstanding achievement as an activator in 2019 and place #4 in Top 44 QSOs, you are granted this certificate.



“In recognition of your outstanding achievement as activator in 2019 and place #2 in WORLD TOP 44 of references, you are granted this certificate. “

Woo-Hoo.....number two activator in the entire world in references (Parks) ! I'll have to aim for number one next year but those new parks are getting further and further away from the home QTH! Just like running counties – after you do everything within 500-700 miles, it's long trips to get to new ones! For WWFF, you only get credit once for running the park. No repeats.

Several other US park folks were in the Top 44 including super-activator Kerri, KB3WAV. (she spots on W6RK.com)

New Parks in Texas

Texas Wildlife Management Areas of 5,000 acres or more (WMAs) have been added to WWFF (not POTA) in early January 2020. More excuses to go run counties and most of them are far, far away from the N4CD QTH – some 600-700 miles away! All these are KFF only parks at the current time.

4869 active	Alabama Creek	Trinity
4870 active	Angelina-Neches/Dam B	Jasper Tyler
4871 active	Bannister	San Augustine
4872 active	Black Gap	Brewster
4873 active	Caddo Lake	Marion Harrison
4874 active	Chaparral	LaSalle Dimmit
4875 active	Cooper	Delta/Hopkins
4876 active	Elephant Mountain	Brewster
4877 active	Gene Howe	Hemphill
4878 active	Guadalupe Delta	Calhoun Victoria Refugio
4879 active	Gus Engeling	Anderson
4880 active	J.D. Murphree	Jefferson
4881 active	Justin Hurst	Brazoria
4882 active	Kerr	Kerr
4883 active	Lower Neches	Orange
4884 active	Mad Island	Matagorda
4885 active	Mason Moutain	Matagorda
4886 active	Matador	Cottle
4887 active	Moore Plantation	Sabine Jasper
4888 active	Old Sabine Bottom	Smith
4889 active	Pat Mayse	Lamar
4890 active	Richmond Creek	Freestone
4892 active	White Oak Creek	Bowie Cass Marion

https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/wma/find_a_wma/list/?option=county

Some of these may be real challenges to get too...and run! Maybe I need to buy a Jeep or 4 wheel drive pickup truck? Hi hi I'll find out.....

No Sunspots – More Volcanic Activity

Would you believe there is a relationship between solar activity and volcanoes erupting? Seems, according to this paper, in years of solar low activity, the solar wind is weaker and does not keep as many cosmic rays from hitting the Earth as at high solar activity periods. This can cause the super heated gases in the magma to start the eruption cycle. In the past year, volcanoes have been going off around the world – South and Central America, Philippines, Asia, and Alaska. From the paper:

Abstract

Volcanoes with silica-rich and highly viscous magma tend to produce violent explosive eruptions that result in disasters in local communities and that strongly affect the global environment. We examined the timing of 11 eruptive events that produced silica-rich magma from four volcanoes in Japan (Mt. Fuji, Mt. Usu, Myojin-sho, and Satsuma-Iwojima) over the past 306 years (from AD 1700 to AD 2005). Nine of the 11 events occurred during inactive phases of solar magnetic activity (solar minimum), which is well indexed by the group sunspot number. This strong association between eruption timing and the solar minimum is statistically significant to a confidence level of 96.7%.

This relationship is not observed for eruptions from volcanoes with relatively silica-poor magma, such as Izu-Ohshima. It is well known that the cosmic-ray flux is negatively correlated with solar magnetic activity, as the strong magnetic field in the solar wind repels charged particles such as galactic cosmic rays that originate from outside of the solar system. The strong negative correlation observed between the timing of silica-rich eruptions and solar activity can be explained by variations in cosmic-ray flux arising from solar modulation. Because silica-rich magma has relatively high surface tension ($\sim 0.1 \text{ Nm}^{-1}$), the homogeneous nucleation rate is so low that such magma exists in a highly supersaturated state without considerable exsolution, even when located relatively close to the surface, within the penetration range of cosmic-ray muons (1–10 GeV). These muons can contribute to nucleation in supersaturated magma, as documented by many authors studying a bubble chamber, via ionization loss. This radiation-induced nucleation can lead to the pre-eruptive exsolution of H_2O in the silica-

rich magma. We note the possibility that the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption was triggered by the same mechanism: an increase in cosmic-ray flux triggered by Typhoon Yunya, as a decrease in atmospheric pressure results in an increase in cosmic-ray flux. We also speculate that the snowball Earth event was triggered by successive large-scale volcanic eruptions triggered by increased cosmic-ray flux due to nearby supernova explosions.”

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1342937X10001966>

Interesting paper. Last year saw RECORD low sunspot activity (200 days of not one sunspot) and volcanoes are erupting all over the world now. Hmmmm.....

AI5P Trip Report

Rick, AI5P, ran some parks recently in in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico:

Muleshoe NWR (K-0552), TX



from the web:

“It is the oldest National Wildlife Refuge in the U.S. state of Texas, having been established as the Muleshoe Migratory Waterfowl Refuge by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. The refuge is a stop for migratory waterfowl flying between Canada and Mexico. The refuge includes several intermittent salt lakes, some of which have been modified to extend their wet periods. Paul's Lake, on the east side of Highway 214, is spring fed, and hosts wildlife during times when the other lakes are dry. If sufficient water is present during the winter, the refuge hosts tens of thousands of sandhill cranes. The largest number of cranes ever recorded was 250,000, during

February, 1981.

Other wildlife includes wood warblers, meadowlarks, raptors, burrowing owls, blacktailed prairie dogs, jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, coyotes, black footed ferrets, spotted chorus frogs, and badgers.

The prairie ecosystem includes plant life such as wildflowers, grasses, yucca, cacti, and mesquite. Rangeland management techniques include controlled burning and grazing.”

Grulla NWR (K-0547), NM



from the web:

“Grulla National Wildlife Refuge is located primarily in eastern New Mexico in Roosevelt County. A very small part of the refuge extends eastward into western Bailey County, Texas.

The central focal point of the Grulla National Wildlife Refuge is an ephemeral salt lake or saline playa – a shallow basin that collects runoff from the surrounding drainage area during heavy downpours but then often dries completely due to evaporation.

The word grulla is Spanish for crane. When wet, the playa lake provides habitat to sandhill cranes and the grasslands within the refuge provide habitat to other birds such as ring-necked pheasants, lesser prairie chickens, and scaled quails.

The refuge has no facilities other than a parking lot and trails.

Oasis SP (K-2708),



from the web:

“ Although fishing is the park’s main draw, it also has several hiking trails, a peaceful and shady campground, and an abundance of birds. “ You've also got some sand dunes here as well. “

Sumner Lake SP (K-2717), NM



From the web:

“This lake on the grassy plains offers many activities, such as boating, swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing, and birding. The park features a large 4,500-acre reservoir on the Pecos River, created in 1939 by the Sumner Dam of the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The reservoir is home to various fish species including large mouth bass, catfish, crappie and walleye. The park elevation is 4,300 feet above sea level.”

And Santa Rosa Lake SP (K-2714). NM



from the web:

“Santa Rosa Lake State Park is a state park located on the eastern plains. The park features the large 3,800-acre Santa Rosa Reservoir that is home to various fish species including large mouth bass, catfish and even walleye. The park elevation is 4,800 feet above sea level. “

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229 contacts. Thanks for following me along! Rick AI5P

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note de N4CD – some of these are out in the boonies without cell service – so if you hear them, please spot them folks! Activators are looking for 44+ contacts – and you can work them multiple bands and multiple modes to help out! With current conditions, it can be tough to even get heard at times! (same for folks running counties- for some awards you need multiple contacts on each of 2 bands).

On the Road with N4CD IV

Friday January 17, 2020

Another trip? Why not? The Cowtown Hamfest was coming up over in Fort Worth and that's a good excuse to head over there. The weather on Friday Jan 17 was gloomy and raining (drizzle) but that didn't stop me from heading there via **Cedar Hill State Park – KFF-2996** in Dallas County. Not many people there – the main boat ramp area is still being rebuilt due to flood damage and is closed. Weather was steady drizzle and 50F. The boat ramp parking area is where I usually head but it is still closed due to flood damage. The alternate temporary one is noisy. So I headed to the campground area and found a nice high unoccupied site and pulled it. Most want to be by the lake. Had a good run of 76 QSOs – there are many new park chasers coming on board all the time. Bill, NU0Q was in FL heading homeward. Jim, N9JF/m was in NC and would be leaving soon headed into more NC counties. Fred, K0FG/m was in NM. Otherwise, quiet on the county hunter frequencies.

There for a bit over an hour and half, then proceeded west a few miles more to Forest Hills. Checked into the LaQuinta (used frequent stay points as it was right at \$100 including taxes). This is urban Ft Worth area with no inexpensive motels. I could head home after, but it's 2 hours of 'rush hour' traffic or more to get back home so I stay overnight. Worse, heavy rain showers were predicted. Hunkered down.

The hamfest starts at 3pm and runs till 7pm on Friday. I didn't spy anything I 'had to have' and saw it all in an hour. It's a small one and some of the same stuff that didn't sell

last year and at other hamfests was there again. You could buy a Hallicrafters SX-85 or SX-110, a Knight Kit T-60 for \$130 (been for sale for a year at that price), misc antenna parts, used computers, some software packages, and lots of misc. Jim Sargent was there with his 1,000 different tubes (probably has what you need) and loads of old radio books and magazines. If you were into microwave, lots of that stuff there. All the tables were occupied and not much more shows up Saturday. Didn't stay that long (two sweeps around the small flea market) then off to dinner at the Pizza Hut.

Saturday January 18, 2020

The hamfest starts again at 7am. Decided not worth going there, so after nice breakfast at the LaQuinta, headed for the next park two hours away – after deciding to head directly for the 'new ones' never run before. Today the NA QSO PARTY SSB would start at noon. I could use that to get contacts in the WMA's where it is tough to raise enough activity to get good runs.

It was also the January VHF contest – but twice on the trip I put on the 6M antenna and heard ZIP. Not a peep. Called CQ on 50.099 for five minutes. NO answer. This contest in TX is a sleeper. I guess if you have big big beams, use FT-8, it might be OK but otherwise – there is nothing there. Of course, with current sunspots you won't have much in the way of openings other than chance E-skip. N4CD/r struck out. Maybe if I had a horizontally polarized antenna I might have heard something. Comments on the 3830 reflector all showed mainly FT-8 activity, near zero SSB activity other than locals.

First up – would be a repeat of **Fairfield Lake State Park – KFF-3007** about 20 miles off I-45 in Freestone County. To date, 270 QSOs have been made from here – half of them by N4CD on a previous trips. Only one other 'activator' (K5WZS) has been here and he ran SSB only. I added in another 88 contacts with a good run – lots of new park chasers. I spot on the POTA spot page, ch.w6rk.com, and DXsummit.fi for 20M runs. Most of the park chasers watch the POTA spots page.



From the state website:

“Fairfield Lake State Park, 1,460 acres, is northeast of the city of Fairfield in Freestone County. The park was acquired in 1971-1972 by lease from Texas Utilities and was opened to the public in 1976.

The history of the area around Fairfield Lake State Park resembles that of much of rural eastern Texas. Long occupied by Native Americans who hunted and fished its waterways, the land was first plowed in the mid-19th century and planted in cotton and corn by Anglo farmers and, about a third of the time, their African-American slaves.

Following the Civil War, the crop-lien system took root. Blacks and whites alike worked in the service of the cotton crop until after World War II, when changes in American agriculture and increased employment opportunities away from the farm brought an end to the era of widespread cotton farming. Since that time, cattle ranching has prevailed throughout the region. The human population of the Brown Creek area, never large, is now widely scattered over the region. In this sparsely populated area, Texas Utilities built its dam, creating Fairfield Lake.”

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Next up would be two Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) nearby. If you are going to run these WMAs, spend \$12 for a 'wildlife permit' from the TX state site. They'll send you a Public Hunting Lands book of 150 pages – detailing maps and locations within the park with parking areas, 'regulations' on the WMAs and State Parks (some are closed for weeks at a time for 'permit only' hunts), other closed periods (nesting), etc. Well worth

it as they show spots you can access that you won't find on regular or even large Map Book of Texas maps. You're supposed to have a permit to enter the WMAs although so far no one has checked me for one and if you aren't out hunting or fishing, you'll probably be OK. In most of these, if you are out of your car other than in a designated parking area, you should be wearing 'orange' to avoid being mistaken for hunted wildlife!

Richland Creek WMA – KFF-4890 (no POTA equivalent or number) is in Freestone – same county run before. Easy to find and nice gravel road into the park. Right inside is a good parking area to run from.



From the web:

“The Richland Creek WMA was named for Richland Creek, a tributary to the Trinity River, which flowed through the property prior to the construction of Richland-Chambers reservoir. Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area was created to compensate for habitat losses associated with the construction of Richland-Chambers Reservoir. The Area is owned and managed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The mission of RCWMA is to develop and manage populations of indigenous and migratory wildlife species and their habitats and to provide quality consumptive and non-consumptive public-use in a manner that is not detrimental to the resource.

Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area is located in an ecotone separating the Post Oak Savannah and Blackland Prairie ecological regions and the Area lies almost entirely within the Trinity River floodplain. The Area is subject to periodic and prolonged flooding. Average annual rainfall is 40 inches. Soils consist primarily of Trinity and Kaufman clays. These bottomland soils are highly productive and support a wide array

of bottomland and wetland dependent wildlife and vegetation communities.

Vast bottomland hardwood forest communities characterized by cedar elm, sugarberry, and green ash dominate the area. Honey locust, boxelder, and black willow are also common. Pockets of bur oak, shumard oak, overcup oak, water oak, willow oak, and native pecan also occur. The understory is dominated by hawthorn, cat briar, poison ivy, and rattan with shade tolerant grasses and forbs comprising the herbaceous layer. Large non-forested areas also occur and are characterized by diverse herbaceous communities. The vast bottomland hardwood forests serve as nesting and brood rearing habitat for many species of neotropical birds. The Area has numerous marshes and sloughs, which provide habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl, wading birds and shore birds, as well as diverse aquatic life. “

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Since this cannot be spotted on POTA (no K-xxxx number), it's more of a challenge to rally the troops to get the QSOs. I get on 20M SSB, not run previously in this county and go to work. Thanks to county hunters working me again (and many of them now park chasers as well), and the park chasers in WWFF, it goes well. 20M is working well. Someone may have spotted me wrong on POTA as many POTA folks show up. Hi HI. I'll take them, but keep repeating **KFF-4890 in Texas**. The POTA number K-4890 is assigned to a park in NH. The numbers diverge after about 4460. Amazingly, with some NAQP QSOs thrown in, I work 115 QSOs from here. Wow....thanks all.

There's another WMA not too far away – Gus **Engling WMA KFF-4879** in Anderson County.



From the web:

“Gus Engeling WMA (GEWMA) is located in northwest Anderson County, 21 miles northwest of Palestine. This 10,958-acre area was purchased from 1950 to 1960 under the Pittman-Robertson Act using Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program funds. The GEWMA's primary purpose is to function as a wildlife research and demonstration area for the Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion. The area is comprised of 2,000 acres of hardwood bottomland floodplain and almost 500 acres of natural watercourses, 350 acres of wetlands: marshes and swamps and nearly 300 acres of sphagnum moss bogs.

The GEWMA is an island of Post Oak Savannah surrounded by coastal bermuda grass pastures, harvested timberlands, and fragmented wildlife habitat. It's rolling sandy hills dominated by post oak uplands, bottomland hardwood forests, natural springs, pitcher plant bogs, sloughs, marshes, and relict pine communities contain a rich variety of wildlife. Sound wildlife management tools like prescribed burning, grazing, brush control and hunting are used to demonstrate the results of proven practices to resource managers, landowners, and other interested groups or individuals.

Historically, the upland sites of the Post Oak Savannah were open and dominated by waist-high grasses and large scattered trees. In addition, early observers reported large oak "motts" or islands of hardwood forests scattered throughout the grassland prairie. Massive, mature oaks dominated the deep, rich, moist soils of bottomlands. Both uplands and bottomlands supported an abundance of wildlife in early reports.

The Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission purchased most of the land comprising the GEWMA between 1950 and 1960. Federal-Aid in Wildlife Restoration Funds purchased the area to act as a wildlife research and demonstration site for the Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion where trained personnel could study wildlife and wildlife management practices. “

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I managed to get 60 QSO's here using all the bands. Caught K0FG/m out in NM and NJ0Q/m back east on 30M CW but best band was 20M between SSB and CW. It helps to be in a new county!

Time for one more today – **Purtis Creek KFF-3050** – (and K-3050) in Henderson County, TX. I could spot on both pages.



From the state web site:

“Native Americans from the Wichita and Caddo tribes once roamed this area. Just east of the park, on private property, is a cliff overhang under which Native Americans took shelter. Petroglyphs carved into the rock walls indicate this was a good hunting area.

The abundance of wild game drew white settlers here in the early to mid-1800s. The settlers established many small towns and communities during this time. On the south border of the park lies a road known as the Tyler to Porter's Bluff Road, a well-known stage route from East Texas to the Trinity River. Along this route, just northeast of Edom near the Neches River, is the site where the famed Cherokee Chief Bowl died in the battle of the Neches in 1839.

Purtis Creek State Park is 1,582.4 acres in Henderson and Van Zandt counties. The state acquired the park property in 1977 from private owners. The park opened in 1988.”

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Had a good run here – well, anything more than 44 is a good run – hi hi – and many QSOS have been made from here -over 600. I add in 67 more then head on to a motel 90 minutes away in Tyler TX. It's a toss up whether to go home, or stay near more parks tomorrow. I decide to stay overnight another day and see what happens.

The Super 8 in Tyler is \$43/night plus 7 bucks in taxes. Not bad! Lots of motels around here too. I arrive at 4:45, fill up the gas tank, and head to dinner at Posado's

Mexican restaurant. Very good! It's going to get chilly tonight down to freezing here – cold for TX.

Sunday January 19, 2020

After a nice breakfast at the Super 8 (egg, sausage, oatmeal, coffee) I head 7 miles north to **Tyler State Park KFF-3059** on a chilly TX morning. I've been here a few times before, too. It was built by the CCC folks in the 1930s as were many TX state parks. (and hundreds around the country). Over 600Qs have been made from here and N4CD accounts for about half of them! Hi hi. Added in 89Qs this morning. Band seems to be working. Smith County. Lots of new park chasers on 20M SSB which is nice. NU0Q/m was busy running in MS – doing a lot of the state there and making lots of folks happy by running much of the state.

Just north of there, you have **Old Sabine Bottom WMA – KFF-4888** only in the WWFF system. You can't spot on POTA - and it's the same county so contacts can be challenging to get. Thanks to the county hunters who do work me again. Some, watching Logger, don't see the change of park and snooze away.



From the state web site:

“The Old Sabine Bottom WMA has 5,158 acres located north of Tyler in Smith County. The area is five miles northeast of Lindale. The WMA is bounded on the west by FM 1804 and meanders between the Old Sabine River Channel and the Sabine River. The Area has mostly bottomland hardwood habitat containing large stands of hardwoods such as oak, elm and ash, and a diverse mixture of understory vegetation. Depending on the annual conditions, the Area maintains fair populations of squirrels, waterfowl, deer, hogs and turkey.

Please note:

Bring your own drinking water.

There are no restroom facilities.

Insect repellent is recommended for mosquitoes.

Caution: Watch for venomous snakes. Poison Ivy should be avoided.

Very wet conditions may occur, rubber boots may be needed. “

There is no water or restrooms at any of the WMAs. Not XYL friendly if you need a 'restroom'. It's 'wet' there because we've had a lot of rain (5 inches in past week). I find a spot to run at a parking area and put it out. You'll note the 'annual permit' required on all the WMA signs. (\$12/yr).

Where have the band conditions gone? Bands sound weak – signals not great – and 20M is nearly dead – with few signals over S3! This is going to be a real nail biter to get to 44. I work at it...and work at it... the DX on 20M goes in the log 8 times – but only a handful of others get through on 20m otherwise from stateside. 30M is poor with ten contacts. 40M CW and SSB gives just enough to get to 46 QSOs after an hour and a half. This is not fun at this point. Nothing on 17M.

Also, the difference of POTA vs not POTA means that 90% of the park chasers (mostly on SSB) won't be looking for you or working you. Maybe someday these WMAs will get added to POTA.

From here, I can drive an hour and a half to one state park and one new WMA up 50 miles north.....or head home. With the rotten band conditions, I opt to head home – about two hours away. It's not worth burning gas when you're not having fun!

Arrive home after 438 miles on this trip. Time for an oil change – car is down to 17% oil life. Then I'll be ready for the next trip.

Thanks for riding along! This was the first trip 'activating' the Wildlife Management Areas in TX. They've just been added to the WWFF system. So far, so good with decent (but bumpy) dirt/gravel roads into them that a 2 wheeler can handle OK. That may not be true out west. We'll see! Someone has to take up the challenge of activating them!

(Thanks to Norm, N9MM, who has worked hard to get the OK and TX WMAs added to

the WWFF system).

On the Road with N4CD V

Another weekend was coming up – and the weather looked decent with moderate temperatures and not much rain in sight. This would be the Winter Field Day weekend as well. My local club was going all out to set up a portable station in a storage area of the EOC in Richardson – plus a trailer – so they could run 2-I for the event with a half dozen antennas including a tri-band beam on a 'tower trailer' and a slew of dipoles and verticals. I thought about operating there (they always need CW folks) but decided to go out mobile instead and hit a few of the TX new Wildlife Management Areas recently added to the WWFF system.

In TX, we were expecting mid 60s on Saturday and mid 50s on Sunday. Meanwhile, Fairbanks AK has already had more than ten days below minus 40F. It's been a few years since there have been so many days below 40F – but that is 'normal' for this area of AK! Brrr. The sled dogs are wearing 'booties' and a jacket but having a ball. The ice and snow are frozen and make for good sled pulling. Soon, annual commemoration of the first 'race against time' - the Iditarod Race will be held between Anchorage and Nome through the real boonies of AK. Way back when a century ago, a diphtheria epidemic started in Nome. Using the military undersea cable system, a message was sent urgently requesting serum be sent – and an emergency dog sled run with relays in mid winter was quickly arranged. It's 1000 miles of mountains and frozen rivers – held every year now in March - -this year. You usually have white out conditions, wind chills up to 70 below zero with gale force winds. Teams start out with 14 sled dogs and at least 5 must finish to qualify for a 'finish'. It takes over 8 days to go the distance.

You won't see N4CD running counties or parks up there in the winter time!

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Saturday January 25, 2020

I was up early and headed out to breakfast with the Richardson Wireless Klub (K5RWK) at Poor Richards – which starts at 5:30. Took the 'radio car' with the antennas on it- have to put the big antenna on the back as it won't fit in the garage otherwise with it!

I usually get there just before 7am. Had my usual 'healthy choice' breakfast then headed out a bit early to a local 'antique radio/ham garage sale' over in Garland TX that started at 8am. One of the Vintage Radio Club members was 'cleaning out' and had a bunch of stuff for sale. Or local club president (Also a radio auctioneer) arranged the sale. The sale started at 8am and a crowd of about 30 was waiting at the entry point. Lots of stuff was spread out on many tables, underneath them in boxes, and in two storage buildings – but most of it was 20-40 plus years old. There were two Kenwood TS-440s for sale – didn't bother to ask the price. One looked primo with mic, other was 'who knows if it works'. Lots of parts and pieces but no old regens. An old Hallicrafters – ancient – and lots of real 'junque'. Looked around quickly – didn't spy anything I had to have and there were boxes and boxes of parts – all really 30-40-50-60 year old stuff but not much useful to me. I've got too much junque myself! I did buy a little Philmore clone crystal set for a few bucks – the type with a small catwhisker detector and 'slide tuner'. Didn't stick around long as wanted to head out to run parks.

Then it was northeast for two hours to get to **Cooper Lake State Park – KFF-3000** that I've run a few times before. It was on the way to the WMA nearby so decided to activate it for the WWFF-KFF Challenge this year. Pulled in and it took an hour and a few to reach 44 contacts from Delta County TX. There are two parts to this – one part in Delta, the other in Hopkins County. Ran the Delta unit.

Then it was over to **KFF-4875** – which is only in the WWFF system. That eliminates about 90% of the park chasers as they are looking for POTA parks and watching the POTA spot site. This can't be spotted there so you've got a hundred or two less folks hunting for you! They have no clue you are out there. KFF-4875 in Hopkins County TX. Parts of it are in Delta, too.

From the state site:

“Cooper WMA is open year round for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking and wildlife viewing. Cooper WMA has 14,480 acres in Delta and Hopkins counties, adjacent to Jim Chapman Lake/Cooper Dam (19,280 acres). The WMA is managed under a license agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers. “



Worked at it, and did reach 44 plus. Winter Field Day started at 1800Z (12 o'clock local) so I could work some of them for credit – that was part of the plan. In addition, there was a big European contest going on – the REF – where folks try to work all the districts in France. Lots of EU QRM preventing EU chasers from hearing stateside parks so didn't catch many. Otherwise, you can get from 3 to 10 DX stations in the log typically in the mornings. Thanks to county hunters and park chasers, a few park-to-park contacts, I reached 44 Q plus

The first spot I tried was at the end of a road – and it was 'walk in only' there. On to plan B. Headed to the HQ and the road from there. Worked out fine. Some of the roads in the park flood during normal rains so be careful here.

Next up to the west was **Pat Mayes WMA – KFF-4889** in Lamar County TX.



From the state site:

The Pat Mayse WMA consists of 8,925 acres located in the Post Oak Savannah Ecological Region on the western edge of the Pat Mayse Reservoir in northern Lamar County. Approximately 11 miles northwest of Paris, the area has no buildings or resident staff. The Pat Mayse Wildlife Management Area contains approximately 1,500 surface acres of water, 2,500 acres of abandoned fields and 4,925 acres of hardwood timber. The land area is composed of approximately 1,000 acres of bottomlands and 6,500 acres of uplands. . Many of the Interior roads consist of logging trails and require a four-wheel drive vehicle to navigate them. ATV use is prohibited.

The primary utilization of the Pat Mayse WMA is for public hunting lands.”

Fortunately there's a nice 'picnic type' area there you can easily access with 2 wheel drive. There were half a dozen other vehicles there having a good outdoor BBQ it seems. Didn't bother them.

Worked at getting 44. Some WFD contacts, a few park-to-park contacts and the rest park chasers and county hunters. Did reach 44Q by going back and forth with park and WFD contacts. Heck, I was just in Lamar County a week or so ago – so it was a 'repeat county'. Thanks to all who worked me again – you got a 'new one' too if you're keeping track. This was the first time it's been on the air.

After the time there, I headed over to Mt Pleasant about 50 miles away for the Super 8 Motel there - \$60 with tax – along I-30. I'd get set for the next few parks in the area on Sunday. Dinner was at Two Senorita's Mexican restaurant close by. Back at the motel by sundown (sun down at 5:30pm – dark by 6pm this time of year in TX). 230 miles driven the first day and 3 parks run.

Sunday January 26, 2020

After a breakfast at the Super 8, I head out early to **White Oak Wildlife Management Area KFF-4892** in Morris County. Parts of this are in Cass, Marion counties too. I headed to the HQ and went in behind it on a decent road for a bit. Found a spot to run. The WWFF only parks are a challenge to get to 44!

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from the web:

“The White Oak Creek WMA is located in Bowie, Cass, Morris and Titus counties, in

northeast Texas, near the Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas border. The WMA covers approximately 25,777 acres of mostly bottomland hardwood forest at the confluence of the Sulphur River and White Oak Creek. The WMA is managed under a license agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Outdoor recreation includes hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and wildlife viewing. Public hunting is permitted for white-tailed deer, feral hog, mourning dove, waterfowl, early teal, duck, woodcock, rail, gallinule, snipe, squirrel, rabbits, hares and furbearers. “

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Found 8 French stations on 20M (REF contest) to then hit 40M at this early hour. A bit later, caught FG/F5HRY in Guadalupe in the Caribbean. A good pile of stations went in the log on CW with a mix of WFD, county hunters and park chasers. When the bands are busy with WFD, why not? Caught TM6G and DL2020R on 20M, too. Only bands for US stations at this hour were 30 and 40M. Didn't catch any EU park chasers (likely QRM there from the contest – really big there). Managed to get to 44 and happy. Left and headed to two state parks. (yep, it's legal to use contest QSOs for park chasing! -sometimes it might be the only way to get to 44 with current conditions – hi hi).

If you watch the Tamitha Skov weekly YouTube presentations (new each week on Thursdays) , you would have noted that the sun is 'trying' to start cycle 25. There were two 'active areas' this week - and they were giving some weak ejections – Earth oriented – which didn't help propagation one bit! However, solar flux is expected to rise next week into the mid 70s for a change! Yeah! Meanwhile, bands were NOT great from

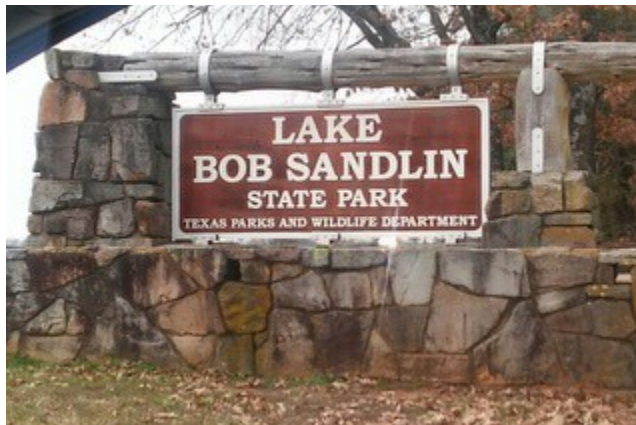
TX over the weekend. Most of the month were 'spot free' but we had one group at the end of the month again.

Next up would be a repeat park – Daingerfield State Park KFF-3002.



It was still time for WFD, so did that and park chasers and county hunters, too. Success with 44+ in log. Caught a few park-to-park contacts, too. Nice to work other park activators although most I can't hear as they are stuck on 40m SSB back in VA, GA, MD, PA, etc, and not hearing them or going to get through the pileups. That's frustrating to say the least. I've been here a few times, including just a few weeks ago!

Head out to the last for the day – **Lake Bob Sandlin State Park – KFF-3023.**



Just been here a few weeks before, too. Catch FY5KE in French Guiana (South America) in the REF contest. Nice DX country. A few WFD stations, and the rest are county hunters and park chasers. Manage to reach 44 then head on out and home which is 2.5 hours away at 75-80 mph along I-30. Lots of trucks on the road....

Home by 4pm. Whew! Over 500 miles and just six parks – 3 of them brand new. Over 300Q all together. Texas is a big place! Thanks for riding along.

Awards Issued

USACA Third Time	K0FG, Fred	March 10, 2019
USACA 9th time #12	K7REL, Tom	Jan 12, 2020
Bingo II #106	AB7RW, Phil	Dec 30, 2019
Single Band 30M #6	K5GE, Gene	
Single Band 40M #4	K5GE, Gene	

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W0GXQ Ran all Colorado. Awarded #31

W4SIG Ran all Louisiana. Awarded #28

K8ZZ Ran all Mississippi. Awarded #26

Michigan Mini

The MI Mini hosted by Ed, K8ZZ, and Joe, W8TVT, will be held in Traverse City, MI April 23 – 26th.

<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.

CW Stats to Dennis, KK7X

Please send your year end CW Stats for your totals ending 2019 to Dennis, KK7X, for compilation and then publication in the County Hunter News and likely the MARAC RoadRunner. First, fifth, tenth time CW – your current count toward the 3077.

If you use Logger, it should be easy to get that number

Send to dennis@kk7x.us

Events for County Hunters

Feb 2 1400z to 2 2359z

Minnesota QSO Party CW Ph Dig

Name, county or SPC

www.w0aa.org

Feb 2 0000z to 3 2359z

Vermont QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

www.ranv.org/vtqso.html

Feb 16 0000z to 17 2359z

ARRL International DX Contest, CW CW

RST, SP or power

www.arrl.org/arrl-dx

Feb 23 1500z to 24 0159 z

South Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

scqso.com/rules

Feb 24 1500z to 25 0059z

North Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

County or SPC

ncqsoparty.org/rules

thanks to ARRL Contest Corral for above info. More contest info listed there for more contests both US and International.

That's all folks! CU next month. De N4CD