

County Hunter News

February 2022
Volume 18 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.

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 Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now occasionally on 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 – We got them. Wow to we have them. Flux over 130 and sunspots over 100. Bands on 20M 'good' and on 17 and 15m 'fair'. Lots of contacts being made on the upper bands. Happy times are here again. Toward the end of month, slow down and lower numbers. Still better than the bottom.

2) COVID 2022 – still here and Omicron Variant raging with record number of cases. Folks dying by the thousands. Most of folks in emergency rooms are UN-VAXXED. The vaccines and boosters seem to work well to keep you out of the emergency room and ICU should you get it – and it spreads like wildfire. We've lost a few county hunters to COVID in 2020-2021 so be prepared. The COVID shots are free and if you got Medicare or insurance, get a new pneumonia shot and of course, your annual flu shot. I'm getting tired writing about it – but – you gotta worry about it and watch out. My sisters kid's whole family got it – infants, kids, parents. One parent unvaxxed. All caught it. Not needed the hospital but laid up for a few days with chills, fevers, etc. Only 63% of US folks have both shots and booster.

Really sad that there are 'rallies' to shop the mandates. Seems the only way to get folks vaccinated is brute force these days. Or burying the idiots like Meatball who said 'if I get it, I get it' and did and died. What can you say? Darwin theory at work culling the unvaxxed in great numbers. Meanwhile, the rest of us suffer from their stupidity.

3) Gas Prices - Around TX and LA, gas prices are now about \$3.10/gal. Peaked up at \$3.25/gal in early Dec and now down a bit. Nationwide, probably \$3.25-\$3.50 average. California higher.

4) Anyone heard from **KD7KST** or **W6RLL** lately? Their ham icenses have expired according to QRZ but nothing else seen?

Michigan Mini

The 2022 Michigan Mini will be hosted by Ed, K8ZZ and Doris, N8WTQ held at the West Bay Beach Resort 615 East Front Street • Traverse City, Michigan 49686 Phone: (231) 947-3700 • Fax: (231) 947-0361 Toll Free: (800) 888-8020) It will be held at the West Bay Beach Resort again in 2022 with room rates of: \$97.95 plus tax per night if reserved by March 23th, 2022 .

Date for 2022 MICHIGAN MINI is April 21 – 22 & 23rd..

AI5P Road Trips

At the end of December, Rick, AI5P, headed to Centennial Valley State Wildlife Area in Weld County CO. Three prior activations had been made from here – with 121 QSOs all on SSB.

“Approximately five (5) miles east of Kersey, property includes two (2) miles of South Platte River, some sloughs, shallow managed wetlands, and upland habitat. “

Winter Cold Weather?

“Just 125 miles west of Washington, the temperature at a weather station in Canaan Valley plunged to minus-31 degrees. It is the coldest reading on record in that part of the state.

The weather station is managed by Virginia Tech at the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The previous lowest temperature measured in Canaan Valley was minus-27 on Jan. 21, 1985, according to Robert Leffler, a retired National Weather Service climatologist, who reported the news in an email.

Canaan Valley is a popular ski destination and home to two resorts, Canaan Valley Resort and Timberline.

Weather records have been kept in Canaan Valley since 1944, according to Leffler. The Virginia Tech weather station, however, was installed only about three years ago by meteorology instructor David Carroll. It is probable that the temperatures fell even lower there in the past.

The station is at the northern end of the valley at an altitude of 3,150 feet.

“Canaan Valley is shaped like a huge bathtub with only one exit where the Blackwater River leaves the valley flowing west toward the Gulf of Mexico. The valley floor is flat and high with an average elevation of about 3,200 feet,” he wrote. “It’s large in scope at 10 miles long by 5 miles wide (50 square miles). The elevated valley floor is completely surrounded by a rim of ridge-tops that range in elevation from 3,600 to 4,460 feet. Canaan Valley is the highest large valley in eastern North America.

“This high elevation and topographic shape make it a classic textbook cold sink. Such places are commonly referred to as ‘frost hollows’. Frost hollows catch and pool cold air forming extremely well at night. Clear, calm evenings (no wind) with dry air and snow cover, as was the case this morning in Canaan, aid in cold air formation and pooling.”

Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/topstories/west-virginias-canaan-valley-plummets-to-minus-31-setting-record-low-for-region/ar-AAT2bEZ>

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It's been up and down here in TX this winter. A couple days above normal by 10F, followed by a few days at 10F below normal temps. A see-saw of temperatures but still generally cold. The solstice passed in Dec and now we have 'longer days' of more sun, but winter weather is still here for months – many months up way north. Keep warm! The end is in sight.

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That's one WMA Park I'll wait for warmer weather to run if I get back that way in WV!

Flashback to the 1960s

Hi-Par Antennas

Hi-Par made several antennas back in the 1950s and 60s that were of interest to VHF'ers – on 6 and 2 meters. One was the Saturn Six 'Halo' antenna for 6m. Back then, the new novice and tech licenses, first created in the 1950s, attracted a lot of new operators. The Novice license was good for one year – and included some VHF band – but many didn't improve their 5 wpm cw skill enough to pass the general class license at 13 wpm. Of those not getting general, a good portion elected to take the Tech test which allowed most of the VHF/UHF privileges. While there were a few 'transceivers' starting out, most folks built their transmitters and used a converter – either home made or commercially made – in front of their car radios. An IF of 1630 KHz worked well. Things were all AM on both 2m and 6m so no problem using a car radio.

The Hi-Par 6m Halo was usually bumper mounted as most cars had strong steel rear bumpers suitable for use. Most mobile operation was fixed although a few mobiled around while moving. To get the HV necessary it took a serious vibrator supply for 10-25w or often a WW2 surplus 'dynamotor' for anything bigger. Most ops probably ran 10-20w mobile. You also had to power up your modulator if you wanted decent plate modulation, too – requiring more tubes and amps. Cars in the 1920a - 1950s were 6v. Then they transitioned to 12v.

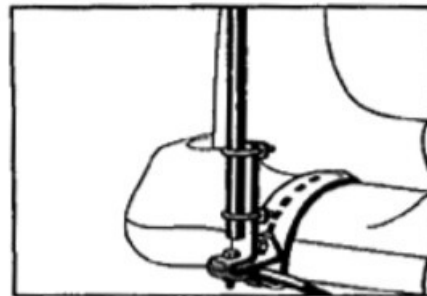
ANTENNAS FOR 6 and 2 METERS



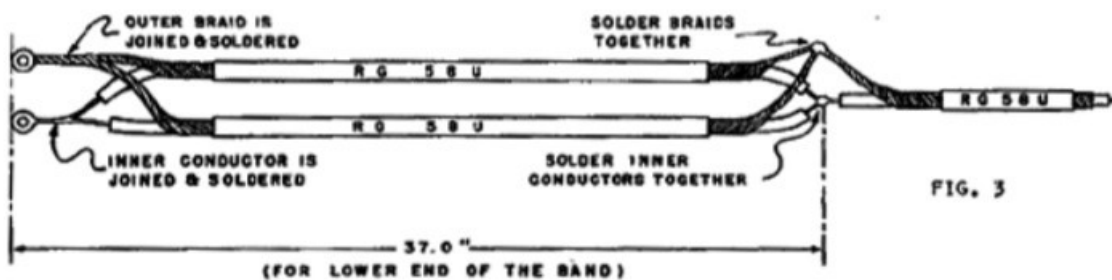
From the original "SATURN 6" mobileer to a new 3 half-wavelength halo for 2 meters, Hi-Par manufactures a quality line of VHF antennas including Halos, Quads, "Hill-toppers", Yagis, and Long-John beams.



HI-PAR PRODUCTS CO.
FITCHBURG, MASS.



The Halo antenna had a 100 ohm feed point and the usual method of matching was a $\frac{1}{4}$ wave Q section of coax paralleled to give you the 2:1 transform on impedance.



From the web:

I lived in Fitchburg, Mass, back in the 70s. I met Henry (W1NEV) at one of the local radio club meetings. Henry had a shop in back of his home. He turned out a wide variety of antennas, Ham, Muzak, etc. His designs were excellent for the time. He always used first class (SS) fasteners. His antennas were not (CAD CAM) designed, but worked very, very well.

I bought one of his 3 el 6 Meter 'Hilltoppers' and had an absolute ball with it. Equipment was a Lafayette HA-460 AM rig and about 10' of RS type mast. I had the bottom of the mast slid over a water pipe / flange screwed onto a board. Parked the rear tire of the car on it and used the ole' "armstrong" method of rotation.

I made almost weekly trips up to Mt. Wachusett (2000'+) in Mass, and to the top of Pack Monadnock in Cow, er, New Hampshire (3000'+).

With the Lafayette, and the 3 el 6 meter beam, I regularly worked 300-400 miles. Typically work 50-70 stations in a morning. Later, I bought another 3 el beam and actually used them stacked with a phasing harness, etc. Although this worked much better, the additional mechanical complexity (and wind load!), made me switch back to the single antenna.

I still have both and they look like the day Henry made them. His method of joining sections with 'tent pole buttons', is not only simple, it works perfectly.....

I also had a couple of his 8 element 2 Meter Hilltoppers, but unfortunately, sold them. Darn!

Total assembly time (no tools) for any of the Hilltippers, was about 1 minute!

Way back then, N4CD (then WB2KQL) had a Lafayette 6m transceiver that would work on 12v or 117v. My dad, WB2MHR, first a Tech – bought it to use. It often went mobile in my car in 1968 'Hilltopping' on the small mountains of NJ. Also had the Hilltopper Beam that I put up on two five foot sections of Radio Shack type TV mast attached to the door handle of car. Yes, took all of 2 minutes to set things up and operate. Nice. Wish I could find one of those Hilltoppers. You'd take it out of the box, fold the arms at 90 degrees, pull out the elements to full length, then stick on top of mast after attaching coax. We didn't have the tall hills of New England, but you could work out 30 miles easily on 6m and there was loads of activity in evenings and weekends.

Lots of fun.

Loads of rigs were available for AM mobile – including Clegg Labs, Gonset, three or four converter folks, Johnson, Lafayette, Polycom, etc. Gonset made rigs for the Civil Defense industry for decades.

HF was AM until the big switch to SSB. That occurred quickly and the AM activity disappeared quickly. Took a bit longer on VHF but not much longer.

When 2M FM took off in the 1970s with the many new transceivers, converted commercial rigs – many of the steadfast VHFers that were on 6 and 2M vanished into FM – land. It was 'repeaters' that allowed short range mobile to mobile now to 25 mile plus range. Also, the use of SSB on 6M killed off the inexpensive AM rigs – and there weren't any 'cheap' SSB rigs. About the only thing going mobile was the Heathkit SB-110 if you wanted to spend a lot of \$\$\$\$. Clegg came out with some SSB equipment but they vanished quickly. Gonset had the 2m “Sidewinder” for SSB.

(Wish I had the logs from way back then – lots of 'band/counties' that got lost along the way. Have a few QSLs from back then). Even ran a few parks – but I'll have to run them again!

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BTW, back then TVI was a big problem. If you had a TV Channel 2 nearby – well, that was often difficult for 6m ops. In those cities, 2M was often more busy. If you were mobile – well, on a hilltop away from TV receivers, no problem with TVI overloading poor receiver design. Now, with digital TV signals, even less of a problem getting into TV sets. NYC had a well watched CH 2 (CBS I think) so 6m was challenging in northern NJ. You often had to avoid evening operation.

USACA Holders

From a post by Barry, K2MF:

There are a total of 1268 USA-CA award holders. This represents an average of between 22 and 23 new USA-CA awards issued per year over the approximately 56.5 years of its existence.

Here are some more interesting statistics as of my last counts:

1. Of the 1268 total USA-CA award holders, 1150 are in the US, 33 are in Canada, 50 are in all other DX entities and 5 are issued to SWLs. 2. There are 552 USA-CA silent keys and 148 USA-CA expired licenses. This means there are a total of $(1268 - 552 - 148 =)$ 568 currently licensed USA-CA award holders, or expressed another way, 44.8% of all USA-CA award holders are still currently licensed.

3. Of the 568 currently licensed USA-CA award holders, 510 are in the US, 19 are in Canada, 33 are in all other DX entities and 4 SWLs have NOT been reported as silent keys.

1/15/2022

The Quest for USA-CA

Mark, K1RO, up New Hampshire way, was closing in on USACA. While not an often seen county hunter on the nets, he was busy in the NPOTA working all the stations he could around the country. Then he transitioned into parks on the air and the state QSO parties racking up counties left and right. Along with thousands of QSLs from regular QSOs, he was closing in on USA-CA.

Kerry, W4SIG, gave him the last two in the TX panhandle on his trip a few months ago. Ed, K8ZZ, hit Tippah, MS on the way back from FL and was scheduled to get Avoyelles, LA but aborted his trip when he came down with a cold and headed home instead.

Avoyelles, LA, was the last need of of 3077 - the WBOW. So that led to a trip by N4CD.

On the Road with N4CD

I hadn't been on a big trip in a while. COVID and other things kept me close to home most of the time, but Mark, K1RO, was down to just ONE county to finish up. He had

all the others confirmed. In good county hunter tradition, SOMEONE had to hope in their mobile and get that for him soon. Not too many issues about weather – not snowing down this way and no below zero temps to contend with.

Flux was down a bit from the 'highs' a few weeks ago. SFI – 90 -95 and sunspots just 20-30. Still good but A=8, K of 2. Not much happened on 17M.

Like the rest of the country, Omicron variant was raging here and in LA. Low vax rates there. Not good.

I checked Mapquest. Hmm.....5 hours and 30 minutes to get there with most of it on interstates at 70-75 mph type speed limits, then 20 miles or so on small roads to get there. Dang, not too many parks that I haven't run along the way, either! I've got to go a long way to get to never run parks before! There are just one or two within 350 miles of the house – and they are ones that have recently been added to the parks on the air database. I could get a couple along the route with some extra miles. The first priority was get to the last WBOW with minimal delay.

So.....6:30am in 22F weather, I left Plano TX headed east before sunrise which wouldn't happen for another 50 minutes. Down US75 to the Beltway I-635 and around to Route 80 which heads east and joins Interstate 20 just before Kaufman County. Not many county hunters around. No takers. The sun comes up and I'm in Van Zandt looking right into the sun headed east. Near zero visibility with the sun right at the horizon in the direction I'm traveling. Not fun for 15 minutes till it gets up a bit from the horizon. No takers on the radio in Van Zandt. So it's out boring US-20 with 'medium traffic' moving 70-75 mph headed east toward Louisiana. A couple hours later, after Smith, Gregg, Harrison Counties I hit Caddo LA and turn south on I-49.

When you get to Natchitoches, you can make a pit stop – gas, McD for an Egg Muffin, and quickly run one of the trails in the POTA system. It runs along Route 6 under the interstate, and if you take the first left off rte 6 turn headed east, you find yourself on a small road with the following sign:



This is El Camino Real de Los Tejas Historic Trail K- 4569 which runs from San Antonio to Natchitoches, LA. If you head west, you soon find 'old route 6' which is the trail headed east.

You can easily park along the road to the east with lots of shoulder to sit. Just needed 10 for an activation and put 40 in the log in a few minutes. Good break after hours of driving.

Then back on I-49 for another couple hours. I set the GPS for Marksville which is in Avoyelles. First you hit Rapides – which I didn't run – there's a park there I'd run it at. When you get to Alexandria, you get off the interstate and head there on 2 lane roads. My planning had me headed down US-1 but the GPS lady took me on highway 107. Both hit Avoyelles after 15 miles. Checked Map. 107 as good except parks down by Marksville and would miss one first. Oh well – first priority – WBOW.

Got to Avoyelles and gave Mark, K1RO a quick exchange at the county line of

Rapides/Avoyelles. Wanted to get to a park there for the rest of the folks.



Avoyelles/Rapides Parish Line

Some history tidbits on the Parish:

“Avoyelles is a parish located in central eastern Louisiana on the Red River where it effectively becomes the Atchafalaya River and meets the Mississippi River. As of the 2010 census, the population was 42,073. The parish seat is Marksville. The parish was created in 1807, with the name deriving from the French name for the historic Avoyel people, one of the local Indian tribes at the time of European encounter.

Today the parish is the base of the federally recognized Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe, who have a reservation there. The tribe has a land-based gambling casino on their reservation. It is located in Marksville, the parish seat, which is partly within reservation land.

Native Americans occupied this area beginning around 300 BC. Varying indigenous

cultures flourished there in the following centuries. Today on the banks of the old Mississippi River channel in Marksville, three large burial mounds have been preserved from the Mississippian culture, which flourished especially along the upper Mississippi, the Ohio River and other tributaries, from about 900 AD to 1500 AD. Mounds of its major city, Cahokia, are preserved in western Illinois across the Mississippi from St. Louis, Missouri. The trading network reached from the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes.

The Tunica people had bands whose territory extended into the central Mississippi Valley. They absorbed the smaller remnant of Avoyel people nearly two centuries ago. Through the years, they also intermarried with the more numerous Biloxi people. The peoples organized politically in the 20th century and were federally recognized in 1981 as the Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe. They are the largest Native American tribe in Avoyelles Parish and have a reservation that extends into Marksville.

Avoyelles Parish is known for its French colonial history and tradition of French language use. The contemporary Creole traditions, in both music and food, reflect European, African and Native American influences. While Avoyelles has a distinctive history of European immigrants, dominated by the French in its early history, it is considered the most northern of the 22 "Acadiana" parishes. These have a tradition of settlement by French-speaking refugees from Acadia (now eastern Canada) in the late 18th century. They contributed strongly to the development of culture in this area, as did Africans and the indigenous Native Americans. The parish is noted for its brand of Cajun/Creole style music and its gumbo, a popular soup with roots in the three major ethnicities noted above.

The central part of Avoyelles Parish is sited on a large plateau, slightly above the floodplain of the waterways. Travel by water was long the primary way to move around this area. The Indians used canoes, and the early French settlers developed their own boats, known as pirogues.

Records from the Catholic churches in Mansura and Marksville document the founding of a trading post and a Catholic school by French colonists. The merchants wanted to conduct fur trading with the Tunica Tribe and the missionaries hoped to convert the natives to Christianity. The trading post was built near the Avoyel/Tunica settlement; it was preserved until the mid-1960s. Historic roadside markers on LA 1 identify the site of the historic Catholic mission school.

Franco-European settlers first called this area Hydropolis, meaning water city, referring to the marshes and bayous. The major mode of transportation was by Indian canoe and pirogue (a French-style dug-out canoe). Church records identify settlers with all their

family members listed, as well as some property; in some cases they listed slaves by name. Church records and documentation were recorded in French during the years of initial settlement, then in Spanish during their brief rule in the late 18th century, with a return to French after France reacquired the area under Napoleon Bonaparte in the early 19th century.

After his troops failed to regain control over Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), Napoleon withdrew from North America. He sold the large Louisiana Purchase territory in 1803 to the United States under President Thomas Jefferson. As the US expanded its rule, local documents began to be recorded in the English of the new government. The United States arranged for the Lewis and Clark Expedition and others to survey the Louisiana Territory. It hired local French soldiers, surveyors and doctors, many of whom eventually settled in the area.

Many of the French people who settled Avoyelles Parish immigrated from France in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Many of the French words commonly used today in the parish date to terms used during the Napoleon period in France, indicating that this was the period of immigration. They have not been used in France for many generations.

The Spanish influence in Louisiana was more dominant in New Iberia — this was named after colonists from the Iberian Peninsula, commonly known as Spain and Portugal. There are no Spanish surnames in Avoyelles. A few families from French Canada (Quebec) settled in Avoyelles. They were from a different geographic area of Canada than the Acadians of present-day Nova Scotia, who were expelled by the British from their homeland (Acadie) beginning in 1755 during the Seven Years' War with France. Many deported Acadians eventually made it to Louisiana from 1764 - 1788, after several years of living in exile along the eastern Atlantic seaboard, Canada, St. Pierre and France.

In the later 19th century, immigrants from Scotland, Belgium, Italy, and Germany also settled here, following the French Creoles. Together they established today's towns and villages. Their direct ties to Europe set them apart from the Acadians (Cajuns) of southern Louisiana, who came from a culture established for generations in Canada. At the turn of the 19th century, free people of color of African-French descent also settled in Avoyelles. Many came from New Orleans, which had a large community of free people of color. Others were refugees from Saint-Domingue, where slaves had rebelled to gain independence as the nation of Haiti. Others came from other colonies in the French West Indies.

The blending of these three cultures: Native American, European and African, created a

distinct Louisiana Creole culture noted in the local language, food, Catholic religion, and family ties.

In the 21st century, the Avoyelles Parish culture has been classified as "Cajun" because of the perceived similarities in speech, food, and various folk traditions with the more southern Acadian parishes. But, few families in Avoyelles are of Acadian descent. From the 1800s until the mid 1900s, local Confederate units and local newspaper reports in *The Villager* always referred to the Avoyelles French families as Creoles, the term for native-born people of direct descent from early French colonists and born in the colony.

Following the disastrous Great Flood of 1927, the US Army Corps of Engineers built a system of levees along the Mississippi River. It reduced immediate flooding in Marksville and other towns, but has caused indirect damage to the wetlands. This has ultimately caused more serious flooding as the speed of the river has increased.

Source: Wiki

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From here, it was another 20 minutes or so to get to Spring Bayou WMA K-4084, KFF-4084.



From the state site:

“Spring Bayou WMA is in the low-lying Red River backwater system. In general, the terrain is low, poorly drained land, with numerous lakes and narrow ridges. About 40% of the WMA is covered by water, with various open lakes, bayous, bays, and sloughs. The area is drained by Little River.

The forest cover consists of nuttall and overcup oak with bitter pecan on the higher elevations. The lower elevations contain overcup oak, bitter pecan, swamp privet, and buttonbush. Lake edges are fringed with cypress, willow, and buttonbush. The understory consists of deciduous holly, hawthorn, dogwood, and seedlings of the overstory. Other plants include rattan, greenbrier, peppervine, trumpet creeper, dewberry, smartweed, verbena, wild lettuce, vetch, sedges, and grasses. Aquatic species include water hyacinth, alligator weed, delta duck potato, water primrose, lotus, and duckweed.

Activities and Amenities

Hunting and trapping: Available game species include deer, squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl, and woodcock. There are youth deer and squirrel seasons and a youth turkey lottery hunt. Trapping for furbearers is allowed; available species are raccoon, mink, bobcat, and nutria. See regulations for details.

Fishing and boating: Fishing is excellent and very popular during the spring and summer. LDWF has released triploid carp throughout the area to combat encroachment of aquatic vegetation and improve the health of the fishery. Common species are largemouth bass, various panfish, and catfish. Commercial fishing is allowed by permit. Boating and waterskiing are popular in open water portions of the WMA. See regulations for details.

Camping: There are campgrounds with electricity accessible via Spring Bayou Road.

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additional info

“Spring Bayou WMA includes Grand Lake, Grand Coulee, Coulee Noir, Lac aux Siene, Lac a Deux Boute, Lac Tete de Bouef, Lake Francois, Lake Gabriel, Petite Bay, Old River, Bayou de la Bay, Central Slough and a portion of Bayou Cocodrie. The names of these lakes, coulees, bays, bayous, sloughs and small rivers reflect the French origins of colonial occupation and settlement in the region. These same waterbodies are relict channels of the Red River and have arcing, curvilinear forms all in the same direction. The outermost of the “arcs” within the Spring Bayou WMA is Old River—a distributary outlet of the Mississippi. Further south, the Red River and a separate waterbody referred to as Old River join forces

When the Red River diverted its course about 2,000 years ago, it made a right angle bend to the northeast and cut through the Pleistocene terrace near today’s community of Moncla. This diversion isolated a piece of highland that became the Avoyelles Prairie and created bluffs at Moncla that would eventually make crossing the Red River in bad weather easier for settlers. The nearby town of Marksville is at the edge of the Avoyelles Prairie on a bluff that American Indians chose for a town and ceremonial grounds.

Today, Spring Bayou WMA is abundant in wildlife and a popular destination for sportsmen. It is accessible by vehicle on the east side via an improved shell road off the

Bordelonville levee,”

The road in is a decent road but 'dirt' for a couple miles. No sweat but don't try this after a gully washer downpour. The GPS lady understood “2628 Spring Bayou Road' and took me right to the entrance. Serendipity!

Had a good run there in Avoyelles Parish. Two Parks.

This was as far east as I would get. Now I'd backtrack along Highway 1 to hit Grand Cote WMA K-0309. Same Parish



fromWiki:

“The Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1989 as part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It is a 6,000-acre reserve located in Avoyelles Parish, near Marksville, Louisiana.

Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge was once part of the large contiguous Mississippi River bottomland hardwood forest. Topography of the refuge is characterized by a large depressional basin that fills with shallow water from winter rains and backwater flooding.

During the 1970s, the area that would become Grand Cote Refuge was cleared and leveed for agricultural purposes. The area was poorly suited for farming, but provided ideal shallow flooded habitat preferred by many waterfowl and shorebird species.

Habitat management objectives are centered on providing shallow flooded habitats for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds during August through March. A special emphasis is placed on providing shallow flooded rice; native moist soil plant fields preferred by northern pintails.

Habitat found on the refuge include: 420 acres forest, 2,485 acres (10.06 km²) reforestation, 2,040 acres cropland, 830 acres moist soil and 300 acres of permanent water.

Underlying soils are the typical poorly drained, nutrient-rich, clays associated with a large river floodplain. These soils are capable of supporting large numbers of resident and migratory wildlife”

There are several ways into this WMA – just south/west of Marksville. Had a good run there.

It was getting late in the day so skipped a repeat of a park and headed to the La Quinta Inn just north of Alexandria about 40 minutes away. Big place with maybe 150 rooms, 3 stories. \$87 including tax for the night. Dinner was next door at the Cracker Barrel. Due to lack of staff, was half hour wait for table and slow service. Help wanted signs all over everywhere. Only 1/3rd of tables were in use due to lack of staff/kitchen help.

Sunday Jan 23, 2021

Up at 7am the next morning and decent breakfast there with muffins, cold/hot cereal, fruit (apples/oranges), mini-waffles in microwave, etc. I was on the road headed north

on I-49 and put out Rapides for the folks. Got off again at Natchitoches and ran the Historic Trail again quickly.

From the National Park Site:

“During the Spanish colonial period in North America, numerous “royal roads”—or caminos reales—tied far-flung regions of the empire to Mexico City. One particular collection of indigenous trails and trade routes became known as El Camino Real de los Tejas, the primary overland route for the Spanish colonization of what is today Texas and northwestern Louisiana. The trail’s name is derived not only from its geographic extent but also from some of its original users. Spaniards referred to a prominent group of Caddo Indians as the Tejas, a word derived from the Caddo term for ‘friend’ or ‘ally.’ Thus, the Spanish province of Tejas, the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas, and the historic trail traversing them owe their name to the Caddo language.

Spanish interest in Texas began because of the expedition of René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, a French explorer who established a fort along the Texas coast in 1685. Spanish officials saw this incursion as a threat to their silver mines and their shipping routes through the Gulf of Mexico. Though La Salle’s settlement failed after he was killed by his own men, the threat of French colonization remained a powerful motivating force behind the development of Spanish Texas—much of which occurred along El Camino Real de los Tejas.

In 1690, a party of soldiers and priests crossed the Rio Grande on their way to the Neches River, where they established two missions intended to cultivate religion and a sedentary lifestyle among the Caddos. Following a smallpox outbreak in 1693, however, Caddos warned the Spaniards to leave or die. They retreated back across the Rio Grande, establishing one of the enduring themes of El Camino Real de los Tejas: American Indians often dictated the terms of Spanish settlement in eastern Texas, and not vice versa.

Prompted once again by the threat of the French, Spaniards reestablished their presence in eastern Texas in 1716 by building four churches and a presidio; however, the missions largely failed to attract the desired number of American Indian converts. A few years later, Spaniards constructed a fort at Los Adaes—just twelve miles west of the French post at Natchitoches. Yet even though Los Adaes would serve as the capital of Spanish Texas until 1770, it relied heavily upon illegal trade with its neighboring French settlement to stay afloat. Its isolated position at the eastern end of El Camino Real de los Tejas, separated from other Spanish settlements by a long trail with treacherous river crossings, made life at Los Adaes a daily struggle.

The governor of the Spanish province of Texas began eyeing a new settlement along the San Antonio River to serve as a midpoint between the Rio Grande and the East Texas missions. This area eventually turned into the heart of Spanish Texas, as the Crown's eastern outposts continued to be hamstrung by supply shortages and indifference from members of the Caddo confederacy who—well-armed with French trade goods and able to sustain themselves without Spanish assistance—found little use for the mission complexes. The Spaniards eventually abandoned three of the East Texas missions, reestablishing them near San Antonio in 1731. By 1750, peace with Apaches allowed the area's Hispanic settlers to expand their ranching and farming activities along the San Antonio River. By 1773 San Antonio was the new capital of Tejas, and the residents of Los Adaes were forced to relocate there. Once again, El Camino Real de los Tejas played a prominent role in the Spanish cycle of populating and abandoning eastern Texas.

The trail retained its importance after Mexican independence in 1821. Ranchers continued to bring cattle along El Camino Real, establishing large ranches along the Rio Grande south of Laredo. Large numbers of Anglo settlers used the trail en route to their new homes in Texas; their arrival eventually led to revolt against Mexico, during which armies from both sides moved along the royal road. Usage of the original route diminished in 1845 when the United States annexed Texas.

Significance

El Camino Real de los Tejas served as a political, economic, and cultural link between Mexico City and Los Adaes (and all points in between). Settlers, missionaries, soldiers, servants, and indigenous allies followed various roads and trails along the 2,500 miles of this route to populate the settlements, missions, and presidios of eastern Texas and northwestern Louisiana. Linking a variety of cultural and linguistic groups, the royal road served as an agent for cultural diffusion, biological exchange, and communication and as a conduit for exploration, trade, migration, settlement, and livestock drives. Spanish, Mexican, French, American, Black, and American Indian travelers along El Camino Real de los Tejas created a mix of traditions, laws, and cultures that is reflected in the people, landscapes, place names, languages, music, and arts of Texas and Louisiana today.”

Running out of time. Skipped one repeat park and headed directly to the La Quinta Inn just north of Alexandria.

Dinner at the Cracker Barrel next door. Due to lack of help, only one section open and had 30 min wait to get a table. Then slow service but the County Ham dinner was good. There's regular ham and there is 'country ham' from the olde days. You either like it or hate it. It's tough, salty - and is basically salted and peppered smoked ham you can hang on your porch for six months without it spoiling. From the days before refrigeration. Smoke the ham, soak in salt, the pepper the outside to keep bugs from eating it. To prepare it to eat, soak in water for 24 hours, then slice and cook. Good emergency rations food you can keep around for a year or two or three.

Slept well.

Up early to get nice breakfast at motel. On the road by 8am. Car windows thickly frosted over completely. Had to wait 10 min for car to warm up and windows clear off.

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Hit the El Camino trail for a brief stop in Natchitoches County for a quick break. Only ½ mile detour off I-49. Took an hour with all the callers. Got some gas to have enough to drive the rest of the way home. Don't like running with tank under half full these days.

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About 40 miles north from there, noted I could get to Red River Parish LA with a 3 mile detour off the interstate 49 at Lake Enid exit. Got off – went the 3 miles east plus a bit to find a place to stop and run. Ran parish with bunch of contacts. There's a park here but it's at least 20 minutes to get there, 20 min back and I'd be there an hour or more so skipped that repeat park. It was LC for at least one CH.

Back to I-49 to get to route 84 going east headed toward another park. You go through Mansfield, LA and see signs for the Historic Battlefield Site. During the Civil War, there was a battle near here.

From Wiki:

“The Battle of Mansfield, also known as the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, on April 8, 1864, in Louisiana formed part of the Red River Campaign during the American Civil War, when Union forces were attempting to occupy the Louisiana state capital, Shreveport.

The Confederate commander, Major-General Dick Taylor, chose Mansfield as the place where he would make his stand against the advancing Union army under General Nathaniel Banks. Taylor concentrated his forces at Sabine Crossroads, knowing that reinforcements were nearby. Banks prepared for a fight, though his own army was not fully assembled either. Both sides were reinforced by stages throughout the day. After a brief resistance, the Union army was routed by the Confederates, consisting mainly of units from Louisiana and Texas, reportedly strengthened by hundreds of men breaking parole.

The Union forces had suffered 113 killed, 581 wounded, and 1,541 captured as well as the loss of 20 cannons, 156 wagons, and a thousand horses and mules, killed or captured. More than half of the Union casualties were from four regiments – 77th Illinois, 130th Illinois, 19th Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Infantry and 48th Ohio. Most of the Union casualties occurred in the XIII Corps, while the XIX Corps lost few men.

Kirby Smith reported that Confederate loss was "about 1,000 killed and wounded" at Mansfield, but precise details of Confederate losses were not recorded. Some of the wounded, perhaps thirty, were taken to Minden for treatment. Those who died of wounds there were interred without markers in the historic Minden Cemetery. They were finally recognized with markers erected on March 25, 2008.

After the Union troops retreated, they fought Confederates again on April 9 at the Battle of Pleasant Hill”

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There's 15 acres preserved and another 150 nearby. It's run by a society and not eligible for inclusion in the park system. There are dozens of battlefields in the park system run by the National Park system and state governments.

I headed east crossing into Texas, then immediately south to get to North Toledo Bend WMA. POTA K-6589 and WWFF KFF-5550. The last road gets you to – a Shelby County boat ramp. Dead end. Hmm..... I missed something. Turn around and look real carefully. Just before that boat ramp and picnic parking area there's a small narrow dirt road off to the south – easily missed – which is the entrance to the WMA. Found it.



Pulled in and found spot to run it. Good run from Shelby County TX. This was added not too long ago to the park system.

From the state site:

“ The North Toledo Bend WMA has 3,650 acres and is located in Shelby County, adjacent to Toledo Bend Reservoir. The WMA is managed under a license agreement with the Sabine River Authority of Texas.

The Toledo Bend Reservoir on the Sabine River forms a portion of the boundary between Louisiana and Texas. The lake is formed by the Toledo Bend Dam northeast of Beaumont. The dam was completed in 1969 and the reservoir is the largest man-made body of water in Texas and the South and the fifth largest in surface acres in the United States. Its rolled earthfill dam has a spillway crest elevation of 145 feet above sea level. With a drainage area of 7,178 square miles, the Toledo Bend Reservoir conserves water for municipal, industrial, agricultural, and recreational purposes and stretches for

well over 100 river miles. The lake has been well known for bass fishing. “

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Had a good run. Plugged in 'home' in the GPS and let the GPS Lady figure out the shortest route home. That turned out to be Rte 95 north through Panola to Harrison Counties, then hit I-20 and head east. Four hours to home if no stops at 70-75 MPH. In TX, 75 MPH Speed Limit =80 MPH actual speed if traffic not too heavy. Sometimes 85 mph. It was medium and the traffic moved quickly. Every now or then a wait until truck A (going 70.1 mph) managed to pass truck B only going 70.0 mph in two or three minutes. Otherwise, mostly 75 and 80+ mph until within 50 miles of Dallas.

Along the way, if you have some time, you can take a five minute detour off I-20 and hit Tyler State Park in Smith County TX. Did a 'quickie' here but it turned into an hour at K/KFF-3059. Didn't have reservation but used state park pass with no problem.

Ran the bands – 20/17/30/40m. After an hour, time to head on home. 64 degrees outside and sun. Nice.

Took US-80 to the I-635 beltway. Hmm...exit backed up 3 miles. Accident happened 500 feet after the merge and two lanes closed with dozen emergency vehicles trying to remove wreck and traffic moving 3 mph. Took 25 minutes to get through. Overturned trailer it looked like. After that, 60 mph to home other than last 4 miles on town roads.

Trip miles: 762

Gas \$3.10/gal

Mileage: Car got 27.1 mpg on trip – (includes stops with engine running and lots of driving at 75 and 80 mph)

Home at 4:30pm

Whew. Too many hours sitting in car. Aching back! Mission accomplished – WBOW for K1RO so worth it. Couple new parks for me run.

Worked All States 222 MHz

Growing Number of Operators Completing WAS on 222 MHz

Until very recently, it had been some 35 years since the most recent Worked All States (WAS) was awarded on 1.25 meters. Former ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, in Arkansas; Marshall Williams, K5QE, in Texas, and John Swiniarski, K1OR, in New Hampshire stand at the vanguard of a new generation of VHF enthusiasts aiming at earning the Worked All States (WAS) Award on 222 MHz (1.25 meters). Harrison was issued WAS #11 on 1.25 meters on December 27, 2021, while Williams was issued WAS #12 on January 11, 2022, and Swiniarski was issued WAS #13 on January 12.

"Since the 1980s, a combination of the old guard and a new group have been pursuing this quest," ARRL Radiosport Manager Bart

Jahnke, W9JJ, said. Harrison worked Tom Worthington, NH6Y, in Hawaii, for his 50th state, while Williams followed close behind, working James Colson, K7KQA, operating EME portable from Oregon, for his 50th state.

Jahnke said the honor of being the very first 1.25-meter WAS recipient went to Terry Van Benschoten, W0VB, in 1983, earning what was then "220 MHz WAS." Nine others joined the ranks between then and 1987.

"In recent years, several stations have been working hard toward joining the ranks of WAS holders on this ITU Region 2-only band," Jahnke said. Other stations that have recently worked 50 states and waiting on the last confirmations include K1WHS and WA4NJP. N9HF and N0AKC are nipping at their heels. No activity on 1.25 meters was available in some of the last few needed states, and portable operations by KA6U, KB7Q, K7KQA, and N7GP made contacts possible.

"Congratulations to [the recent award recipients], and to all those VHF+ state chasers -- and to the many activators of rare 222 MHz states -- on their achievements in this continuing quest for 222 MHz Worked All States," Jahnke said.

In 1988, when the FCC reallocated the lower portion (220 - 222 MHz) of the 1.25-meter band to the federal government and Land Mobile Service, amateur activity on the band stalled, while adjustments were made to equipment and band plans. During the past several years, so-called "weak-signal" activity, especially EME, has increased on the band with a renewed interest from existing and new band users.

Amateurs interested in staying abreast of 222 MHz activity can follow the fun on the 222 MHz Activity Reflector.

Harrison, Charlie Betz, N0AKC, and Al Ward, W5LUA, have written an article, "The Quest for 222 MHz WAS," which contains tables, maps, and details on the propagation, locations, and equipment that made their operations possible. Ward was among the initial 10 WAS recipients for 1.25 meters. Plans call for the paper to be presented and published by the Central States VHF Society Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin, July 29 - 30 and at other conferences. Harrison said, the paper also has "lots of history in it about the 1.25-meter band, the original 10, and the group now in the hunt along with ongoing 'roving' efforts of KB7Q and KA6U."

Source: **The ARRL Letter for January 13, 2022**

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Way back in the 1970s, I think I worked about 25 states on 220 MHz from my hilltop in VA- almost all in VHF contests on CW - with a few locals on 223.5 simplex FM with a 10w Clegg FM rig. Weren't too many operators on back then and most only got on for contests. Did work 34 states on 2M and 17 on 432. (All states on 6m and all VE on 6M) To get more on 220, 432 and 1296 would have required going to moonbounce or a lot of luck on some E's or tropo. Now with digital modes, you can do a lot more with moderate power on 6M and up. FT-8 gives 20db advantage. No need for KW's and 16 beams in an array or 16 foot diameter dishes. Other modes even better. Heck, stations easily work out 400 miles with FT-8 on 6m these days and catch marginal openings all the time when the band pops open for a few minutes.

Mobile Activity in January

Starting Jan 1

KA4RRU spotted in Honolulu HI

KC6AWX spotted in San Francisco

AB4WL/NN4JM noted in parks/counties in AL

KE4UP was in Los Angeles, Santa Clara, Riverside, La Paz, AZ to Yuma, Maricopa, Pinal, Gila, headed east through Greelee, into NM, into TX. Took a few days breather, then headed east through south TX

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N4RKK spotted the following parks/Counties

KD8IE – Portage OH
N4DCW Rowan KY
KN3A Dauphin PA
K5SJC Smith TX
K3ES Clarion PA
K5EMD Faulkner AR
N8YO Berrien MI
AA9OM Jay, IN
K5EDM Clark, AR
KW5CW Hill, TX and Bosque TX
NG5E Hunt, TX
KG2RJ Essex, NY
KD4O Kershaw, SC
K5TER Somervell, TX
KM1CC Barnstable, MA
N3HXZ Manatee, FL
WK4WC Rowan, NC
K5DEZ Socorro, NM
K4NYM Columbia, FL
and dozens more.....

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K8ZZ headed home from FL starting in Jackson FL up through the panhandle with over a dozen counties run there. Up through AL to MS with dozens of counties there. Then to LA for some south parishes, at least a dozen, then back into MS. Then up in AR in the NW corner for more. Spotted in MO next headed home.

K1YAG noted in Fannin, Lamar, Bowie, Red River, Camp, Wood, then over to Brown, Coleman, TX, then over in NM for counties there.

WY0A on SSB ran a dozen counties in IA then into WI with dozens more. Dozens in cold, cold, snow on the ground WI. More than half the state I think. Later headed back home via many in IA.

N9JF popped up in a park in Wakulla FL in a park. Later in Gulf, FL, then Baldwin, AL

N8KIE spotted in Honolulu HI. Trip to Kalawao in jeopardy as no rental cars there and very expensive when you can get one – hundreds and hundreds of \$\$\$\$\$. Plus, with the covid testing required for airline travel in HI- even inter island - always the risk of a false positive test – and then you are stuck on that island for 7-10 days quarantine. Likely not this winter. Folks on Molokai don't want any 'visitors' who might spread covid there.

NF0N headed out on trip in MO and IA.

On weekends, over 100 parks are on the air – often 100 a day! Loads of counties to chase when no mobiles out. Some operate only SSB. Some only CW. Some both. A good percentage now on FT-8 in the parks. Loads of opportunities when other things are slow.

Awards Issued

Call Combo Award: K4YT completed Call Combo 1X2 on 8 January 2022. He received #4

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Ran All State: W8OP competed West Virginia for his 4th time on 12/1/2021, He received #2,

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Roadrunner Award: KE4UP attained 250 last counties on 1/12/2022. He received #97

Roadrunner Award: WY0A attained 100 last counties on 1/13/2022. He received #260

Roadrunner Award: W4SIG attained 775 last counties on 11/20/2021. He received #21

Roadrunner Award: K8ZZ has attained 1175 last counties on 18 October 2021. He received #8

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Ran All State Award: K8ZZ Completed Georgia on 20 December 2021. He received #28.

Ran All State: K8ZZ Completed Florida on 1/4/2022. He received #43

Ran All State: K8ZZ Completed Alabama on 1/5/2022. He received #27

Events for County Hunters

Yay! It's QSO Party Season Again!

Feb 5 0000z to 6 2359z 1.8-UHF

Vermont QSO Party

CW Ph Dig RS(T),

VT county or SPC

www.ranv.org/vtqso.html

Feb 5 1400z to Feb 5 2359z 1.8-28

Minnesota QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

Name, MN county or SPC

www.w0aa.org/mnqp-rules

Feb 26 1500z to Feb 27 0159z

1.8-50 South Carolina QSO Party

CW Ph Dig RS(T),

SC county or SPC

scqso.com

27 1500 28 0100 3.5-144

North Carolina QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

NC county or "SPC"

ncqsoparty.org/rules

In addition, there are several big contests from 10-10 10M SSB contest to ARRL DX CW Contest , BC QSO Party, RTTY contest that will fill the bands. Check ahead of time to be sure your weekend isn't wiped out by a contest or other activity before heading out.

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2022/February%202022%20Corral.pdf>

Michigan Mini

There's the planned Mini in Michigan in April. Details on the MARAC web page. You can sign up now. Let's hope this all Covid stuff peaks and is way down on the scale by late April.

The 2022 Michigan Mini will be hosted by Ed, K8ZZ and Doris, N8WTQ held at the West Bay Beach Resort 615 East Front Street • Traverse City, Michigan 49686 Phone: (231) 947-3700 • Fax: (231) 947-0361 Toll Free: (800) 888-8020 It will be held at the West Bay Beach Resort again in 2022 with room rates of: \$97.95 plus tax per night if reserved by March 23th, 2022 .

Date for 2022 MICHIGAN MINI is April 21 – 22 & 23rd..

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other events:

Dayton Hamvention in late May 2022.

Future future planning – MARAC Convention in October 2022.

That's all folks!