



HURL Elkhorn Endurance Race Support 2026

Guard Station (& SOTA) Report

By Tom - KE7VUX

I have spent the past few years quietly babysitting the portable repeater on Occidental. I had a conflict this year and Brian KJ7OUF took over the Occidental responsibilities – only to have my conflict resolve itself. I wound up with Oakley, KE7WWL, at the Guard Station (Tizer Cabin) this year – our first time for either of us. We essentially traded Brian and Tom K3OWG their Guard Station location for my Occidental.

Guard Station saw much more activity than Occidental.

Oakley and I wound up agreeing to carpool. I loaded up way too much gear in my 1979 Scout II and left my house in the north valley just after 6am, stopped for gas and

Upcoming Events - 2026
CCARC monthly meeting – September 14, 7 p.m. at the Salvation Army, 1330 Hudson St. or the Google Meet link available at n7rb.org/meetings-nets
Ham In The Park - August 15, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at JFK Park, East Helena. All are welcome to this coffee meet-up alternate location and open house for those interested in Ham Radio.
Technician License Class - A six-week prep course will start September 9, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at the Salvation Army.
CCARC Annual Picnic – September 12. 3-6 p.m. at Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds, first shelter on the left when you enter.
Just For The Helena Of It race - October 18. Mark your calendars if you would like to help support this event.
Coffee Net – Every Saturday at 9 a.m. on 147.22, Belmont Repeater. Meet up at the Red Atlas at 9:30 a.m.
Trivia Net - Every Sunday, 7:30 p.m. on 147.22. John Monson AJ7MT



some ice, grabbed some McDonald's for us, and got to Oakley's house in Montana City a little past my 6:45 am planned arrival.

While in the drive-through at McDonald's, I heard Brian KJ7OUF was having trouble with his Jeep. Rob AE7AP was en route to rescue him and the cross-band repeater. I messaged Richard Hiltz KJ7RDH to let him know what little I knew of Brian's predicament. Richard is an old hand in the 4x4 club and has wheeled with Brian for a long time. He was up and at 'em before long and headed up to see what assistance he might provide, dropping whatever he might have been doing on a Saturday morning to offer assistance to a friend.



Oakley and I arrived at the Jefferson City exit a little past 7am – the parking lot area at the bottom of the trail was unusually full with trucks and trailers from all of the ATVs used for the day. I was somewhat glad I opted to drive instead of trailering, though if I had brought the trailer I might have been of more help to Brian.

Brian's information from past activations was to plan about 90 minutes from the exit to the Guard Station. We beat that by a bit, but we didn't rush to beat it by much. We

were on station before 8:30.

Usually the road to the Tizer Lakes is the more difficult of the options from "Four Corners", but going straight and heading to the cabin, we found that the trees across the trail had been cut just wide enough that we could pass, but narrow enough we had to be careful. Making cuts a few feet farther up the fallen trees on either side is a courtesy everyone should consider when the opportunity arises. Frontier 4-Wheelers have had some discussions with the Forest and that is also their preference. They spent a day on this trail last year, just before the Elkhorn race, clearing brush, fixing fences, and removing widow makers – not that it was easy to see a year later.

Runners deviate from the typical trail course at this location and come up the "driveway" to the Tizer Cabin, where the aid station is, then double back and rejoin the trail. The aid station was set up in the middle of the driveway, slightly away from the cabin, which they had access to thanks to their coordination with the Forest.

With the aid station in the middle of the road and under the blazing sun, Oakley and I set up off to the side, back just a little bit. The aid station had music going and cowbells

for the runners, so setting up just off to the side and back worked out well – we were close enough to sometimes see the bibs, but sometimes had to take a short stroll and circle the runners to find where they hid the bib number.

We had some nice conversations with Jefferson Search and Rescue about antenna options. They were interested in a tree-hangable option for their HTs, and the adapters we used.

I overpacked, but let's get to the bare essentials.

We were able to contact MacPass DMR with an HT with a modest upgraded antenna – SRH-771.

We were able to reach the cross band on Occidental with the same HT with the same antenna. This worked at 5 W, though it was slightly marginal – as you grabbed the HT to move it to your face, the cross band would sometimes fade, and halfway through the day when the HT battery started to drop, we couldn't hold the cross band effectively – but a fresh battery solved that.

Going above and beyond, we used a dual-band VHF/UHF antenna on my Scout and attached it with a short section of coax to the HT. That also solved the “crossband fades as we move the radio around” problem completely. We did not experiment with lower power.



Using the vehicle-mounted dual-band, we had a slightly scratchy Belmont repeater, and heard various traffic on 147.500. Belmont and 147.500 were quiet most of the day, as was MPRG4.

On the highly desirable but not required equipment: I brought a 13'x13' canopy, which we sat under – and moved ourselves as the day wore on. The aid station was jealous. The Capital Trail Vehicle Riders Association set up a similar canopy behind the cabin, but the aid station table was out in the open. I loaned them my shade umbrella for a bit, which we strapped to their table until a wind gust sent the umbrella on a short flight.

If I didn't have the vehicle mounted antennas, I think Oakley's rollup 450-ohm J-pole at "any" elevation would have done the job fine. There are several trees right around the cabin that would make a good candidate. No need to get high, we can probably get by with whatever limb we can reach and access would be fine.

On the overkill but entertaining side – Oakley brought a VHF log periodic antenna, which we fooled with but never transmitted on. I elevated it on a 24-foot painters pole as we experimented.

We brought plenty of water. There is water available at the cabin – there's a corral next to the cabin, which has a white PVC pipe that is spring-fed. The aid station was filtering the water, but if you wanted to cool yourself down, the spring water was fine as is.

Speaking of cooling down – I caught some grief for it, but no one complained when they sat downwind of the portable swamp cooler I brought along.. we were roughing it, for sure.

Joe W7BYZ and Jess came over after lunch, hung out with us for a while, and then eventually took over our responsibilities after the sweeps arrived. They were spending the night, so they sat around for a bit and waited for the sweeps to hit the next station. Oakley and I packed up and prepared to go see what aid we might render to Brian, KJ7OUF, when we heard over the radio that his grandson had hauled him out on a trailer, and Brian was no longer in need of assistance.



With Brian's Jeep safely accounted for, that freed us up to take a side quest on the way home – we drove back down to Four Corners, and then took the other part of the Bullock Loop, going a short distance to the far edge of the big clearing, where we dismounted from the Scout and took what was supposed to be a ~1/2 mile ~375' vertical hike to Bullock Hill, W7M/HB-070. We aimed for the peak, only to discover we aimed for the lower high spot, and had to hook back to finish our hike to the summit. I believe it was 45 minutes from start to summit, and much less on the way back down – we didn't take a detour and it was down hill.

Oakley carried the 24' painters pole (collapsed) and I carried my Icom 706MKIIg, a 9 Ah Dewalt tool battery, a 20V to 13.8V 20A voltage regulator, and my 20m coaxial dipole and a little bit of coax.

I set up under this dead tree, just below the summit.

Oakley walked out about 34' or so, and elevated his end of the antenna. One zip tie through the ground block I use as an end of the antenna, and two around the painter's pole ACME thread.

Oakley was a trooper, holding the antenna up the entire time – and then he didn't want to trade places, content to head back down. I lobbied him several times, to no avail – he was content to make the hike and hold the antenna. He was the one that said "Yeah, let's do this" and extended our day in the heat another hour and a half.

Joe was going to set up his HF station at Guard Station to contact us, but ultimately didn't. Still, we radioed Guard Station to let them know we had arrived, QSY'd over to 146.520, and made a few calls.



Rob AE7AP contacted us from Occidental, giving us a summit-to-summit contact (and a "complete" for me, having both worked it and activated it). Joe was our second contact on VHF. We tried a few more times for a VHF contact, but that was the extent of it.

I fired up the '706 and we found two POTA activations in California that both answered my call. That brought us to four contacts. I spun the dial for a bit more looking for any strong stations to try to call, found none, tried VHF once more, and then we packed up and headed back down.

We managed to meet Joe and Jess at Four Corners as they came down from Guard Station to head back up to the lake. We visited for a moment, then spent the next hour driving down to the Tizer parking lot area.

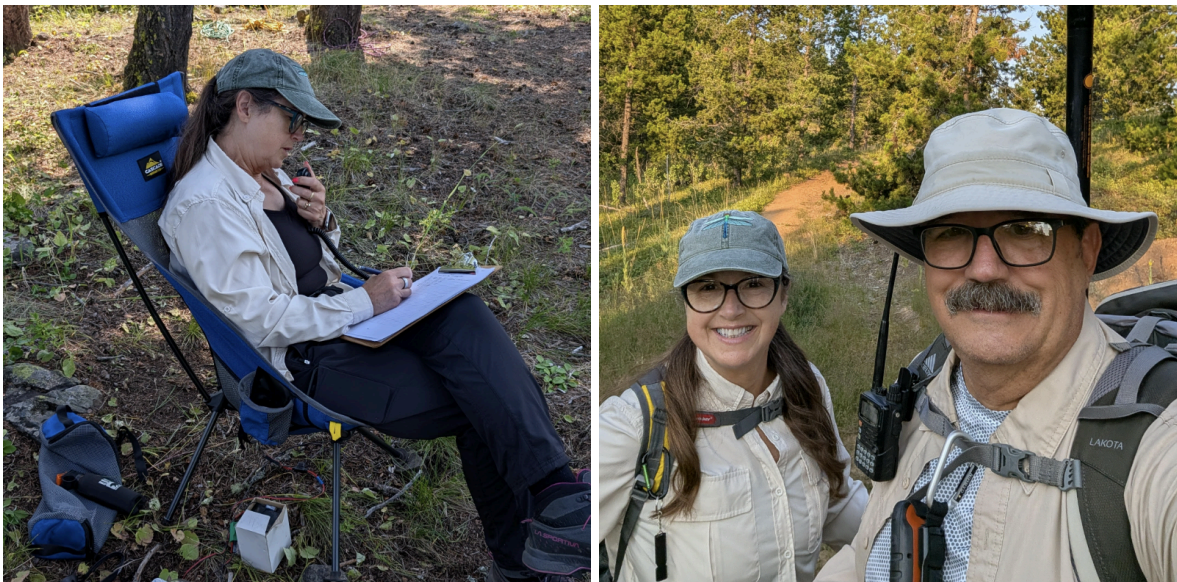
The radios were quiet – we heard AE7AP relaying traffic on 147.500, but nothing on the crossband, and once I heard the crossband was down, nothing on Belmont and I didn't hear my APRS beacons get picked up.

Additional photos from other Elkhorn ham stations:

McClellan Creek - Courtesy of John AJ7MT (of Sue AJ7KA)



Teepee Creek - Courtesy of Bill N7MSI (Bill and his sister Colleen KG7VDV)



Race HQ...*And They're Off* - Courtesy of Kathe N1NYT



Occidental Plateau, cross-band repeater site - Courtesy of Tom K3OWG



July, What a Month for Ham Radio!

Devin - N7HNT

The first big thing for me this month was my first-ever hamfest. What an amazing weekend. I started off with an activation at Salmon Lake State Park on my journey up to the Glacier-Waterton International Hamfest. This was definitely one of my favorite activations to date.

With very few people around, glassy water in front of me, a covered picnic table to set up at, and an absolutely breathtaking view, I could not ask for more. I had no cell service for internet but was able to get a text out and thanks to Brett N7SKI for spotting me I was off to the races. About halfway through the activation I heard a very loud motor and thought “that’s an exceptionally loud boat” only to realize that it was actually a float plane taking off in front of me. I finished out with QSOs in Canada, Hawaii, all along the west coast and decided to continue the journey north.



After having lunch with my sister in Kalispell, I found my way over to the hamfest and it did not take long to find the Helena crew. As I was setting up my tent a gentleman next to me asked what time it was and after I gave him the correct time I made a joke about UTC time that did not land and it wasn't until after that I realized there were people at the campground who were not there for the hamfest. He asked me what it was and was completely surprised to find out that it was about radios and not food. Cue the foot in my mouth, hi hi.

The next day after breakfast, and of course coffee, I started with browsing around the various tailgates in search of treasures I just could not live without. I managed to score a vintage brass straight key and a sweet Vibroplex bug in excellent condition that I have been searching for. I had a blast meeting new people and putting faces to a few callsigns I had only spoken to over the radio or even Facebook.

It was pretty hot and muggy as expected for July in Montana but it was an experience I would not trade for anything. My first hamfest was an absolute success and I will most definitely be back next year.



Next was the HURL Elkhorn race. My shift at Teepee Creek was not scheduled to begin until 1500 but Brett N7SKI and I wanted to get an early start to maybe play around with HF for POTA and possibly beat the heat as much as we could. We hit the trail around 1030 and the hike up was nothing short of gorgeous as always. To Bill N7MSI and Colleen KG7VDV's surprise we ended up arriving at the aid station about 3.5 hours early and had plenty of time to hang out and mess with our HF radios. Brett even

managed to get an activation in before we took over our duties of calling in bib numbers. It was 100 degrees out, but fortunately there were lots of trees up there so we had shade to chase around throughout the day.

Shortly after 1500, Heath KK7ISQ joined us and we all had a great time helping out and calling numbers in. I don't believe there were any serious medical incidents or lost runners and I am always impressed with the amazing teamwork of our Capital City Amateur Radio Club. It's always a pleasure working with this amazing group. At long last, around 2130, the sweeps finally made it to the next station at McLellan Creek. We were dismissed and we began our hike back out. The temperature was much more pleasant as the sun had gone down so we donned our headlamps, picked up the pace and made excellent time getting back to race control. Aside from the occasional toad on the trail, the hike out was fairly uneventful and we were greeted by a happy Rob and Barb as well as beer and cookies! Cheers to all.

Ham Radio in the Park — August 15, JFK Park, East Helena

Allen - KH7AL

When we launched the Membership Growth Initiative in July, one of the first things that came out of it was a handful of people reaching out through the new website, curious about the hobby but not quite sure where to start. That got me thinking about how to give those folks — and anyone else



who's ever wondered what ham radio is actually about — a chance to come see it in person.

The result is Ham Radio in the Park, happening Saturday, August 15th from 9 a.m. to noon at JFK Park in East Helena (309 Harrison Ave N).

Think of it as Field Day 2.0, without the contest. Our June Field Day event up on the pass faced some pretty miserable weather that kept a lot of people home, and frankly, a mountain pass isn't the most welcoming venue for someone who's never touched a radio. JFK Park is shaded, has picnic tables, and is about as low-barrier as it gets. I'll have a small generator running and coffee on — because no radio event is complete without coffee.

For anyone new to the hobby, we'll be demonstrating how to set up a portable station from scratch (the same kind used for Parks On The Air activations), how to use a handheld radio for simplex point-to-point communication, and how to use our local repeater. Mostly, though, we'll just be there to answer whatever questions visitors may have — no pressure, no pitch, just hams who love this hobby and want to share it.

All are welcome. Bring your curiosity, bring a friend, bring your kids. If you know someone who's been on the fence about getting licensed, this is a great chance for them to see what it looks like before committing to anything.

Facebook event: <https://facebook.com/share/1BepijXyKV/>

Hope to see you there.

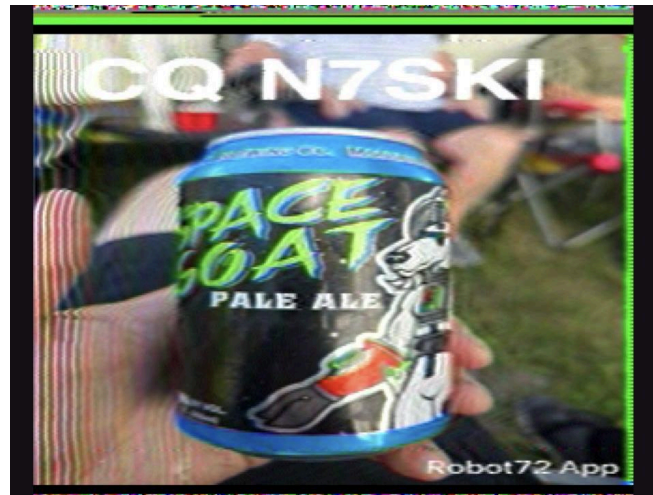
SSTV Experimenting on 2 Meters

Brett - N7SKI

After reading all the stories from the W7O SOTA campout and hearing about the variety of QSOs participants made from Oregon summits, I hatched a little plan of my own. One mode that caught my interest was SSTV (Slow Scan Television), and I wanted to see if it might be a fun option for future summit activations.

To put the idea to the test, I teamed up with Devin "The Hornet" N7HNT. Armed with two different smartphone platforms—Devin using an Android phone and me using an Apple device—we each found a workable SSTV app and met on the 2-meter SSTV hailing frequency of 145.500 MHz. Devin used the popular **Robot36** app on Android, while I experimented with **Robot72** and **SimpleSSTV** on Apple devices.

Using SSTV is surprisingly simple. You load an image into the app, preferably one that includes your callsign for identification purposes, key up the radio, and press the send button. The app converts the picture into a series of audio tones that are transmitted over the air. After about 40 seconds of entertaining, and perhaps slightly annoying, digital sounds, the receiving station decodes the signal and displays the image.



To our delight, the experiment worked! We were able to successfully exchange several pictures using nothing more than our HT radios and smartphones. Image quality was respectable, and it was exciting to watch a picture slowly appear on the screen after each transmission. The different apps communicated well with one another, proving that SSTV can be a practical mode even with simple handheld equipment.

This little experiment showed that SSTV can be an enjoyable and effective mode on VHF, and it may find its way into a future SOTA activation. It's always fun to explore new ways to make contacts, and SSTV adds a unique visual element to amateur radio that many operators may not have tried before.

So, if you hear some strange digital noises on 145.500 MHz, it might just be a couple of operators sending pictures instead of voice! Happy experimenting, and we hope to see some SSTV images coming from a summit soon.

13 Colonies Special Event

Bill - N7MSI



Once again, I got a Clean Sweep in the 13 Colonies Special Event July 1-7, 2026. This Special Event is an annual event and really tests your ability to hunt and contact a station in each of the 13 Colonies. All contacts were made with 100 watts SSB, except I had to use good old CW to get Georgia. Look for special events to work; they are a lot of fun. Try competing or collaborating with friends.

Happy Trails

Phil - AF7RC

This is Phil Pogge, AF7RC. I had a great time in Helena. I would like to thank everyone, including the SOTA and POTA activators. 146.520 was surprisingly active. I've been traveling in the US for four years. Helena's club is second to none. Looking forward to meeting more of you when I return next summer!

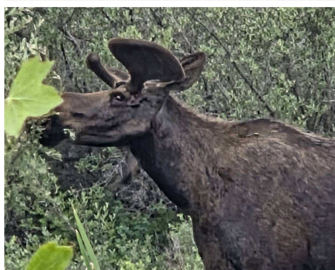
Thank you and 73,
AF7RC clear.

Headwaters Amateur Radio Club (HARC) Field Day

Stacy - KK7CJV

HARCMT's first Field Day had many firsts: a VE testing session produced a new General-class licensee—congratulations, Terry, KM7FZY—three new members joined

HARCMT, numerous new operators got on the air and made their first Field Day contacts, and many tried new-to-them modes and logging software. The club was very successful operationally, fulfilling approximately 85% of the objectives. The wooden token made by Justin KM7FWP for handing out at the GOTA station was a plus. We overcame the weather (2.75" of rain at the QTH) and challenges (moose on the loose in the campground) and had a great time doing it. HARCMT's total score with bonus objectives: 3,302.



Glacier-Waterton Ham Fest - 2026

Attendee Reports:

Stacy - KK7CJV

It was a wonderful time to visit with ham friends new and old across the state and region. The overall theme of many discussions was, "What are you doing that is working to recruit and retain operators and inform the public about ham radio?"

In Lincoln they had a teacher who taught STEM and was doing a segment on ham radio. The local hams gave a presentation on how to get their license. They had 15 test takers at the end of the segment-14 passed!

In the Flathead region, the FROG Montana group goes to gun shows armed with information and preprogrammed radios for sale. They also have hands-on events quarterly. A group of hams out of the Spokane area are bringing the focus back to FUN on the airwaves and their local repeaters.

I really enjoyed learning about the Brass Knuckle Gang and learning a bit more about the new tech, Meshcore. Whether you check out the swap-meet tables or roam and chat, there is something for everyone at the Glacier Waterton Ham Fest.





Bill - N7MSI's hamfest report:

"I'm sore, tired, and sunburned, I had a blast. My cheeks are even sore from laughing and smiling so much. Mark W7HS and Rob AE7AP are the big winners. Mark got an antenna and Rob won the CW contest. I scored a couple of microphones and I picked up a J-37 straight key for Brett N7SKI.

Devin N7HNT really got into the spirit of things volunteering with teardown as did Tim KB7DMK and his XYL Cindy. My XYL Jeanine even had a good time. It was more than an event, it was an experience."

John - AJ7MT's hamfest report:

"Trivia made its simplex debut Friday and Saturday evenings with 8 - 10 players a session. Friday's winner was a not-yet ham playing on her husband's callsign. He won Saturday.

Emmett and his dad made it up Saturday. Emmett was presented a J-pole by KE7NLU Eric and HARC. Emmett and dad also placed second in their trivia debut Saturday afternoon!"



CCARC Is Looking for License Class Instructors/Mentors

Allen - KH7AL

Our first Technician license class starts September 9 and will run for six weeks on Wednesday evenings (6:00 - 7:30 p.m., with Q&A to 8:00 p.m.) at the Salvation Army office. I'm looking for club members willing to present one session on a topic they know well.

This isn't a six-week commitment — it's one or two evenings, on a subject you're already passionate about. Curriculum support is provided. Topics available include antennas, propagation, operating practices, adventure radio, digital modes, and emergency communications basics.

If you've ever thought about giving back to the hobby by helping new operators get started, this is the easiest possible entry point. Email membership@ccarc-info.org if you're interested.

BUY/SELL/TRADE

This was a part of N1ET's (SK) collection. His granddaughter is tired of moving it and would like to find it a new home. It's a Hammarlund Super Pro SP-400-X. Contact Zhaun AI7BM if interested.



Editor's Notes

Thank you to all members who contributed articles, photos, operating reports, and announcements for this month's newsletter.

Editor: Marla Unruh KM7LIB Co-Editor: Allen Le Vie KH7AL Writers: CCARC members

Not yet a member of the CCARC? Join today and help our club & community:
<https://n7rb.org/join-contact>

Capital City Amateur
Radio Club
Helena, Montana

