

The SkyWave Vilas County Amateur Radio Club



Winter Field Day 2026 KC9RF “Texas Style”

Bob KC9RF operated Winter Field Day 2026 this year from Texas. The following are Bob’s experiences operating portable in true winter conditions.

Bob’s Winter Field Day 2026 experiences started at Guadalupe River State Park, Texas about 25 miles northwest of San Antonio.

Arriving on Friday afternoon Bob set up 3 antennas which included:

1. 20 Meter Delta loop which also is resonant on 10 meters
2. 40 meter end fed 66-foot 1/2 wave wire with 49:1 Unun matching unit and counterpoise wire also good on 10, 15, and 20 meters.
3. Non-resonate 71ft end fed configured as inverted L or Sloper 10-80 meter with 9:1 Unun matching unit.

(Continued in Tech Talk)

VCARC MONDAY NIGHT 2 METER NET

The VCARC 2 Meter Net meets every Monday night starting at 7:30 PM local time. Net Control is via the W9VRC Eagle River repeater on 145.150/ PL 114.8. A digital Net immediately follows. Fred KD9CCE, RayBob KD9DDE and Kyle AB9AX are Net Controls.

VCARC FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

The VCARC Board meeting will be held on Wednesday February 11, starting at 6:00 PM local time Via Zoom.

All VCARC Members are welcome to attend. We value everyone’s thoughts and ideas for 2026!

VCARC FEBRUARY BREAKFAST

A VCARC Breakfast is planned for February 14, at 9:00 AM at the Friendship House Restaurant in Eagle River WI.

This is a great opportunity to “Meet and Greet” VCARC Members and other Ham Operators from the area. See everyone there!



VCARC JANUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

January 14, 2026, 6:00 PM – The Meeting was called to order by Bob KC9RF.

Treasurers Report (January Update)

Beginning Balance	\$6905.08
Expenses: PO Box	0.00
Membership Dues	85.00
Donations	25.00
Ending Balance	7015.00

Old Business

Plans are proceeding to locate the repeater Echolink equipment to the Eagle River Library. RayBob KD9DDE will be installing the equipment in late January or early February.

New Business and Announcements

The Demmer Memorial Library in Three Lakes has invited to the VCARC to speak at their Hobby Program on April 22, 2026, on Ham Radio. Arrangements are being made.

For participation in Winter Field Day, Please send your activities and photos to the Newsletter.

Echolink equipment is close to being installed at the Eagle River Library.

Fred KD9CCE will present the Tech Talk at the Wednesday April 8, 2026, Member Meeting.

The motion to adjourn was made at 7:00 PM.

VCARC NEWS

Included is the VCARC Meeting and Event Schedule for 2026. As you can see 2026 is shaping up to be a very busy year for the VCARC. Please consider volunteering for one or more of the scheduled events.

VCARC/ Member Activities	Date(s)
February Board Meeting	02/11/26
Advanced Snowmobile Race	02/09/26
March Board Meeting	03/11/26
Wisconsin QSO Party	03/15/26
April Member Meeting	04/08/26
May Board Meeting	05/13/26
Dayton Hamvention	05/15 - 05/17/26
June Member Meeting*	06/10/26
InSayner Bike Ride Support	TBA
ARRL Field Day 2026	06/27- 06/28/26
July Member Meeting	07/08/26
August Board Meeting	08/12/26
September Board Meeting	09/09/26
Wisconsin POTA Contest	09/19/26
October Member Meeting	10/14/26
WI ARES/ RACES Conference	TBA
November Board Meeting	11/11/26
December Board Meeting	12/09/26

* Field Day Discussions and Preparation

January Member Meeting AllStar Presentation

The VCARC wishes to thank Mike KD9MZ for an excellent presentation on AllStar. A copy of Mike's presentation will be posted on the VCARC website.

VCARC 2026 Membership Dues Being Accepted

Membership Renewals are now being accepted. The Annual Membership cost is \$20 per Individual and \$25 for a Family Membership. Please send renewals and new applications to VCARC P.O. Box 1141,agle River, WI 54521.



Looking For Volunteers for the Advanced Snowmobile Race on February 9, 2026

We are still looking for volunteers for the Advanced Snowmobile Race. If you are interested, please contact Ray KB9CBL at kb9cbl@yahoo.com. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated for this fun Winter event.

ARRL NEWS

New 60-Meter Frequencies Available as of February 13

The new 60-meter frequencies approved by the FCC in December will become available to amateurs as of February 13, 2026, along with new power restrictions on those frequencies. It's a bit confusing, as different rules apply to different segments of the band. The changes result from the FCC's action to approve a worldwide 60-meter amateur allocation made by the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15). See <https://tinyurl.com/mt8p8jpa>.

As of February 13, FCC-licensed amateur operators holding General Class or higher licenses may operate on a secondary basis anywhere between 5351.5 and 5366.5 kHz, subject to a maximum bandwidth of 2.8 kHz and maximum transmit power of 9.15 watts ERP (effective radiated power).

For the purpose of computing ERP, the transmitter PEP (peak envelope power) is multiplied by the antenna gain relative to a half-wave dipole antenna. A half-wave dipole is presumed to have a gain of 1 (0 dBd). Amateurs using other antennas must maintain in their station records either the antenna manufacturer's data on the antenna gain or calculations of the antenna gain.

Here's the confusing part: The existing 60-meter channels centered on 5332, 5348, 5373, and 5405 kHz remain as secondary amateur allocations with maximum power of 100 watts ERP.

However, the old channel at 5358.5 kHz is eliminated as it is now part of the new 5351.5-5366.5 kHz subband and subject to the lower power limit.

For all 60-meter transmissions, emission bandwidth is limited to 2.8 kHz or less and amateurs must not cause harmful interference to, and must accept interference from, stations authorized by the United States (NTIA and FCC) and other nations in the fixed service; and all other nations in the mobile service.

Data or RTTY emissions in particular must be limited in transmission length so as not to cause harmful interference. Digital mode operators must be familiar with offsets in order to stay within the authorized frequencies.

ARRL CONTESTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The following are upcoming ARRL Contests and Special Events in the Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula Michigan Areas.

MARC FM Simplex Contest

The Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club (MRAC), one of the oldest, continuously operating amateur radio clubs in the world, invites you to join us for our annual MRAC FM Simplex Contest.

Contest Objective: The purpose of this contest is to encourage amateurs to learn the basics of contesting and simplex operations, and to expand the scope of their VHF-UHF operating techniques beyond what's needed for standard repeater operations. More info can be found at <https://www.w9rh.org/>

Date: February 22, 2026

Contest Period: 1:00 to 4:00 pm CST

International DX (Contest)

Contest Objective: To encourage W/VE stations to expand knowledge of DX propagation on the HF and MF bands, improve operating skills, and improve station capability by creating a competition in which DX stations may only contact W/VE stations. One contest period is CW-only and one is Phone-only. Use only the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands.

W/VE amateurs: Work as many DX stations in as many DXCC entities as possible.

CW: February 21-22, 2026.

Phone: March 7-8, 2026.

Contest Period: 0000 UTC Saturday thru 2359 UTC Sunday.

WISCONSIN AREA HAMFEST CALENDER

If you are looking for a new piece of radio equipment or just trying to get rid of that "Old Boat Anchor" a Hamfest is a great way to accomplish both.

The following are the upcoming Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula Michigan Area Hamfests.

MAARS HamSwap and FunFest

Date: 02/21/2026, Saturday, 9am to 1pm

Location: Marshfield Wildwood Zoo Pavilion

Marshfield, WI.

Sponsor: Marshfield Area Amateur Radio Society

Admission: Free. Vendor Tables \$5.00

Contact: KD9OFG jdrax@tbirdranch.com

MVARA Spring Fever Swap Meet

Date: 03/07/2026

Location: American Legion

419 1st Ave. Holmen, WI 54636

Sponsor: Mississippi Valley Amateur Radio Association

Website: <https://www.mvara.net/>

Tri-County Hamfest 2026

Date: 03/15/2026

Location: Activity Center, Jefferson County Fair Park
503 North Jackson Ave. Jefferson, WI 53549

Sponsor: Tri-County Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.W9MQB.org/SwapFest>

Madison Area Repeater Association Hamfest

Date: 04/18/2026

Location: Mandt Community Center

400 Mandt Parkway Stoughton, WI 53589

Sponsor: Madison Area Repeater Association

Website: <http://w9hsy.org>

ORC 46th Annual Spring Indoor SwapFest

Date: 04/25/2026

Location: Cedarburg, WI

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Ozaukee Radio Club Incorporated

Website: <https://ozaukeeradioclub.org/>

A.R.A.C. Hamfest

Date: 05/02/2026

Location: Head of the Lakes Fairgrounds.

4700 Tower Ave. Superior, WI 54880

Sponsor: A.R.A.C - Arrowhead Radio Amateur Club

Website: <http://THEARAC.ORG>

Green Bay Hamfest

Date: 05/30/2026

Location: Our Saviour Lutheran Church

120 South Henry Street Green Bay, WI 54301

Sponsor: Green Bay Mike & Key Club

Website: www.k9EAM.org

TECH TALK

Winter Field Day 2026 KC9RF (Continued)

Friday, Bob did some POTA to test out antennas and made about 70 contacts. The temperature was 60 F.

Bob found out right away that the 71ft antenna with 9:1 UN match had a significant drop off in signal reports both on transmit and receive when compared to the 1/2 wave end fed 66 ft antenna. The 71 footer was a new antenna for Bob to use but was very disappointed in the performance on all bands tested.

Saturday used the delta loop and 1/2 wave 66 ft end fed with good results on 10, 15, 20 and 40 meters. Bob did use the 71 footer to make 3 marginal contacts on 80 meters.



KC9RF Winter Field Day "Antenna Farm"

The temperature dropped off significantly from Friday at 60 degrees to Sunday to around 22 degrees that morning. Weather conditions deteriorated quickly Saturday afternoon with an ice storm that left anywhere from an 1/8 to 3/8 of an inch of ice on everything.

So, Bob got the true Winter Field Day experience. Bob had to go out several times to shake ice off of the antennas so they would tune correctly.

Preparation paid off for the conditions with an electric space heater and a little buddy propane heater. There were times where both were on to keep warm.

Bob used the Yaesu FT-710, his proven POTA radio. Power was set for 90 watts of output. Three LiFePO4 batteries were used to keep the radio going throughout the weekend.

Winter Field Day operating started at 10am. Contacts were slow to start but late morning 10 meters really opened up stateside and operated 10M for about 3 hours then switched to 15 and 20 meters. About 6-7pm worked 40 meters with good success. 535 contacts were made on Saturday.

However, Sunday was a different story as Bob only worked another 166 for a total of 701 contacts. Good things to have on hand were hot drinks to keep the voice from getting hoarse and a connected keypad on the radio with voice memory to repeat my callsign and report information.

Bob operated about 16 hours out of the 30 hours of Winter Field Day. Bob said It was a lot of fun talking to operators in WI, upper MI, WY, MT and other states operating from tents and primitive cabins with below zero and near zero temps.

That's what Winter Field Day is all about operating in diverse conditions and preparing for emergency operations.

We all should look at what we could set up in case of an emergency. Would we be prepared to help?



KC9RF Winter Field Day site conditions

Winter Field Day History

In June of 2006, Charles, N5PVL, asked if SPAR (The Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio) would be interested in sponsoring a Winter Field Day activity. Discussions, proposed rules, and modifications followed, and in September, SPAR's Board of Directors voted to approve sponsoring a Winter Field Day.

Next came a flurry of activities to get the word out, and the first Winter Field Day was held just four months later, on January 13-14, 2007. Based on comments from participants, Winter Field Day would soon become an annual event.

Walt (W5ALT) and Charlie (KY5U) contributed significantly to the success of SPAR and WFD. However, due to health issues, activity within SPAR slowly declined, and so did their support of WFD.

Because of these health issues and the aging members of SPAR's Board of Directors, there was a delay in scoring and releasing the 2015 WFD results. Members who had participated in WFD over the last nine years were upset, and with no official response from SPAR, rumors spread, and some feared that WFD might fade away.

Stepping up to the challenge of keeping WFD alive, a small group of WFD enthusiasts banded together and formed the Winter Field Day Association (WFDA).

In late 2015, the remaining SPAR Board Members handed over the reins and the responsibility of Winter Field Day to the Winter Field Day Association, who scored the 2015 entries, and have been promoting the event ever since.

A WFD committee was formed to oversee the rules and manage the event. Subtle changes to the rules have been made as needed, but the event's purpose has remained the same. Through the hard work and dedication of Tom (W8WFD), Bill (VE3FI), Dave (W3DET), Erik (WX4ET), and Ken (N8KC), Winter Field Day has continued to grow and thrive.

For many who have participated in WFD over the years, it is no longer just an event but an annual tradition. In 2022, the WFDA processed over 2,500 logs from stations around the world, and once again reigns of Winter Field Day were passed to a new board of directors.

We sincerely thank all of those who participate in the Winter Field Day activity each year and look forward to bringing new ideas, changes, and challenges to Winter Field Day as we continue to grow the program. Though significant changes will happen in the future, we will always remain true to the original purpose and intent of Winter Field Day.

We are excited to partner with volunteers and sponsors from all over the United States who now work together to support Winter Field Day. Though the association's leadership has changed over the years, at its core, the WFDA remains the same. We are a small group dedicated to the original purpose of Winter Field Day and its core principles.

Natural disasters are unpredictable and can strike when you least expect them.

Your training and operating skills should not be limited to fair-weather scenarios.

Preparedness is the key to a professional and timely response during any event.

We passionately believe that ham radio operators should practice portable emergency communications in winter environments as the potential for freezing temperatures, snow, ice, and other hazards present unique operational concerns.

WFD is formatted to help increase your level of preparedness for disasters and improve your operational skills in subpar conditions.

If you are as serious about emergency communications as we are, we welcome you to join us during our yearly event. We are sure you will find WFD to be a challenging yet exciting and rewarding event!

Courtesy of the Winter Field Day, winterfieldday.com



Vilas County Amateur Radio Club

An ARRL Affiliated Organization

VCARC OFFICERS and COMMITTEES

President Bob Barnum, KC9RF
Vice President Kirby Giampa W8DCD
Secretary Marie Beckholt, KD9VUB
Treasurer RayBob Heuer, KD9DDE
Board Member Ray Protich WB9OCO
W9VRC Trustee Tom Bahr W9TBZ
Newsletter Bob Barnum, KC9RF, Ray Protich WB9OCO



CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address: Website: <https://vcarc.net/>
W9VRC
Vilas County Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 1141
Eagle River, WI 54521

MEMBER AND BOARD MEETINGS

VCARC Member and Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month starting at 6:00 PM. The Member Meetings can be attended either in person or via Zoom. The Board Meetings are Zoom only. Please check the Member Activity Schedule for the dates each meeting is held. Zoom logins will be sent out to those on the VCARC email list.

VCARC REPEATER INFORMATION

The VCARC operates W9VRC/R amateur radio repeaters in Eagle River and Land O' Lakes Wisconsin. The VCARC operates a weekly Informational Net every Monday night starting at 7:30 PM local time. Net Control is via the Eagle River repeater. A digital Net immediately follows.

Repeater Information	Eagle River Repeater	Land O' Lakes Repeater
Frequency	145.150 (-)	145.390 (-)
PL Tone	114.8	114.8
Operating Modes	Auto C4FM/ Analog	Auto C4FM/ Analog
Echolink	Node 691369	-
Wires X	-	Room 8011
Yooper Net (IRARC)	-	Room 65384
ARES/ RACES	Back up for W9RRA/R	-

THE SKYWAVE NEWSLETTER

The SkyWave is the Official publication of the Vilas County Amateur Radio Club. If you wish contribute articles or other newsworthy items regarding Amateur Radio for publication, please contact Bob KC9RF at rwb1636@gmail.com or Ray WB9OCO at WB9OCO@gmail.com.