

The SkyWave Vilas County Amateur Radio Club



VCARC Ham Activities Scheduled for 2026

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)
January Member Meeting	01/14/26
Winter Field Day	01/24 - 01/25/26
February Board Meeting	02/11/26
Advanced Snowmobile Race	02/19/26
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

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 is Net Control.

VCARC JANUARY MEMBER MEETING

The VCARC Member meeting will be held on Wednesday January 14, starting at 6:00 PM local time Via Zoom.

The Meeting Tech Talk will be "AllStar for Repeaters", presented by Mike Zyskowski KD9MZ. Please join us for this interesting and informative presentation.



VCARC Members at the December Breakfast

VCARC JANUARY BREAKFAST

A VCARC Breakfast is planned for January 17 at 9:00 AM at the Friendship House Restaurant in Eagle River WI. See everyone there!

VCARC DECEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December 10, 2025, 6:00 PM – The Board Meeting was called to order by Bob KC9RF.

Treasurers Report (December Update)

Beginning Balance	\$6878.08
Expenses: PO Box	78.00
Membership Dues	80.00
Donations	25.00
Ending Balance	6905.08

Old Business

Plans are proceeding to locate the repeater Echolink equipment to the Eagle River Library.

The possible repeater relocation options continue with Vilas County.

New Business and Announcements

Future Member Meeting Tech Talks were discussed including AllStar, Soldering connectors, APRS digital repeaters, and digital vector (DV) for SSB.

There will be a June Member Meeting to discuss final preparations for Field Day 2026.

The motion to adjourn was made at 6:35 PM.

January 2026

VCARC NEWS

VCARC Repeater Upgrades for 2026

The VCARC Eagle River and Land O' Lakes repeaters are both in the process of ongoing and proposed upgrades for 2026.

For more information regarding the proposed VCARC repeater upgrades and general information regarding both repeaters please see TECH TALK.

ARRL Field Day 2025 VCARC Did Good...

The ARRL recently released the 2025 Field Day Results. The VCARC had a total score of 3242. This placed the VCARC in the top 40% nationwide under the Field Day 5A category. Not bad for a Northern Wisconsin Field Day location and 100 watts!

In comparison, this year's VCARC Field Day score was 662 points higher than in 2024. The number of Field Day contacts remained consistent.

Field Day 2025 increased bonus points earned especially in media communication and local promotion, visits by local officials, message handling and an onsite Tech Talk. Several new Members were also signed up at the Field Day Site.

So, what about ARRL Field Day 2026? Preliminary plans are already being discussed. More to follow...

IRARC 70 CM Repeater Implementing FM38

The Iron River Amateur Radio Club (IRARC) is in the process of upgrading the 444.175 MHz repeater with AllStar to link/ operate on the FM38 repeater network. The VCARC Land O' Lakes repeater is already linked into the IRARC repeater system.

The FM38 repeater group is a collection of UHF Amateur ("Ham") Repeater systems in the state of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. This is a privately owned system but available for use by any Amateur Radio operators. Currently there are 20 repeaters in the network providing coverage from Chicago IL to Sturgeon Bay WI and West to La Crosse, Chippewa Falls and beyond. Additional Information regarding the FM38 repeater group can be found at www.fm38.org.

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, Eagle River, WI 54521.



ARRL NEWS

2026 is the ARRL Year of the Club

2026 has been designated by the ARRL Board of Directors as the Year of the Club, recognizing that radio clubs are the backbone of ARRL. The growth and development of amateur radio rely on our vibrant community of radio clubs. All ARRL Affiliated Clubs are invited to participate! The Year of the Club includes:

- Innovative programs to support club growth and bolster club activities
- Opportunities to celebrate and recognize clubs on the air
- Recognition and incentives for clubs that help increase ARRL membership
- Recognition for clubs celebrating significant milestones, including 100 years of ARRL affiliation

More to follow on ARRL Year of the Club activities planned as they become available.

Up to \$25,000 at Stake in New ARRL Student Coding Competition

Pre-registration is now open for a Student Coding Competition, a new national challenge sponsored by ARRL. The project is designed to engage young radio amateurs in shaping the future of amateur radio through software development. Open to ARRL-member amateur radio operators aged 21 and younger, the competition will invite students to design a mobile app that supports ARRL and the amateur radio community. Cash awards totaling up to \$25,000 will be presented to one or more winning entries.

The competition officially begins on January 1, 2026, when complete rules and application specifications will be released at coding.arrl.org. Participants are reminded not to start coding yet; entries must follow the published requirements. Project submissions will be due by March 31, 2026. Pre-register now at coding.arrl.org.

Obsolete Part 97 Rules to be Deleted 02/10/26

Unless an objection is raised by January 2 that the Commission finds to deserve its consideration, the following four Part 97 provisions will be deleted as of February 10, 2026:

§ 97.27. This provision is duplicative of a statutory provision related to the FCC's right to modify station licenses.

§ 97.29. This provision specified an obsolete procedure to replace paper licenses. ARRL proposed deleting this section in comments filed earlier this year.

§ 97.315 (b)(2). This obsolete provision grandfathered HF amplifiers purchased before April 28, 1978 by an amateur radio operator for use at that operator's station, and grandfathered those manufactured before April 28, 1978, for which a marketing waiver was issued.

4. § 97.521(b) and Appendix 2. This rule and appendix relate to obsolete VEC regions.

ARRL CONTESTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

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

Straight Key Night (Event)

Objective: This 24-hour event is not a contest; rather it is a day dedicated to celebrating our CW heritage. Participants are encouraged to get on the air and simply make enjoyable, conversational CW QSOs.

The use of straight keys or bugs to send CW is preferred. There are no points scored and all who participate are winners.

Date: January 1, 2026

Event Period: 0000 UTC thru 2359 UTC.

RTTY Roundup (Contest)

Contest Objective: Amateurs worldwide contact and exchange QSO information with other amateurs using only the Radioteletype (RTTY) mode on the 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands. Any station may work any other station. Stations may be worked once per band, regardless of mode. Automated operation is not permitted each claimed contact must include contemporaneous direct initiation by the operator on both sides of the contact.

Dates: January 3-4, 2026.

Contest Period: 1800 UTC Saturday, ends 2359 UTC Sunday.

MRAC 109th Anniversary (Special Event)

Jan 10, 2026 1600Z-2230Z, W9RH, Milwaukee, WI. Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club. 7.250 14.250 145.390 127.3 hz) WIRES-X Rm #43588. Certificate. Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club, PO Box 26938, Milwaukee, WI 53226.

<https://www.w9rh.org/special-event-station>

January VHF (Contest)

Contest Objective: For amateurs in the US and Canada (and their possessions) to work as many amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees x 1 degree Maidenhead grid squares as possible using authorized frequencies above 50 MHz. Stations outside the US & Canada (and their possessions) may only work stations in the US (and its possessions) and Canada.

Dates: January 17-19, 2026

Contest Period: 1900 UTC Saturday, ends 0359 UTC Monday.

Winter Field Day (Contest)

Contest Objective: Winter Field Day is a multi-objective event. The primary objective is to set up an amateur radio field station and successfully make multiple contacts. Successful participants are those who can set up their equipment and correctly log the designated exchange during the operational period explained below. All participants are encouraged to complete as many additional objectives as possible. For more information see winterfieldday.org.

Contest Date: January 24-25, 2026

Contest Period: 1600 UTC Saturday ends 2159 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 Winter 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

TECH TALK

The W9VRC/R Repeaters

Amateur radio repeaters, especially in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, fill a communications void often left open by traditional cell phone service communications.

The W9VRC/R repeaters are no exception. The following Tech Talk will discuss the present and future repeater projects. In addition, a summary of each repeater's attributes and operation will be discussed.

VCARC Repeaters Present and Future Projects

The Eagle River repeater recently received a third receiver duplexer cavity to improve receiver sensitivity. In addition, existing coax and connectors were reconfigured to reduce both receive and transmit losses.

Earlier this year a 120 VAC line filter was installed to remove noise from an adjacent LED tower beacon.

The repeater is also in the process of relocating the Echolink equipment to the Eagle River Olson Memorial Library. The Echolink equipment includes a Yaesu FT1900R, antenna, computer and software.

The VCARC Board and Membership approved in 2025 battery backup for both the Eagle River and Land of Lakes repeaters. The battery backup will provide 2 to 3 days of repeater operation in the event of utility power failures.

A West Mountain Radio Super PWRgate Battery Backup System is proposed being used. AGM batteries were selected especially for the Land of Lakes repeater location due to site operating temperatures below 32F.

Possible repeater relocation, increasing the power of one or both of the repeaters for better range and signal penetration has been discussed. An analysis will be performed to determine the optimum location, output power and antenna height to maximize repeater coverage.

If you are interested in assisting with the VCARC repeater upgrade implementations, please contact RayBob KD9DDE at rmh2992@aol.com. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated!

VCARC Eagle River Repeater

The Eagle River repeater is the primary repeater used by the VCARC for Club communications and the Monday Night 2 Meter Net. The repeater is also used for ARES/ RACES backup communications for the W9RRA/R 146.94 Rhinelander repeater.

Repeater Information	Eagle River Repeater
Repeater Call Sign	W9VRC/R
Frequency	145.150 (-)
PL Tone	114.8
Echolink	Node 691369
Wires X	-
Yoooper Net (Michigan)	-
Repeater Unit	Yaesu DR2X
Operating Modes	Auto C4FM/ Analog
Backup Power	Being Installed
Transmitter Output	50 Watts
Antenna	Hustler G6-144B
Antenna Gain	6dB
Antenna AGL*	85 Feet
Eagle River Elevation	1647 Feet
Line of Sight Range	20 Miles (Est.).
ARES/ RACES	Back up for W9RRA/R

* Above Ground Level

VCARC Land O' Lakes Repeater

The Land O' Lakes repeater covers the Northeastern portion of Vilas County and Southern portions of the UP. The repeater is linked via Yoooper Net to the IRARC repeater system in Iron River, MI.

Repeater Information	Land O' Lakes Repeater
Repeater Call Sign	W9VRC/R
Frequency	145.390 (-)
PL Tone	114.8
Echolink	-
Wires X	Room 8011
Yoooper Net (Michigan)	Room 65384
Repeater Unit	Yaesu DR2X
Operating Modes	Auto C4FM/ Analog
Backup Power	Being Installed
Transmitter Output	50 Watts
Antenna	Comet
Antenna Gain	6dB
Antenna AGL*	160 Feet
Land O' Lakes Elevation	1755 Feet
Line of Sight Range	25 Miles (Est.)

* Above Ground Level

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.