

Chilliwack Amateur Radio Club

Field Day 25 June 2009

Post event Report

General

This year's Field Day was particularly successful in all aspects of the event with only a couple of areas where the club can continue to improve its capability. Participation was good but despite members knowing that the last weekend in June is always reserved for Field Day many still had planned conflicting activities. Despite this there were some forty participants at the Saturday night supper event, however; we could still do with a lot more operators manning the radios.

Planning and organization

This went very well indeed. Thanks to the efforts of VE7BXN and others, the renovations to the mobile tower and beam antenna had been completed and were ready for deployment. Previous training in the erection of this tower and the tented radio room pay dividends as both were erected safely and in just over an hour. The equipment was moved from its storage area at VE7'HJJs QTH with no problems. VE7HHT delivered the other antenna equipment that was also erected without difficulty. VE7TDD delivered his personal large tent for our kitchen area that proved to be excellent and coupled with the hard work of VA7BXN, VE7BLL and VE7GCC we had a mobile kitchen and dining room that was able to handle breakfasts, lunches and a first class dinner on Saturday night. The contributions by XYL's was also very much appreciated. The social activities of the club are alive and well which is very satisfying.

Publicity

The local newspapers were advised of the event but no direct contact was made to other authorities and it was felt that we were not sure just how well our Field Day would be supported by the membership and just how professional we would be. Hopefully as we improve our overall capability we can invited directly local politicians and other dignitaries. VE7HJJ did personally invite Counselor Jansen from the City of Chilliwack and she was given a tour of our facilities. She was most impressed at our layout and equipment and given a briefing on our UHF/VHF capabilities of being able to set up emergency radio nets throughout the City and FVRD. She recognized that communications are essential for city authorities to exercise command and control in a major emergency.

Location of Field Day

Permission had been obtained from the City of Chilliwack for the club to deploy to a remote parking lot at the end of Browne Road and by the Vedder River. This site proved to be an excellent location with ample room for antenna erection, the establishment of a radio room, deployment of generators and the parking of member's trucks, automobiles, trailers and motor homes. Suitable trees provided shade and the ground was hard pan and clean. It was also clear of mosquitoes that have always provided problems in the past. There was still a great deal of parking space for the general public if needed.

HF Operations

The club had decided not to join in the Field Day contest but to use the event to practice operating our HF radios with our new portable and beam antenna system. A general objective was made to see just how many USA states and Canadian Provinces that we could contact. See attached for the results that under the circumstances were good. VE7HJJ and VE7XL managed to acquire a simple Field Day computer logging system and installed it on their lap top computers for use by the HF operators. This was an effort to encourage operators to use computer logging. There is always resistance to new techniques but it is essential to move the club into the high tech era of the 21st Century if we are to encourage new younger members. We have long gone from the home brew radio systems and paper logging of the past. The logging system worked well and all the club's contacts were logged and therefore were able to be sorted and easily examined.

In the club meeting previous to the Field Day event a volunteer was requested to supervise the operation of all our HF radios both club ones and individual members radios. No volunteers were forthcoming and members felt that it was not required. This proved to be a serious error that resulted in confusion at the start of the event and it is suspected resulted in the damage to one of our radios.

There has been criticism of the club spending too much time on emergency activities and not on our hobby that is Ham Radio. This has been noted and we have now acquired two state of the art HF radios that will be put into operations once we are moved into the New Radio Room located with the City of Chilliwack's EOC. We will also have a new 65 foot tower and beam antenna in the same location. It is hoped that these considerable improvements in the club's HF capabilities will encourage members to take a more active role in DXing and perhaps even contesting.

Field Day gave a great opportunity for new members to operate HF radios, learn about the “Q” codes and general protocol for HF operation from seasoned members. With this type of exposure, new members will eventually become more comfortable with HF operation which should encourage more use of our HF equipment at the Club.

Hopefully at the next field day we will have a designated club member who will:

- ❖ Take on the responsibility of ensuring that all the clubs HF radios are delivered to the field day site and are fully serviceable
- ❖ That the various antennas are erected and that each one will be checked for SWR before radios are operated
- ❖ That all members who intend to operate are fully conversant with the operation of the radios
- ❖ That one person remain in overall control and who will be the person to coordinate band changes to avoid conflict between operators
- ❖ That will ensure that computer logging takes place
- ❖ That band filters are used appropriately

In this way we may be able to increase our overall capability for Filed Day operations and in turn be better prepared for real time emergencies in the future.

Roger Galliford

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President Chilliwack ARC