

Amateur Radio and the Hayman Fire

By Jeff Ryan, KØRM

Wildland fires in the Western United States have blackened hundreds of thousands of acres so far this year. Ham radio operators have provided thousands of hours of public service.

A large pool of experienced radio operators volunteer their time, equipment and talents for the betterment of their communities.

I wrote the preceding sentence in a monograph several years ago while I was the Emergency Coordinator (EC) for Pikes Peak ARES based in Colorado Springs. The monograph was aimed at our served agencies and was also used as a “background” information press hand-out to describe the capabilities of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). It has long been my contention that Amateur Radio is at its best when giving back to our communities. It is with great pride and a sense of accomplishment that I watched and worked with the hundreds of ARES volunteers as they responded with their served agencies to the fires in Colorado.

Year after year, ARES groups train, drill, and participate in public service events with the goal of keeping their skills sharpened for the day we all hope never comes. I learned many valuable lessons while planning and participating in the annual Simulated Emergency Test and other exercises. One of the most important things I discovered is that things

don’t work as planned; they work as *practiced*. Simple things like: how do you set or change the CTCSS tone on your HT or mobile radio? What repeaters are available for use between a particular remote town, and a served agency location? Are you sure you can connect your radio to someone else’s antenna?

It’s prudent to think about what you’re going to do in an emergency and make plans, but actually doing it is another story and there’s no substitute for the actual experience of an exercise to point out gaps in your plans. ARES groups practice, establish procedures and hope they will work when needed in an actual event.

Colorado ARES groups have regularly participated in exercises over the years. Now that they’ve joined the ranks of those groups who have been involved with an actual long duration incident they know that the pre-planning and actual practice pays off.

Into the Breach

On the afternoon of June 8, a Forest Service employee called in a report of a wildfire just north of the town of Lake George, a mountain community some thirty miles west of Colorado Springs. The Hayman Fire was reported during the regular news broadcasts that evening and at the time it seemed to be just another fire—there had already been three major wildland fires in the area and several ARES groups were scaling down their

support for the Iron Mountain Fire near Cañon City about 45 miles south of Lake George.

By June 10 strong winds had caused the Hayman fire to rage out of control as it grew to over 30,000 acres and threatened homes and campsites. The Douglas County Sheriff’s Office became the primary response agency, and they requested assistance from Sheriff’s Offices in the adjacent counties of Jefferson, Arapahoe, Teller and Park. ARES groups supporting each of these agencies also responded. ARES support also commenced for the Red Cross and Salvation Army response to the fire. Forty-eight hours later, nearly 200 Amateur Radio operators were participating in the multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency response to what eventually became the largest fire in the history of the state (137,000 acres burned).

The fire grew so large that two separate incident command posts (ICP) were set up—one in Castle Rock (“North”) and one in Lake George (“South”). (Eventually a third, short duration “East” ICP was set up in Cascade). Hams were present at each ICP, the Red Cross shelters and HQ, Salvation Army HQ and canteens, Sheriff’s Offices in Douglas and Teller counties, the Woodland Park Police Department, the Metro 911 Center in Denver, and as part of the Jefferson County emergency response team.

The integration of Amateur Radio into



WBØTUB

Smoke from the Hayman Fire near Lake George, the largest fire in Colorado history.



KGØVY

Pikes Peak ARES EC Wes Wilson, KØHBZ (right), confers with Lee Inman, KØQED, at the forward heli-base area near Lake George. Note the poor visibility due to smoke.

each of these diverse served agencies worked well for two main reasons. First: Colorado Section Emergency Coordinator, Mike Morgan, N5LPZ, wanted to ensure that the different ARES groups within the section could work together should it become necessary. To that end, he ensured that the different groups participated in joint exercises and public service events. Since they practiced together, participation in a joint real-life incident was virtually seamless. Second: Each ARES group had pre-established relationships with each of their respective served agencies. As these agencies geared up to respond and support the fire, the ARES groups were simultaneously activated.

Because of their existing relationships with the responding served agencies, officials were already aware of the capabilities of Amateur Radio and turned to ARES leadership to provide emergency and auxiliary communications wherever it was warranted.

"Can you send a ham to the Westcreek

Fire station please?" The request came from Jim Leideritz, Director of Emergency Management for Teller County when the phones went dead at this fire station on the front lines of the burn area. Because Amateur Radio is fully integrated into his emergency response plan, he didn't have to waste time trying to figure out if ham radio could fill the void; he simply made the request to send someone in.

"All of Colorado is Burning"

So declared Governor Bill Owens, much to the chagrin of the \$6 billion Colorado tourist industry. "I was speaking metaphorically," he stated a couple of days later. He was, however, expressing the sympathies of most Coloradoans as more than eight major fires burned across the state. Amateur Radio support was involved with the ones that were closest to the more heavily populated areas. In May and June, these included the Schoonover Fire near Deckers, the Coal Seam Fire near Glenwood Springs and the

previously mentioned Iron Mountain and Hayman fires.

ARES groups were involved because of their pre-planning and existing relationships. Without these relationships, Amateur Radio groups will generally not be asked to participate in emergencies. After an incident has started, it's too late to approach responding agencies with a sales pitch about how Amateur Radio can help them. They will be much too busy responding to worry about how to integrate an unknown group of volunteers into their agencies. Emergency Preparedness means up-front agreements and practical exercises. These two primary ingredients will go a long way toward ensuring that when needed, Amateur Radio will be at its finest.

Jeff Ryan, KØRM is the ARRL Section Manager for Colorado. He has previously held ARRL appointments as an Emergency Coordinator and as Assistant Section Manager. You can contact him at 6721 Northface Ln, Colorado Springs, CO 80919, kØrm@arrrl.org.

Field Organization Reports

Compiled by Linda Mullally, KB1HSV

Public Service Honor Roll September 2002

This listing is to recognize radio amateurs whose public service performance during the month indicated qualifies for 70 or more total points in the following 6 categories (as reported to their Section Managers). Please note the maximum points for each category:

- 1.) Participating in a public service net, using any mode. -1 point per net session; maximum 40.
 - 2.) Handling formal messages (radiograms) via any mode. -1 point for each message handled; maximum 40.
 - 3.) Serving in an ARRL-sponsored volunteer position: ARRL Field Organization appointee or Section Manager, NTS Net Manager, TCC Director, TCC member, NTS official or appointee above the Section level. -10 points for each position; maximum 30.
 - 4.) Participation in scheduled, short-term public service events such as walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, simulated emergency tests and related practice events. This includes off-the-air meetings and coordination efforts with related emergency groups and served agencies. -5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent in either coordinating and/or operating in the public service event; no limit.
 - 5.) Participation in an unplanned emergency response when the Amateur Radio operator is on the scene. This also includes unplanned incident requests by public or served agencies for Amateur Radio participation. -5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent directly involved in the emergency operation; no limit.
 - 6.) Providing and maintaining a) an automated digital system that handles ARRL radiogram-formatted messages; b) a Web page or e-mail list server oriented toward Amateur Radio public service -10 points per item.
- Amateur Radio stations that qualify for PSHR 12 consecutive months, or 18 out of a 24 month period, will be awarded a certificate from Headquarters upon written notification of qualifying months to the Public Service Branch of Field and Educational Services at ARRL HQ.

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1050 | 365 | 286 | 219 | 169 |
| N5NAV | N9VE | N0BN | AC5SU | K4DND |
| 597 | 360 | 260 | 210 | 165 |
| K6SOJ | KA2ZNZ | KB2RZT | KB2CCD | W5PY |
| 575 | 350 | 252 | 190 | KC5OZT |
| W5ZX | AG9G | KA2GJV | K5DPG | K2UL |
| 545 | 330 | 250 | KB2VRO | 164 |
| W2MTA | WA2YL | KB2KOJ | N2OPJ | KB2ETO |
| 420 | 324 | 232 | 185 | 163 |
| N2CCN | N5JCG | K2DBK | N5OUJ | WA1QAA |
| N2LTC | 308 | 229 | W1G | 162 |
| 390 | K9JPS | WB5NIC | 175 | W5XX |
| W9RCW | 300 | 220 | AL7N | 160 |
| 375 | W2LC | AB2IZ | 172 | W9YVQ |
| W7TVA | | | KB2VYZ | W5GKH |
| | | | | KB2SNP |

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| W3BBQ | KM5YL | 105 | 93 | 82 |
| 158 | K6YR | WD4LSS | W5NK | WB4BIK |
| WN0Y | WB0TAQ | N2IKR | 92 | K1FP |
| W6IVV | W4EAT | N2AKZ | KC3Y | 81 |
| 157 | K4IWW | 103 | WA4EIC | K1 |
| NN7H | KW1U | N3RB | KB8NDS | K3SS |
| 155 | W1GMF | 101 | 90 | 80 |
| KG40QA | W6QZ | K3JL | W4CKS | AA4YW |
| 152 | KG4CHW | 100 | KDCQJ | KC6SKK |
| W0OYH | KA4FZI | 100 | W4PIM | KE4UOF |
| 147 | AB4XK | K7GXZ | KA1GWE | KG4MLD |
| NN2H | 117 | WA0TFC | AA3GV | AG4DL |
| 145 | W4FAL | W0WWR | N3WK | WX4H |
| N5SIG | 115 | KB3GFC | W3CB | NR2F |
| K1CFI | K4BEH | W6DOB | KF6OIF | W5MTO |
| K0IBS | K9LJU | W9F | N8PAM | W5OMG |
| 143 | KT1A | KC2EOT | KG2D | AD4BL |
| N0ZIZ | 114 | WB2QIX | WB2JH | 79 |
| 140 | N6NKO | W1ALE | WA1FNM | W4DLZ |
| WB5ZED | 112 | WA9VND | WA4XA | AK6DV |
| AC5XK | N9KNJ | W7GHT | WB4GGS | 78 |
| KD1LE | 110 | NJ5M | K4WKT | 78 |
| N2GJ | W7GB | KB5TCH | K4FUM | N3WKE |
| 139 | WB4GM | WJ2F | K6IUI | WB4UHC |
| K5ER | NM1K | KF4OPT | WB4PAM | 77 |
| N11ST | KK3F | K4SCL | WD4GBD | N3OR |
| 138 | K5MC | N6NKO | K2PB | KA2ZKM |
| W4NTI | K4UIV | AC7DD | AA2SV | KE2SX |
| K4RLD | KE4JHJ | K15T | WA2CUW | 76 |
| 135 | WA1JVJ | WB5SI | KG4OTL | KA5IJU |
| 134 | N1LJK | WB2GTG | AF4QZ | W7VSE |
| KB0DTI | KG4FXG | KB2KLH | N8DD | 75 |
| W2GUT | K4BB | 99 | WBSTX | WBVYH |
| KJ2N | AF4NS | W1JTH | 89 | 74 |
| N3WAV | KD4GR | 98 | K2DN | K8SH |
| 132 | KC4ZHF | K4FQU | KA2BCE | N2VQA |
| KC8KYK | W7QM | 97 | 88 | 73 |
| 130 | W7ZIW | N5UVC | AA4BN | KG4MLC |
| WA2MSU | N5UVC | K1TSV | KJ7SI | WD4MIS |
| N8IO | KK5GY | W7SD | 87 | AA4AT |
| 126 | WA5OUV | WW8D | W0D0GUF | KB4CAU |
| WB4BHH | K9FHI | 96 | KA2IWK | WA4DOX |
| W5IM | K4YVX | KU6Z | 86 | KG4TVQ |
| W4AUN | KA4LRM | N5NMA | 85 | N8OD |
| 122 | 109 | 95 | 84 | 72 |
| N4TAB | N1IQI | W7EP | W4CC | KD5CZM |
| 121 | K4RBR | W4DGH | 84 | KB1CVH |
| 121 | 108 | AF2K | KJ5YY | W4CAC |
| K0FJ | KB9KEG | WA2GUP | W7LG | KC7SGM |
| W9YCV | KB2GEK | N7YSS | 70 | 70 |
| 120 | N2BVM | KV4AN | 83 | 70 |
| W0LAW | 107 | N3KB | 83 | 70 |
| W4ZJY | KD4EFM | WA2YOW | K5SFM | 70 |
| | KC8CON | 94 | K3CN | 70 |
| | | WB2KNS | | 70 |

The following stations qualified for PSHR points in previous months, but were not recognized in this column: (Aug) W8JEB 305, W6IVV 158, WN0Y 157, KB2ETO 154, W4ZJY 120, W4PIM 90, (July) N6NKO 85, (June) N6NKO 132, AA3GV 89.

Section Traffic Manager Reports September 2002

The following ARRL Section Traffic Managers reported: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DE, EMA, EPA, EWA, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MDC, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, NFL, NH, NLI, NM, NNJ, NNY, NTX, OH, OK, OR, ORG, SB, SC, SD, SDG, SFL, SNJ, STX, TN, VA, WI, WCF, WMA, WNY, WPA, WV, WWA.

Section Emergency Coordinator Reports September 2002

The following ARRL Section Emergency Coordinators reported: AK, AR, EWA, IN, KS, LA, NC, NLI, NFL, SFL, SV, TN, WNY.

Brass Pounders League September 2002

The BPL is open to all amateurs in the US, Canada and US possessions who report to their SMs a total of 500 points or a sum of 100 or more origination and delivery points for any calendar month. All messages must be handled on amateur frequencies within 48 hours of receipt in standard ARRL radiogram format.

| Call | Orig | Rcvd | Sent | Divd | Total |
|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| KK3F | 23 | 1262 | 1218 | 44 | 2547 |
| W1GMF | 0 | 751 | 1409 | 25 | 2185 |
| NM1K | 833 | 219 | 968 | 13 | 2105 |
| N2LTC | 0 | 642 | 645 | 26 | 1313 |
| WX4H | 2 | 402 | 586 | 2 | 992 |
| W1PEX | 0 | 30 | 893 | 0 | 923 |
| KW1U | 0 | 455 | 360 | 12 | 827 |
| WB5NKC | 38 | 48 | 705 | 76 | 807 |
| K9JPS | 0 | 386 | 33 | 366 | 785 |
| W0WWR | 0 | 135 | 499 | 18 | 652 |
| KA1VED | 17 | 301 | 317 | 17 | 652 |
| W4EAT | 0 | 312 | 300 | 3 | 615 |
| W6DOB | 0 | 123 | 462 | 30 | 615 |
| W9RCW | 0 | 317 | 15 | 280 | 612 |
| K7BDU | 16 | 309 | 265 | 8 | 598 |
| KA5KLU | 0 | 272 | 275 | 21 | 568 |
| K5UPN | 27 | 306 | 217 | 5 | 555 |
| KFS | 0 | 257 | 296 | 1 | 553 |
| KC8LBZ | - | - | - | - | 545 |
| W7TVA | 43 | 212 | 155 | 100 | 510 |
| WB2GTG | 0 | 218 | 276 | 8 | 502 |

BPL for 100 or more originations plus deliveries: AK6DV 212, K9GU 187, N9VE 168, W9IHW 166, WA5OUV 126, NJ5M 120.

Q5T