



NAQCC FLORIDA CHAPTER MEMBER NEWS:

On Friday, April 17th, 2015, the Florida Chapter of NAQCC returned to the local park system for our monthly adventure. We held our latest “Operation in the Park” event returning to one of our favorite locations, Hontoon Island State Park, in DeLand, FL.

Located in the St. John’s River, and accessible only by a ferry boat, this State Park is a radio friendly location that is quiet and serene.

Evidence shows that inhabitants have been living along the St. Johns River for over 12,000 years. Shell mounds and other artifacts found on Hontoon Island prove that many Native Americans called this place home.

In the 1500s, Spanish Conquistadors founded the city of St. Augustine, and they built a series of missions throughout North Florida. One of those missions is said to have existed here on the island. After the Second Seminole War, settlers formed homesteads along the St. Johns River. Their survival depended on fishing and hunting wild game, along with raising cattle and growing crops like citrus, sugar cane, corn, cotton and sweet potatoes. A former soldier named Hunton acquired the property and established a pioneer homestead on the island. The island has also been a boat yard, a center for commercial fishing and a cattle ranch.

This park, like many of the others we have visited, has a covered pavilion, loads of picnic tables, BBQ grills, restrooms, water fountains and easily accessible adjacent parking. It also has a canoe launch, horseback and hiking trails, marina, and camping sites. On our arrival, we pretty much had the entire park and all the pavilions to ourselves as usual.

All week long before our operation it had rained and was windy off and on (yes, those “April Showers”) with temps in the high-80’s to low 90’s – it goes from “winter” to “summer” here with little transition!! Fortunately, today we arrived to our site with overcast skies and a temp of 74 degrees with 60% humidity, accompanied by a light breeze. It was very comfortable for us to operate.

The ferry operator, a park volunteer named Phil, took one look at us and immediately knew what we were up to – and he asked a gazillion questions as he is looking to get a ham license! He even came by to watch us operate (with more questions) during his break. We provided him with lots of information and resources including local license testing information.

The signals were not good today on any of the bands we used. 20M was nice and quiet, but 30M had some noise. 40M was again, horrible (few weak signals and lotsa noise) just like last month. No joy there!



Steve WB4OMM #5913 brought his ol' reliable Elecraft KX-3 with Vibroplex Code Warrior Jr paddle, running 5W out to a 20M or 30M Hamstick on a ground mounted tripod with 4 radials. He didn't get skunked this month – 4 Qs.

Steve made QSO's with 4 members in 4 different states including regulars Karen W4KRN #3392 in VA; Curt WA2JSG #3457 in NJ; Bob KB3ENU #5334 in MD on 20M; and K1PUG in CT on 30M.



Art WB4MNK #5274 (top) used his Elecraft KX1 running 4W, a Dirt Cheap paddle, 2.2 amp LIPO power supply, 28 FT end fed wire up 15 feet with 16 feet of counter poise. Art made 3 QSOs with non-members in 2 different states - K4VSV-SC, W4OIS-SC, KC4KNN-NC

Darryl AB8GU #6913 (bottom) NAQCC-FL Official cheerleader and all around "supervisor" spotted us on the internet, helped with antennas, transport, and kept us informed on each other's progress.



Don K3RLL #1905 used his trusty Elecraft KX3 running 5W - his antenna was a 31 foot Unun-base loaded all band vertical. His key was a German Palm Paddle.

Don's lengthy list of exotic contacts from Hontoon State Park today included Dale WN0WWY #6289 in KS; and John K4ARQ #5721 in FL.



Wally KG4LAL #6278 brought his Yaesu FT-817 running 5W out to a wire dipole up about 15' in a tree. Scouring the bands he didn't snag a QSO; but not for the lack of trying! In his "defense" (not that it's needed!), Wally spent most of his time displaying/explaining what we were doing and ham radio in general with the park volunteer that came over looking for more information. And Wally, the good sport that he is, stayed with him and provided the answers. Good for you Wally!



Rick AA4W #1628 brought his Elecraft KX-3 too! (We had three KX-3s and a KX1.....).

Running 5W, he fed a zip cord dipole antenna and used a "bug" to make his contact; he worked Dave W1DV in NY, a non-member, on 30 meters.

We quit around noon and enjoyed our "brown bag" picnic lunch. As usual the discussion revolved around great ham radio adventures and all of the great facets of our noble hobby. While the band conditions weren't quite "great", the weather was great, the location was great, the food was great....and the friendship was great! A GREAT day!

Many thanks to those who listened for us and helped make this another successful NAQCC-FL event!

NEXT MONTH: The next monthly outing of the NAQCC-FL folks is tentatively scheduled for Friday, May 22nd, 2015 at 9:00 am. Look for our announcement!

72/73 to all –

Steve WB40MM, #5913

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