

Mississippi Section Report for June 2024

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Mississippi Hams charged off on June 24 for Field Day 2024. Records show that 16 clubs were in the field. The usual general consensus was that it was HOT, but band conditions seem to vary from site to site. Here are a few reports:

The Chickasaw ARA (CARA)(K5K) operated from the Hernando Point Campground near Hernando. The major challenge was HEAT. K5K made just over 200 contacts with 6 to 8 different operators, but there was very little activity after midnight as the heat took its toll on everyone. We had a visit from a MS State Guard recruiter asking questions about our setup. We also had some campers come by just to see what we were doing.

CARA Members got lots of practice installing antennas, testing antenna launchers, using solar panels, testing batteries, using filters (provided by K5VD) to block out the other nearby stations, eating and having fun. It was a very successful event! All stations operated on emergency power.

W5AJT cooked breakfast for everyone Saturday and Sunday mornings. AB8LA coordinated dinner on Saturday evening. W5LJD and N5PYQ cooked up the burgers and dogs. Everyone brought a covered dish, and we had a feast! We counted 25 people at dinner. (Thanks to KF8PD for the CARA info)

George County ARES (GCARES)(KC5CWW) operated Field Day from the QTH of KD4VVZ and KD1VVZ. The day started with a testing session at 8:00 AM, and KJ5FUN passed his General. Then the Field Day setup began about 9:00 AM with putting up antennas and getting the equipment ready. KG5AZM did a 20M antenna build with the group, which was then put up to use during Field Day operations that began at 1:00 PM, and the antenna worked perfectly. After the set-up was complete, it was time for lunch and as always, there was lots of food! This year's food was great with KI5RGH bringing smoked pork butts.

After lunch it was time for door prizes and just about everyone received something great. There was even a Kenwood TS440 radio and several antennas that were donated by KF4JIF and KI4OOL. The Kenwood TS440 with the matching external antenna tuner and power supply were the grand prize which was won by KJ5FUN. The 20M antenna was given to him as well so he could have some fun, as his callsign says, on the air with his new upgrade to General!

In the early afternoon there were two 30-minute hands on the air training classes on what and how to use all the receive filters on HF radios. (Thanks to KD4VVZ for the GCARES FD info)

The Olive Branch Amateur Radio Club (OBARC) (W5OBM) operated for the full 24 hours from the Olive Branch City Hall. A total of twelve club members and two GOTA participants operated throughout the event. They operated in the 2A category with two primary HF stations, one GOTA station, and one VHF station, all operating on emergency power. Over the 24 hours

of operation, they logged a total of 340 QSOs using CW, phone, and digital modes. This was well short of our previous QSO totals, but not bad considering the band conditions. KI5TKL was the designated GOTA coach and supervised forty-eight total contacts between two GOTA participants.

AI5HG provided smoked barbeque pork for the main meal Saturday evening. The meat was from an OBARC fundraiser orchestrated by WA4CB which was held the week before. Sixty-three delicious smoked pork butts were sold to raise funds for the club to purchase the tower trailer pictured in the Field Day photo on www.arlmiss.org.

All our equipment worked well, despite getting off to a slow start. When first selecting the 20-meter band for initial testing, we heard almost no other stations. We spent most of the first hour troubleshooting, believing we had an antenna or feedline issue. It turned out that it wasn't us, it was the band conditions! Every band had high RF noise levels making it difficult to complete QSOs. At first, we thought it was our location, but we soon discovered that other stations were having the same difficulty, and a check of the internet propagation sites confirmed that things were not looking good. Still, we endured and started making contacts, although it was often a struggle to pull stations out of the noise.

As with every Field Day, there were many learning experiences (like, don't forget to periodically check the fuel level in the generator so it doesn't run out in the middle of your operation). Some of our newer Hams showed up and got to see what it's like to set up a station, put together antennas, handle feedline, use logging software, and operate contest style. But just being involved in setup, getting on the air, exposing the hobby to the public, and experiencing the bond of radio amateurs coming together as a team always makes for a successful Field Day no matter how many contacts are completed. By that measure, Field Day 2024 was a success in Olive Branch. (Thanks to K5OLV for providing the OBARC info)

The Meridian ARC (MARC)(W5FQ) set up for Field Day at the Collinsville Fire and Rescue Department building. This location provided several valuable advantages besides the very good public exposure. We had commercial power and restrooms as well one of the fire engine bays in which to set up tables adjacent to an outdoor area convenient for deployment of various antenna systems.

One of the teams set up under a lean-to area on the side of the building and operated both days solely on "emergency power" from a member's electric vehicle (EV). They used long wire antennas, taking advantage of several tall pine trees behind the fire station to have a place to hang antennas. Although the bands were noisy, most operators were largely successful in making contacts with both phone and various digital modes. CW operation was somewhat hampered due to noise conditions.

This Field Day location was adjacent to a popular shopping area, thus several individuals and families, who noticed the Field Day banner, were attracted to stop by to see the activities. Others, after learning about Field Day from media and Internet postings, visited the site. Some young people, who were Get-on-the-Air (GOTA) participants, were amazed at being able to talk with contacts, who were located many states away. (Thanks to KI5HCM for the MARC FD info)

The University of Mississippi ARC (W5UMS) operated from the Trade Park in Oxford. This is the sports complex which is run by the City of Oxford. We had four stations set up with between eight and ten operators throughout the event. Operators were set up in the Lafayette County joint operations command truck using generator power all 24 hours. We did have a crew operating the overnight hours, and we did very well after the bands opened back up. We had visitors from the Oxford Police Department and Lafayette County Sheriff's Department throughout the day and night. We also had a visitor from the North Mississippi Storm spotters' group, who is interested in getting into Ham Radio.

The biggest problem we had was a couple of dead keys or key interfaces on the radios we were intending to operate CW which really put a damper on the Morse Code situation.

The best part of our event this year was the food! Saturday lunch consisted of fried catfish from Taylor Grocery, and Saturday evening's main event was a whole hog that had been cooking overnight. We had pulled pork, ribs, tenderloin, and fresh bacon throughout the night and into the morning on Sunday. There was even leftover catfish for breakfast and breakdown lunch. UMARC Members would dare to say that this was the best Field Day food anywhere in Mississippi! (Thanks to KE5IMK for the UMARC FD info)

The Jackson County ARC (JCARC)(N5OS) operated from the Safe House in Vancleave. Field Day 2024 for JCARA started out pretty shaky. We had to go through The Jackson County Commissioners for permission to operate out of a Safe House (EOC) in St. Martin. The Commissioners approved it, but it was scheduled for June 29 and 30, and, as we all know FD, was June 22 and 23. Bless their heart's the County jumped through hoops to find us a nonscheduled safe house. We operated out of the Central Jackson County Safe House (EOC) in Vancleave. Same layout, but the property was lacking in trees over St Martin. Did I mention, it was hot, I mean insane! But we set up KM4EWZ's Trailer with pneumatic mast trailer. We put a Tribander on top with an Armstrong rotator. Below it we mounted two 80m OCFD roughly 90 degrees to each other. However, we did mount the OCFDs on a 2X4 about 3 feet from the mast. This placed the OCFDs about midway under the Tribander's Driven Element. This would come to haunt us later.

We have a number of POTA operators in the club, and they wanted to participate in Field Day and are good operators. So, they set up outside, some camped, some worked out of the back of their vehicles, and one brought his RV. They operated digital, four in total. Did I mention it was Hot! These guys really impacted our score!

In the EOC we set up three stations, one on the tribander and the other two on the OCFDs. These stations operated SSB. I did not get checkout (or permission) with the county to run the facility on generators for 20 minutes to qualify in a Foxtrot class. So we ran on the club's propane generator, through the full duration of the 24 hour FD). We found no matter what combination of bands we operated on, the three of us operators had major interference (We were running 100 Watts). So, we went to hunting and pouncing, and when an operator was ready to throw out our club call, he would raise his hand and the other two operators would wait their

turn. It worked. We took breaks, took turns, and operated at least one station all night inside the facility. We operated as 7Foxtrot MS.

Meanwhile outside FT-8ers were banging away most of the night. Near morning, when the other side of the world was awake, W5DDX snagged 9 DX stations on 15m SSB with the tribander, long path! (2-Bolgia, 1-Italy, 1-Croata, 2-Spain, 1-Hungary & 2-Germany)

QSO count was 278 phone, 191 Digital, and total QSO points of 660. This doesn't include low power and emergency power multipliers and the odds and ends that needed to be added for the final score. This is a good QSO score for us. We have already started planning for next year with that Tribander! (Thanks to N2PKW for the JCARC FD info)

The Central Mississippi ARA (CMARA)(K5XU) operated from the Rankin County EOC. On the Friday before Field Day a few members started setting up campers, antennas, coax, tables and chairs, and other necessary equipment for Field Day. Saturday morning rolled around, and members began setting up the remainder of antennas, rolling out coax and hoisting the tower. We also tweaked our initial setup from Friday to make things run smoother. This year we opted to cater the food prep. The food was fantastic, and lunch was soon over. We then prepared to take our positions at our stations for the event to begin.

We entered Field Day 2024 as 3F again this year, using K5XU's callsign. Three stations seem to be a good number for us to be able to man for the entire 24-hour operation. We began with one SSB station, one CW station, and one Digital station. In addition to these, we also had a GOTA station, and a VHF walk-in station set up at our information table. We had many visitors to our information table, including Hams from other clubs, new operators in the area, and several interested non-licensed individuals.

As the afternoon turned to evening, our primary CW operator left for the evening, and that radio was turned over to digital operations. We continued throughout the night in this configuration. As Sunday dawned, we continued with operations turning the third station back over to CW for the remainder of the event. By the time the event was winding down it became increasingly difficult to find a station that we had not already worked. Although we were tired, time will tell how our numbers stack up against other Field Day operations around the country. We were confident that we gave it a great effort (Thanks to KJ5ET for the CMARA FD info)

The Pine Belt ARC (PBARC)(K5PN) started setting up on Friday at the Hattiesburg Police Range. They operated on solar power. During the night they had a huge pileup on 40M SSB that lasted for four hours. Furthest QSO was on 20M with Jordan. One of our members brought some great brisket that he smoked earlier plus there were hamburgers, hotdogs, with all the sides with plenty to go around. (Thanks to KI5OAI for the PBARC info)

From the Golden Triangle area, members from Lowndes County ARC and the Magnolia ARC (using KC5ULN) convened in Hamilton at the home of one of the Lowndes Co ARC members, KI5IKJ, who opened up her property and home to host Field Day this year. In spite of the heat, there was good attendance and, as always, good food to be had. It was noted that band conditions

did not seem to be optimal and there was some electrical interference that they had to contend with as well. (Thanks to K5RFL for the FD info)

Heads Up!!! From SEC KC5IMN. On Saturday, August 10th from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Mississippi ARES will conduct a statewide exercise named 'Wildfire Heatwave SET.' During the exercise, participants will respond to simulated wildfires across the state resulting from by severe drought and prolonged heatwaves. Affected areas will have limited public safety and service communications infrastructure, posing significant risks to firefighting personnel and public and private property.

ARES team members will operate from various locations, including home stations, mobile units, and portable setups. Teams will deploy to Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and other agency sites. County Emergency Coordinators (EC) will supervise operations and coordinate ARES and other Amateur radio operators within their respective counties. ARES teams will facilitate emergency and welfare communications among local responders, public safety entities, and public service organizations. Want to participate? Contact kc5imn@arrl.net or your county EC.

KA5ICO has retired as Magnolia Net Manager due to physical considerations after 8 years on the job. Thanks, Bob! KF5BA has taken over the helm. Give Bobby your 100% support!

Attached for your information below is the current status (updated from last month) of known upcoming Ham events in and around Mississippi:

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- ARRL Club Grant Program. July 26. Last date for submission
- EMCOMM Checkin on 3862, 6:00 PM, Aug 1.
- SET, Wildfire Heatwave, Aug 10, POC: KC5IMN
- ARRL Day in the Park, Oct 5, Old Trace Park, Ridgeland, POC: AK5J
- Capital City Hamfest, February 1-2, 2025, Trademart, Jackson, POC: AK5J
- Mississippi QSO Party, April 5-6. 2025, POC: W5XX

And on the national level the ARRL digital system has been partially down since Mid-May. As a result, there is no information available on June New Hams in Mississippi, Upgrades, or New ARRL Members. We'll catch up when new info is available.

Club Newsletters (Editor): the Meridian ARC Spark Gap (W5MAV)

HF Net Reports – sessions/QNI/QTC (Net Manager)

Magnolia Section Net 30/1191/10 (Tnx W5JGW)

MS Baptist Hams Net 3/11/0 (WF5F) Sunday, 7263 at 4PM

MSPN 30/2168/24 (W5JGW)

Pine Belt ARC 10M Net 4/15/0 (K5TLL)

VHF Net Reports - sessions/QNI/QTC (Net Manager)

Bluff City ARC EMCOMM Net 4/66/0 (K5MCK)

Capital Area Em Net 5/44/0 (K5XU)

Jackson ARC Net 4/33/0 (K5XU)

Lowndes County ARC 4/47/0 (K5TCO)

Mississippi Coast ARA 4/116/0 (W5JGW)

Pine Belt ARC 2M Net 4/43/0 (K5TLL)

Pine Belt ARC 2M Simplex Net 1/10/0 (K5TLL)

Vicksburg ARC/MLEN 5/101/0 (KG5YEE)

Digital Net Reports

Central Mississippi ARES Digital Net 4/33/27 (KI5JCL)
(2 VHF nets and 2 HF nets)

East MS EMCOMM Net 30/308/150 (K5TCO)

MS WinLink Net QNI 92 by 7 stations (K5FIT)

Traffic: WV5Q 149, AE5MI 21, and W5XX 7

PSHR: WV5Q 209, AE5MI 101 and W5XX 82

