Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm
Newsletter
March 2022

Reminder: ZOOM Meeting Monday March 8th at 7:00 p.m.

So Many Things To Do

As the Covid appears to be abating, several things hav become crystal clear to me. We have reached the limit of our resources. This limit has been reached by time, inability to meet, update, repair, and revitalize both us as a group and our equipment. In an email to Roger N1XP, I wrote down some of the projects we have ahead of us. But we have many more. I believe if we have teams to assist in each general project we can get our group and our resources back to functional for an emergency. I propose we separate the tasks into three major areas in the next four months. The tasks are:

1. EOC setup
2. Repeater System up and functional
3. Trailer and Shelter
4. Personal radio and radio related gear

When I talked to Allyson last week, I was pleasantly surprised to find the feedlines and antennas were still in the building. This is a big plus! With some antenna analyzers we can figure out which feedlines go to which antennas and then hook up the appropriate radios.

A big plus is that Bob N1WJO has set up the new laptop for the trailer. I haven't been in the trailer yet but the exterior looked okay with no new damage from snow, ice, etc… I did cover the electrical panel and need to recheck my work – hopefully later this week. The solar panel and case for the laptop are both in. The parts for the shelter are in, but we will need warmer quieter weather to do this task. The old shell that was over the shelter ribs is buried under the snow near the power pole.

The repeater system is broken. There is no better way to say it. The individual repeaters appear to be functioning as standalone units. Yes the N1BBK repeater is on low power and will continue to be until the temporary unit and either the repaired unit can be swapped back. A big thank you goes to Norm KA1SG for tackling this part of the project. I can reach the N1BBK 910 machine from the house here in Sumner as well as the 224 machine on Streaked. My signal gets lost going to Pikes Hill due to the little 1700ft blocks of granite between me and 147.120.

Personal Gear and radios- please check your equipment! That is your gear at home and mobile. This winter has presented challenges to antennas, coax, and radios. If you need someone in the group that has a piece of test equipment to check something let us know!

So the bottom line is I will need some help to make this all work. Our Monthly Zoom meeting is Monday night March 8th at 7:00 pm local time. Please be prepared to assist in one project and volunteer. We as a group can get all of this done by June 2022.

Thank you,

Wayne N1YIS

Trailer Update

Still on site and was relatively snow free. The picture was taken by Allyson on one of her trips to the site. I have wrapped and bungeed a tarp to the electrical panel last week in an attempt to keep some of the snow and rain out.

Trailer Shelter

The entire trailer is now exposed to the elements. The current state of the shelter will require us as a team to put the replacement cover over the frame as well as put up the end pieces. The top shell is currently in the foreground under several inches of snow.

EMA Notes

The courthouse is open to the public again. We need to go through security at the new entrance before going to see Allyson, Teresa, or Rachel in the EMA. I was reminded that the Leatherman tool stays in the vehicle to pass through security. Our equipment in the basement is disconnected.

Ham Radio Volunteers Needed!

March 5th - Sunday, March 7th

CanAm Crown International Sled Dog Races:

Calling all amateur radio operators!

Ham Radio Volunteers Needed! The annual sled dog races are on and ham radio operators are needed for **Saturday, March 5th - Sunday, March 7th**, to provide communications at various locations, including Allagash, Rocky Brook, and Maibec. This isn't your average public service event. Hams may

have to bring multiple rigs, antennas, and supplies. Races start and finish in Fort Kent. Contact: Derrick Ouellette, KW1A, KW1A@arrl.net for more information and to volunteer!

Maine Telegraph Newsletter

The Maine State newsletter for Maine amateur radio operators is available. This month's edition contains articles on SkyWarn, Awards to Maine amateurs for their service, Winter Field Day, The new echolink node and more. This link should take you to the newsletter: https://www.mainearrl.org/newsletter

Maine ARRL Convention
April 1st & 2nd 2022

Androscoggin Amateur Radio Clubs' 2022 Hamfest and Convention. The hamfest will be held Friday April 1, 2022 and Saturday April 2, 2022 at the Ramada Inn Conference Center 490 Pleasant Street Lewiston ME. Co-cordinator is Ivan n1oxa 207-577-5152 or n1oxa and David we1u at 207-783-1759 or we1u Check back with this web page for more information as it becomes available, as the coronavirus will effect our plans for a possible fall hamfest and convention.

For more information: http://www.w1npp.org/pages/MEConvention2022.html

Trek Across Maine
June 16-19

The American Lung Association has decided to run the Maine event. Volunteers for communications are needed. Please sign up through the ALA's site. https://action.lung.org/site/TRR/Cycle/ALANE_Northeast/828726805? pg=utype&fr_id=22540. For more information also see: https://action.lung.org/site/TR? pg=informational&fr_id=22540&type=fr_informational&sid=9143

Currently the New Hampshire Cycle the Seacoast has been suspended for another

Field Day 2022
June 25-26

With the lessening of COVID cases as well as restrictions, we should consider our options for this event that happens the last full weekend in June (25-26th). Rules for Field Day are posted at http://www.arrl.org/field-day#rules.

Correspondence
Joining the Multi-County Packet Network

We have been asked to join the statewide packet group to link the state wide county EMAs. The following emails are attached here:

From: Roger <xp@n1xp.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2022 2:48 PM
To: N1YIS@megalink.net
Cc: Brian Wall <W1BKW@outlook.com>; Bradley Brown Jr. <bradbrownjr@gmail.com>;
Richard Bates <richard.bates@stgeorge.me>
Subject: Maine Emergency Packet Network (MEPN)

Hi Wayne:
I am Roger N1XP, one of several SysOps involved with the MEPN. Brian informs me you
are interested in Oxford County EMA joining MEPN. The packet network's goal is to
reach each County EMA EOC in Maine. (See attached maps). One advantage of a
packet network is relaying long-lists of information or forms to other EOC node
stations providing timely and accurate relay of information. Another advantage is
each node station can also be a Winlink RMS gateway accessible by VHF radio.

The network is configured with a UHF network backbone connecting each node.
Individual node stations (EOCs) are on separate VHF frequencies allowing local
operations and thus preventing interference to other nodes. Messages (mail), from
one EOC node station to another, are automatically routed across the UHF backbone.
A typical node station in the MEPN consists of a Raspberry Pi running pilinBPQ, and
Direwolf. Direwolf is a software packet program negating the need for a physical
TNC. pilinBPQ is the powerful AX.25 packet node switch, BBS/Mail, RMS, and CHAT
networking program from G8BPQ.

Brian has arranged to meet with W1IMD for the purpose of using the 'IMD tower in
Hiram as a node location providing packet backbone connectivity to Oxford County.
A third map shows this proposed link and a separate link into Farmington/Franklin
County.

I will be happy to meet with you, by Zoom or other means, to discuss the
possibilities. Brian is welcome to arrange and facilitate this meeting .

73
Roger, N1XP

Hi Roger,

First, sorry for the delay in returning your email.

Yes to the question of Oxford County EMA joining MEPN. It will be several months before we have the systems back up and running at the EOC. There was significant demolition and construction at the County buildings over the last three years. All external antennas removed and all radio related gear disconnected. So basically we have absolutely no communication at the EOC at this moment.

On the plus side, the radios and computers are still in the building, the feedlines to the two antennas under the roof in the eaves are still there. In the next month I plan to start the rebuilding process of our systems. This plan will be discussed in our March Oxford ARES/CERT Comm Zoom meeting Monday night.

We have some unfortunate priorities to take care of as well. If Brian hasn't mentioned it, our repeater system W1OCA,W1IF, and N1BBK repeaters have suffered "un-linkage". These repeaters were originally set up to serve Oxford County from North to South. Our mobile command post and shelter is in need of significant TLC. The pandemic certainly has contributed our ability to recover.

With this being said and once we get basic voice comms back up at the EOC, I would like to get the packet system back up and running. The equipment we have at our disposal will be PC based (and much newer than the equipment Dick Knight N1NYW used to maintain.) Any antennas we will use will installed in the Courthouse attic. We no longer have the 'luxury' of external antennas at the EOC at this point -so some creativity on our part will be needed.

I believe we should meet to do a preliminary way to proceed. Twenty plus years ago I had a small packet station on a rebuilt Windows 95 or a DOS machine. Anyway that is ancient history.

Would it be possible to meet via ZOOM next week? I have an account so I could host.

Wayne Strout N1YIS
Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm EC