



RADIO-ACTIVE!

May 19, 2025, Volume 4, Issue 5

Volunteering for a Large Scale Event



Most of our local Santa Cruz County events where we provide radio communication support are under 500 attendees. Imagine the logistics of larger events and disasters and the coordination needed when the activity exceeds 10,000 attendees. Last month, April, were two such large scale events that occurred in Monterey County —the Sea Otter Classic and the Big Sur Marathon.

Nine Santa Cruz ARES members participated in these events and for most it was not their first time. The Sea Otter Classic is a bicycling and outdoor sports festival and exposition held each spring since 1991 at Laguna Seca and in the back country of Fort Ord. The four-day event is considered the world's largest cycling festival, drawing nearly 10,000 professional and amateur athletes and 74,000 fans. It kicks off the cycling season on the Central coast.

Bike riders of all ages rip through gnarly gravel, take to the road and shred down massive berms in one of the 12 races. The mission of the Sea Otter Classic is to make people's lives better through participation in sport and recreation and through celebration of an active outdoor lifestyle.

The Big Sur International Marathon (26.2 miles) is a point-to-point course run on scenic CA Highway 1 from Big Sur to Carmel the last Sunday each April for about 4,500 total entrants supported by 2500 volunteers. Towering redwoods, crashing waves, coastal mountains and verdant pastures are featured on this bucket list course for many runners. All entrants must be 16 years or older, in good health and well trained to run in this challenging course with a 6-hour cut-off time. The mission of the race is to enrich and empower the community through charitable giving and to inspire a passion for healthy lifestyles by creating memorable running experiences. Since the inaugural race, this marathon has given back over \$6.4 million to the local community through their annual grant program, supporting schools, nonprofits, public safety, and

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Ham License Testing coming to you!

On 5/24, from 1 to 3 PM at the Emergency Operations Center (5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz). This is an opportunity to let your friends and family know so they can study for the Technicians license, and anyone who would like to upgrade to General or Amateur Extra licenses can do so as well. This is being hosted by the San Benito County W5YI group. If you are interested, please sign up ahead of time. Good luck everyone!

Here is the signup link.
<https://ham.study/ses-sions/680280e6a8ef7a14c63943da/1>

Santa Cruz County ARES Purpose

- The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes
- We are not fire fighters or police or sheriff's officers. We are volunteers who care about our communities by using our emergency communication skills.
- Before volunteering in an emergency we first take care of ourselves, our family, and our home.
- We value every member's contributions, irrespective of license class, years of experience, or the price tag of equipment.

Ham Radio's Motto

"When all else fails – ham radio works". That is because, when all the normal communication systems stop working, Ham Radio is still in operation, helping people, conveying messages, and sometimes, even saving lives.

Large events—continued

environmental organizations throughout Monterey County. Both events require multiple months of planning and require a large cadre of volunteers for various aspects of the events. Both have the appearance of little cities that pop-up and all the volunteers cooperatively and synergistically working together. Is it always perfect ...no, but the volunteers make them work for the participants to have the best time. Volunteers come from far and wide.

This year for the Sea Otter Classic radio communications there were 30 volunteers. The San Benito County Amateur Radio Association is the primary organizer and led by Tim, W6TST for radio communications of the event. The volunteers came from five counties with Santa Cruz County comprising 27% of those volunteers and 17 shifts. For the eight Santa Cruz volunteers—three had previously volunteered (John, N6QX; Dan, KM6GMG and Jim, KN6NCG) for the event more than three times, two this was their second time (Roberta, AJ6KN and Jeff, KN6PAA) and three this was their first time (Dan, N6RJJ; Ed, N6EMA and JoMarie, KM6URE). Tim provided several zoom calls to review the logistics, 205 frequency list, and maps of the events and answer multiple questions. One of the expectations was: Knowing the procedures, plans and data is key. Most of us felt prepared and knew what to bring. Depending on what course you were as-

signed drove the equipment list. The road course necessitated the use of APRs and a mobile rig but those positioned in the back county a HT was sufficient most of the time. Cell phone coverage is very spotty. Two temporary towers and repeaters are put into place specifically for the event. One of the towers is 100

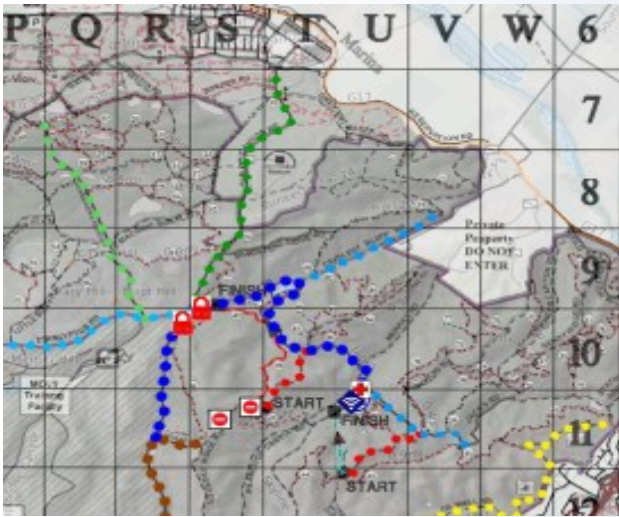


feet and on a trailer with a generator powered winch to aid up righting and extending it up in the air. It is placed on the one of the highest hills of Laguna Seca. The other is placed on Chews Ridge, an old Fire lookout, and is located approximately 50 miles southeast of Monterey and approximately 30 miles west of Highway 101. The lookout sits at an elevation of 5,043 feet. This temporary repeater was meant to assist communications in many of the nooks and crannies of Arroyo Seco and Carmel Valley.

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Large events—continued

Event days required us to arrive just as the sun was rising. Some had to drive through rain or heavy fog but once we arrived at Laguna Seca it was sunny though windy days. A briefing led by Tim was provided giving us any new updates. We paired up with our partner/s for the day, transferred our equipment and supplies into the selected drivers car and dispersed to our designated location following topo maps



into the back county of Fort Ord. Fort Ord is now part of Bureau of Land Management property and the request was to minimize the number of vehicles. Usually, public access is limited to foot, bike or horse power. Surprisingly, several of the roads were signed and in fairly good shape. One saw some buildings (small shacks and pavilions of picnic tables) of Fort Ord, evidence of the area's prior life. One location was a clearing and labelled Lightfighter LZ, i.e. a former helicopter landing zone. The



wildlife was quite abundant most notably sunning rattle snakes, rabbits, and a wide variety of birds. The ticks also made their presence known for at least two of our volunteers. The flora was also striking in some areas with lots of tree varieties, tree moss, scrub brush and poison oak.

There were a few challenges of route signage and clarifications sought for the locations of our post. Often our location was shared other agency volunteers. This included sheriff, firefighter/EMS, musicians and ski patrol. The ski patrol provided back country medical support and EMS were the transport. Most of the radio



traffic were requests for the usual Heath and Welfare checks, SAG requests for mechanical failure and a few medical and lost items instances. Net control housed in San Benito's Comms trailer was consistent for all four days provided by Tim and Roberta, AJ6KN at the primary location within Laguna Seca. One of the days included a 90 mile road course through the Salinas Valley corridor down to Arroyo Seca and up through Carmel Valley. Our two volunteers for this road course were part of the four SAG crews. As a SAG, we needed to change to multiple frequencies throughout the drive. And reports had to be sometimes delayed until traveled outside a canyon area.

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Large events—continued



By contrast, the Big Sur Marathon was staffed by 32 volunteers with one being a Santa Cruz County ARES person, JoMarie, KM6URE. It was the second time for JoMarie. Some of the same volunteers from the Sea Otter Classic were volunteering for the Big Sur Marathon. Radio communications staffed 13 Aid stations, four SAGs, two convoys and two sweeps. Other volunteers included Sheriff, CHP and police, multiple county clubs, school programs, medical personnel on e-bikes, Cal OES (California Office of Emergency Services), Army Corp of Engineers, and a Verizon Response team. To cover the course for radio



communications four temporary repeaters are placed along the course and linked. There is no cellphone coverage outside of Carmel area down to Big Sur. Preparation materials were sent in three emails with attachment of details—205, assignment and course and coverage maps. It is expected for the volunteers to arrive by 4am and check in with lead, get cre-

dentials and get to their position before Highway 1 become access controlled. The access control means you have to wait and be escorted in one lane and direction (convoy). Runners occupy the ocean side of the course, emergency vehicles, course vehicles and convoys on the hill-side of the road. This year's main challenge was the 'slip-out' that occurred in 2023 that remained only as a one lane and the rain. Lots of coordination was needed to allow the racers not lose time because of waiting for vehicle traffic. Two SAG drivers were staged on the south side of the slip-out and two on the north. JoMarie was in a SAG on the south side but once one person was transported across the slip-out the SAG had to stay on the north side. JoMarie's SAG had the greatest number requests (11) and they came in various forms. Net control asked, CHP flag us down, EMS flagged us down and Aid stations flagged us down. The Marathon has a greater amount of demonstrated exuberance by the volunteer staff to support runners as they go by. There is a grand piano being played at the half way point, Taiko drummers at mile 11, various other musicians, and lots of cheering.

All the radio communications volunteers from Santa Cruz County reported these events are very enjoyable to work and are making plans for participation next year. We hope you make plans to join in the fun next year.

This story was written by the comments of the eight volunteers. Read the additional contribution by John, N6QX in his own words on the next page and a few random pictures.



Large events—continued

N6QX Experience

During the Sea Otter events Thursday and Friday I was stationed at backcountry location M2, the junction of Skyline and Oil Well Road. This ridge-top location provided an excellent RF path to the event's 2-meter repeater: I was full-quieting using my HT on low power with its short rubber duckie antenna. Nevertheless, I set up my Ed Fong J-pole antenna and base/mobile radio with battery box. I find it much more convenient to use than an HT for a day-long deployment in a fixed location. The photo shows the setup with Bill, KJ6PN, my partner for the day.

Luckily we had no injuries at our location. The greatest excitement was shortly after setting up, while I was beginning to stake down the pop-up, an enormous wind gust upended the shelter, taking with it the j-pole antenna strapped to one leg. The antenna coax pulled over my work table and dumped my base radio and clipboards in the dirt. Luckily, everything survived this drop test.



Equipment available to loan

Santa Cruz Communications Support have made **FOUR** kits available for loaning to allow ham operators participate in a deployment or to trial a different setup. Two kits are for a vehicle deployment and includes mobile dual-band radio, mag mount antenna, battery and kneeboard. The other two kits are for stationary outdoor deployments and includes the vehicle kit with additional supplies of a tripod antenna, lighting, and pop-up. Contact either John, N6QX, Roberta, AJ6KN, Stephen, KM6NEP or Gary, K6PDL for arraiging for check out.

Come play radio at this month's Membership Meeting

Our monthly ARES meeting will be this Wednesday, May 21, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, this time in person, **outdoors** in the parking lot of the County EOC, 5200 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz.

Why outside? It's a repeat of the fun Comm Post Message Passing Exercise we held last October. Bring your go-kit and set up in the parking lot as though you were creating an emergency communications post in an area lacking power and phone coverage. Send and receive short, tactical messages. Here's our suggested list for a complete go-kit: <https://xczcomm.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PSPS-Go-Kit.pdf>

Don't have all this gear? Come anyway and play along. At a minimum all you need is:

- ▶ 2M-70cm dual band radio. A hand-held is fine.
- ▶ Clipboard, pen, and ICS-214 log sheet
- ▶ Light source
- ▶ Suitable clothing

Anticipated schedule: (expect last minute changes):

- ▶ 7:00 PM (or earlier): Arrive at EOC. Claim a parking spot and set up your communications post. Come to the building's main entrance to get a paper containing your tactical call sign for the exercise and some messages to be transmitted to other stations. Messages will be short bits of tactical information for quick, informal transmission, not word-for-word transcription.
- ▶ 7:15 PM: Roll call and check in on a directed net on simplex **Coastal 1, 146.535 MHz**. Contact Net Control to find a station you have traffic for. Move to another frequency as directed by Net Control to send or receive messages. Send your messages and receive any messages sent to your station. Messages may be sent by voice or Winlink (if your recipient is equipped to receive Winlink). Summarize all messages sent and received on your ICS-214 sheet. See **Scoring**, below.
- ▶ 8:00 PM: End of message-passing exercise. Hand in your ICS-214 log sheets. Hot-wash discussion and critique of exercise, at the building's main entrance. Sign up for future ARES Net Control openings.
- ▶ 8:15 PM Wander around and look at everyone else's setups. Steal good ideas and improvements in your own setup.
- ▶ 8:45 PM Pack-up your comm post and depart.

Exercise Frequencies:

Be sure your radio is ready to operate simplex on these frequencies:

- 13 SLV1 147.555 MHz
- 14 SLV2 446.875 MHz
- 15 SLV3 147.450 MHz
- 16 CSTL1 146.535 MHz
- 17 CSTL2 441.000 MHz
- 18 CSTL3 147.570 MHz

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Report your volunteer hours!

The reported volunteer hours for April was 651 hours. Please remember to enter your hours on the form on <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>

Reporting the time you spend on ARES and ham radio activities reminds county public safety managers that we're around and ready to serve in time of need.

Membership Meeting—continued

Scoring:

Scoring is based entirely on the ICS-214 logs. You get 1 point for outgoing every message you log as sent, and another point when that same message is accurately logged by its recipient. Half your possible points come from the logs of your message recipients. The message is deemed successfully received if the recipient's log contains enough information for an appropriate response by a third party.

Example log entries:

"<tactical call> needs 10 cases drinking water"

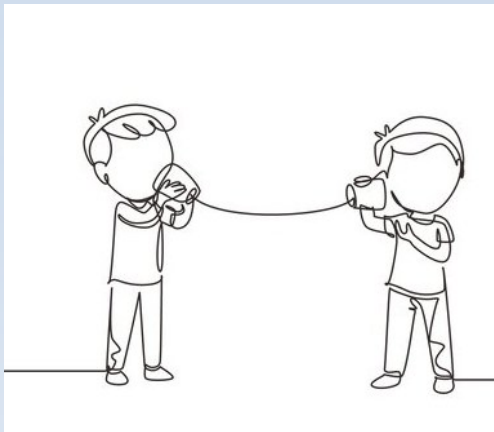
"<tactical call> reports Pajaro River levee leaking near Lincoln St."

"<tactical call> reports unaccompanied 4-year-old male 'Daniel' safe at Soquel Elementary"

"<tactical call> how many cots are needed at Watsonville High?"

These need not be word-for-word transcriptions, just enough information for clear understanding. Handwriting must be legible. Although some of the messages are questions, there will be **no responses** in this exercise. Just log the question.

Join us this coming Wednesday evening. This will be fun.



Resources

- Website:
<https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours:
<https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Upcoming events:
<https://xczcomm.com/index.php/calendar-of-events/>
- Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles:
<https://arrlsantaclaravalley.org/news/> or
<https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- XCZ Comm You Tube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHZH8TUSgh4SqHTPXSWolPA>
- Submitting deployment documents:
send in PDF form to
EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates:
email K6PDL@ARRL.net, and
EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov

2025 SCC ARES Events

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
June 23 - 27, 2025	Santa Cruz Regional Active Shooter and Casualty Care Response Training	Confirmed	This event is sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's department and provides first responder training for an active shooter. ARES along with CERT provides perimeter monitoring in maintaining a closed event location. Sign up: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/2025Activeshoot
July 4, 2025	Aptos 4th of July Parade	Approximate	We provide monitoring of the public to provide information to the Sheriffs
8/17/2025 (est)	Race through the Redwoods	Approximate	Race through the Redwoods is a 10K foot race that starts and finishes at Roaring Camp but the majority traverses the redwoods in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. It is promoted by the Felton Business and Community Association. ARES provides monitoring of runners positions and safety for the organizers.
9/21/2025 (est)	Santa Cruz Triathlon	Approximate	Santa Cruz Triathlon is a non-profit that donates proceeds to various athletic programs in the county. ARES provides monitoring of participants positions and safety for the organizers.
October 31, 2025 (est) 1530 - 2000	Halloween Trunk or Treat 5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz	Approximate	Trunk of Treat is organized by the Santa Cruz Sheriffs. ARES provides monitoring of participants along with closed road staffing and shuttle parking location.

2025 Other Radio Events for Ham Operator Participation

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
Each Wednesday 10am - 12pm	Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month 10am	C.A.K.E. @ Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		C.A.K.E. = Coffee/Caffeine Assisted Knowledge Exchange. Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
1st Saturday of each month [6/7/25, 7/5/25, 8/2/25, 9/6/25, 10/4/25, 11/1/25, 12/6/25] 10am - 2pm	POTA	Approximate	Play radio at a scenic park near by. Not formal and any mode can be used. Emails sent prior to event to indicate the specific park. Prior parks have been Seacliff State Park and Wilder State Park
June 28-29, 2025	ARRL Field Day	Confirmed	A national activity promoted by ARRL to share all the various aspects of the Ham Radio. Often hosted by both radio clubs of the Santa Cruz County. More information to be shared at a later date.

**Santa Cruz County
Amateur Radio Club and
San Lorenzo Valley
Amateur Radio Club**

**June 28, 2025
Par 3 Golf Course
Aptos, CA**

FIELD DAY

2025

10AM - 6PM

**TALK IN ON K6BJ
146.790MHZ - 94.8HZ**

**FREE &
OPEN TO
ALL!**

**EXPERIENCE:
EMERGENCY RADIO OPERATION
MORSE CODE (CW) OPERATION**

**TALK ON A HAM RADIO
MINI CLASSES
AND MUCH MORE!**

**<https://k6bj.org>
<https://www.slvarc.org>**



MAP