



RADIO-ACTIVE!

June 16, 2025, Volume 4, Issue 6

A New Opportunity Developing...SAR

Dan, KM6GNG

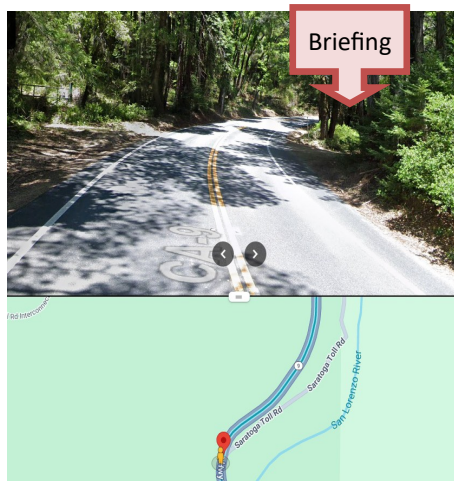


The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SAR) team is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization comprised of highly trained volunteers, dedicated to serving the community by educating the public and searching, rescuing, and recovering missing persons in Santa Cruz County, and across California. A few years ago ARES began working with SAR by first reviewing the communication capabilities of SAR. A small group of

ARES volunteers did participate in a few of the SAR monthly trainings to understand how an operation occurs. But then the connections broke down for unknown reasons. Just recently John, N6QX, our ARES District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) was able re-establish communications. This led to a request for ARES to support their annual SAR large scale training exercise scheduled for Saturday, May 24th, part of Memorial Day weekend.

As there was very limited information as to what support was required, ARES volunteers were limited to level COM2 or higher. Five ARES volunteers participated in the event: Mike, K9VF; Oliver, KJ6LDD; Ed, N6EMA; Jim, KN6NCG; and Dan, KM6GNG.

John met with the volunteers over Zoom to share prior SAR experiences and to offer support to the team. The limited information given was to show up at 8:00 AM for a briefing at the intersection of Highway 9 and the Old Saratoga Toll Road in the Castle Rock State Park, which was also to be the location of the SAR Command Post (CP). The volunteers were also given a topographical map from a SAR exercise that was two years ago. Continued of Page 2



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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.

SAR - continued

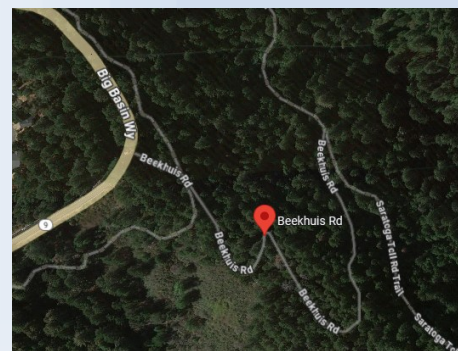
So, the ARES volunteers had no idea as to what type of radio support was required.

Castle Rock State Park is a land of sculpted sandstone, lush forests, and sweeping vistas. From one of the highest ridges in the Santa Cruz Mountains, park visitors enjoy hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding. Rock climbers explore the park's caverns and rocks, including the namesake Castle Rock. Plant-lovers come for California black oaks, knobcone pines, and high-elevation coast redwoods. The park's 34 miles of rugged trails conveniently connect to an extensive trail system that links the Santa Clara and San Lorenzo valleys to nearby Big Basin Redwoods State Park and open space preserves on the Skyline to the Sea Trail.

A challenge was the mountainous terrain of Castle Rock State Park. There were many hills and valleys preventing line-of-sight communications. A study of the area the day before the event showed that repeater access from the CP required the power of a mobile radio and was limited to the WR6AOK repeater. This repeater was busy the morning of the event since it was linked to other Santa Cruz area repeaters. Jim, KN6NCG made a call and was successful at getting the WR6AOK unlinked from the other Santa Cruz repeaters to make it available for the SAR-ARES use.

At the 8:00 AM briefing the volunteers were told that the SAR team would like the ARES radio operators to find good positions

in the field so that we could relay information from the deployed SAR teams in the field back to the SAR CP. The ARES team leveraged the information from the previous SAR exercise to field the radio operators. Each ham radio operator was also given a commercial radio to be able to monitor the SAR team communications on either their repeater or simplex channels.



Deployment began and Mike , K9VF was given a ride to the head of the Beekhuis Road Trail. He then hiked down about a half mile to a visible position and setup a commercial repeater provided by the SAR team for communications amongst the SAR team. This station location proved to be very valuable and strategic over the course of the event. After receiving status and position messages from the SAR team members, he would relay it back to Dan, KM6GNG at the CP via a simplex ham channel (SLV Simplex 1). The SLV simplex channel had excellent coverage amongst the fielded ham radio operators.

Continued on Page 3

SAR - continued



Jim, KN6NCG and Oliver, KJ6LDD proceeded to the Sempervirens Point Overlook parking lot. The higher elevation of this position allowed a good vantage point over the park. This radio station was very visible to the public. Jim served as our Public Information Officer fielding many questions from curious onlookers. This was good public relations for the ham community.

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 arraigining for check out.

Ed, N6EMA tried taking a direct route to his position at Castle Rock Station, but the gate was locked. Without a key or combinations to the gate, Ed proceeded to the East side of the park where he was able to access a fire road to get to his station. He said that there were two bridges that barely supported the weight of his full size truck.

Dan, KM6GNG setup the ARES Command Post roughly fifty feet from the SAR CP. The 33 foot mast hosted a GP-3 high-gain VHF/UHF antenna at the top with a commercial antenna provided by the Santa Cruz EOC about ten feet lower. This station provided better reception of the SAR channels than the radio in the SAR CP. With the co-location of the two CP stations, relayed information could be walked over to the SAR CP.

A little before noon, the radio traffic became more interesting. One of the SAR teams could not be reached during numerous calls by the other SAR teams. The SAR exercise was rearranged a bit with one of the fielded SAR teams being redirected to search for the missing SAR team. Although not part of the plan, each of the ham stations tried using their commercial radios to contact the missing SAR team. With the challenging terrain, ARES used a combination of ham and commercial radios, as well as cell phones for communication. Note that much of the Castle Rock State Park does not have cellular communication. Late afternoon discussions were starting about continuing into the night. But at 1740 the missing SAR team was located and all the SAR teams would be returning to the CP.

The SAR exercise was successful. The ARES team was able to relay information to the SAR CP that otherwise would have gone unheard. John Mizell, the SAR team leader expressed his appreciation of the ARES team. There was good interaction between the ham radio operators and the SAR team. By the end of the exercise, the SAR teams had a better understanding of the ARES ham radio support capabilities and our value for future exercises.

See Page 4 and 5 for more pictures from the field.

SAR - continued

SAR Command Post



ARES Command Post



The radios and documentation



SAR - continued

Traversing the sketchy bridge to get to post, N6EMA



N6EMA setup



K9VF setup

PR Central—KN6NCG/KJ6LDD setup



Report your volunteer hours!

The reported volunteer hours for May was 493 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.

July Membership Meeting Info

The summer months bring lots of volunteer opportunities for ARES as it is when have many events to support. See page 7 for the upcoming event opportunities. It is also we get very busy with our families—having visitors and traveling. Therefore, our July Membership meeting will be a potluck at Skypark Gazebo (361 Kings Village Rd, Scotts Valley) on July 16th at 6pm (Note, earlier time).

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

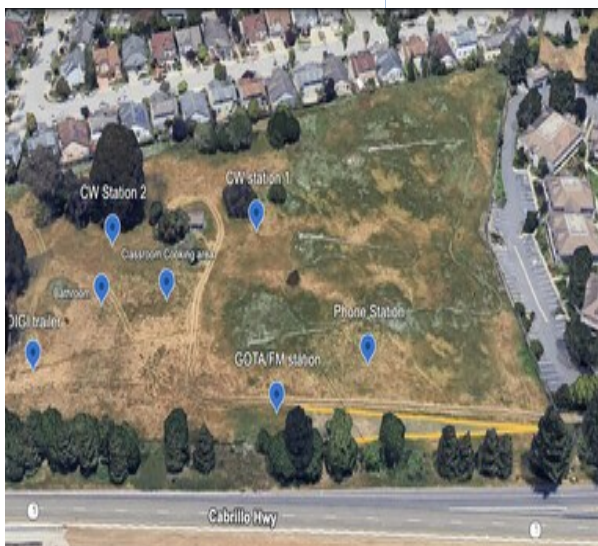
2025 SCC ARES Events

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.

Field Day



Field day is ham radio's Open House and it will be soon, June 28—29, 2025. It is a way to welcome the public to come learn more about ham radio as well as operators to explore other aspects of the hobby. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is the national association for amateur radio, connecting hams around the US is the principle organization for this activity. ARRL boasts that Field Day is the largest on-air amateur radio event in the world with more than 40,000 hams throughout North America setting up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate ham radio's science, skill and service to our communities and our nation. It combines

public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach, and technical skills all in a single event. The event includes a contest to contact as many other stations as possible and to learn to operate our radio gear in abnormal situations and less than optimal conditions. This years theme is 'Radio Connects'.

Locally, in Santa Cruz County, our two radio clubs (San Lorenzo Valley Amateur Radio Club and Santa Cruz County Amateur Radio Club) have often joined forces for planning the event. The Field Day committee announced to be returning to the old Par three golf course in Aptos (2600 Mar Vista Drive; located at the end of Old Dominion Court). It includes seven acres of land to spread out and it is in close proximity to highway 1. This year the area has been graded and mowed. The different stations including *phone* (voice), *CW* (Morse code), *satellite*, *digital*, *VHF*, and a *GOTA* ("get on the air") station that is staffed with a coach. New this year will be short educational topics for all including topics such as Meshtastic, HamClock, Starlink, Tracking down powerline noise, and contesting occurring on Saturday. The general schedule of the event is Friday, June 27: setup day, Saturday, June 28: day #1 of operations, Sunday, June 29: day #2 of operations and teardown. If you are interested in helping out with the organization reach out to Craig, N6SBN at Monterey10@hotmail.com or Jim, KN6NCG at jim@kn6ncg.com.

Set your reminders to come visit on this weekend in June and consider bringing a friend to lure into the hobby!



AMATEUR RADIO FIELD DAY!

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

SATURDAY

28

JUNE

2025

10:00AM - 4:00PM

free & open to all!
Lunch included



End of Old Dominion Ct. in
Aptos, just past the Seacliff Inn

Details:

- Instructional Classes
- Radio Operations
 - Phone
 - Digital
 - CW
 - HF
 - Satellite
 - Make your first contact with Get-on-the Air



Talk-in on K6BJ, 146.790 MHz, PL 94.8 Hz, 36.9799, -121.9126

K6BJ.org and SLVARC.org