

McARCS Minutes – June 9th, 2025 @ 18:00

Present – Allen KN6QCY, Mary Ann KM6STC, Mary Jane WA3VUI, Mike KC6MGM, Melissa KM6SHL, Dan W6AAM, Mike K6MAH, Nick KI6RIT, John W6FQX, Tim WB9NJS, Rick KK6PZA, Steve KD6DQO

Welcome and introductions – Mike KC6MGM started the meeting at 18:04

Treasurer's report – Tim WB9NJS

The donation from the Mendocino Ultra 50k marathon was received and deposited in the McARCS bank account. The balance is now \$807.19.

Tim noted that the proposed budget that was presented and approved earlier this year was based on the previous marathon donations being \$250, leaving a yearly budget surplus of around \$10. This year's donation was \$200. This will result in funds being slowly depleted over the next few years unless other sources of revenue are obtained.

Secretary's report – Nick KI6RIT

The posting of the meeting minutes have been backlogged a bit. The March minutes are being worked on now and will be posted to the McARCS website shortly.

The McARCS secretary was not present at the April meeting, so unless someone else has notes from that meeting, no minutes will be posted.

The May meeting was canceled so there are no minutes to post from that.

Webmaster's report – Nick KI6RIT

The only changes as of late to the website have been general content updates to the News section and the weekly posting of the countywide net log by Dan W6AAM.

An update was released recently for the software that the website is built on, DokuWiki. The update will be applied after sufficient time has passed for any major unforeseen bugs.

Net Logger's report – Dan W6AAM

No updates to report.

News & Event Reviews

June test session – Tim WB9NJS

The next test session will be held in Lakeport on June 21st. A couple of people from Lake County have signed up thus far. The following test session will be held in Ukiah, likely sometime in September.

Tim is open to doing other test sessions outside of the quarterly schedule on request.

McARCS Business

Field Day – Tim WB9NJS

This year's Field Day takes place on Saturday, June 28th and Sunday, June 29th. As usual, this year's inland Mendocino County Field Day event will be held jointly by WARS and McARCS at the Baechtel Grove Middle School in Willits. A potluck will be held on Saturday evening.

There is currently no plan for what bands or operating modes will be used for the event. Tim suggested holding another Zoom meeting closer to the event date to solidify plans. A date and time of June 19th at 18:00 was suggested.

ARRL June VHF/UHF Contest – Dan W6AAM

The June contest takes place on the 14th this year. In years past, local efforts took place on Walker Ridge on the Lake/Colusa county line. This year it was decided to participate at the Red Mountain campground on Cow Mountain east of Talmage.

For those that are interested, the area is a Parks on the Air (POTA)-registered site.

Secretary's post-meeting note: per Soulin KK6VLV, the exact spot on Walker Ridge used previously is now fenced off and no longer available.

McARCS Operating Procedures updates – Mike KC6MGM

The operating procedures document is in need of updating. Mike proposed a number of changes and sent out a copy to McARCS members for review and discussion. The proposed changes are listed below, with accompanying discussion and decisions. **Decisions have been highlighted in bold.**

- Removal of sections 2.2 (Public Safety) and 2.3 (Public Agencies)
 - Since when this document was last updated, MACS has taken on those duties.
 - John W6FQX had concerns that with those sections removed, that would require the county Office of Emergency Communications to activate the emergency operations center before any ham radio operators could communicate with public agencies. He gave an example of a localized fire needing evacuation and a fire department wanting a ham radio operator to announce that without having to wait for the EOC to activate.
 - John W6FQX also pointed out that the listed public agencies (non-public safety), such as public works and education, would not be involved with the EOC in certain, non-emergency cases.
 - Mike K6MAH responded to John, stating that MACS members can respond to events at locations other than the EOC, and that the purpose of MACS is that it is a served agency-sponsored organization with vetting, credentials, and training, items that most public safety organizations are likely to require for any serving ham radio operators.
 - Nick KI6RIT, Steve KD6DQO, and Tim WB9NJS agree with Mike KC6MGM's proposal.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will remove the two sections and renumber the remaining sections.**
- Removal of section 3.4 (HF net)
 - The document lists two different HF nets, North Coast Emergency Net and Mendocino-Sonoma Net.

- Mike KC6MGM pointed out that neither net is affiliated with any served agencies and HF nets used during exercises, such as the BEACON exercise coordinated by Humboldt County, are determined by the exercise coordinator before each event.
- Mike K6MAH mentioned that Humboldt County has a 40-meter net every other week that is affiliated with their OES.
- Mike KC6MGM said that the listed nets would likely be used for ham-to-ham traffic during an event, rather than for formal or coordinated traffic for a served agency, and proposed leaving them in the document for that reason.
- Mike K6MAH and Tim WB9NJS agreed, and Tim proposed adding the above information to that section of the document.
- John W6FQX said that 40 meters should be emphasized in the section for daytime use. The document currently lists 7245 kHz as an alternate frequency for the Mendocino-Sonoma HF net that occurs in the evening.
- Mike KC6MGM said that 7245 is used by a lot of nets during the day so a local net will likely need to shift up or down in frequency as needed.
- **Mike KC6MGM will leave the section in the document and add the above information to it.**
- Update to section 3.5 (Adjacent County Repeater Access)
 - One Lake County repeater is listed, as well as a number of Sonoma Mountain Repeater Society linked repeaters in Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt counties.
 - The current status of the SMRS organization is unknown and the repeaters in at least Mendocino County appear to have been removed or have otherwise been non-functional for a number of years.
 - Mike K6MAH proposed removing the information in the section and linking to the Northern Amateur Relay Council of California (NARCC) website, as they maintain a list of repeaters in the region that are frequency-coordinated through them.
 - Nick KI6RIT suggested adding a reference to NARCC on the Repeaters section of the McARCS website, as well as links to the repeater info pages on the club websites for those counties.
 - Tim WB9NJS agreed with the above, and suggested adding a reference to linked repeaters in adjacent counties.
 - Mary Ann KM6STC suggested that if a list of repeaters is kept in the document, they should be broken out to an appendix.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will leave the section in the document, remove most of the current content, and add links to the McARCS website Repeaters page, as well as the NARCC website.**
- Removal of section 4.2 (Operator Identification)
 - McARCS does not issue any formal identification cards or badges, but MACS does.
 - Mike KC6MGM proposed removing all text in this section and adding text stating the above.
 - Mike K6MAH proposed removing the section entirely.
 - Mike KC6MGM, Dan W6AAM, and Tim WB9NJS proposed adding a line recommending bringing your government-issued ID, amateur radio license, and MACS ID (if obtained) with you to any McARCS-sponsored or coordinated events.

- Mike K6MAH suggested adding text to the section reminding people not to self-deploy in the case of an emergency.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will remove all existing text and add text stating that members should bring a government-issued photo ID and a copy of their amateur radio license.**
- Addition of clarification text in sections 5.2 (Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)) and 5.3 (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES))
 - The proposed changes add text listing MACS as the ACS and RACES unit in Mendocino County.
 - Mike K6MAH asked about the RACES section and whether MACS is actually under the RACES umbrella. Mike KC6MGM said that it is not in the MACS charter but since MACS serves an Office of Emergency Services, it can be essentially be activated under a RACES-qualifying event or activation and use RACES-designated frequencies.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will add the proposed text as-is.**
- Removal of section 5.5 (Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services)
 - The existing text lists McARCS as the designated organization for emergency radio communications. MACS currently fills that role.
 - Tim WB9NJS suggested replacing the text with information on the relationship of McARCS with county OES and disaster service worker status.
 - Dan W6AAM mentioned that McARCS is still listed on the county Office of Emergency Services website and that text stating that McARCS is recognized by OES should be retained. Mike KC6MGM stated that the information regarding McARCS on the OES website primarily pertains to the weekly nets and doesn't list McARCS as the designated emergency communications service.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will rewrite the section, incorporating Tim's feedback.**
- Addition of text in section 5.7 (American Red Cross (ARC))
 - The proposed text lists that any ARC radio operators will be considered as enrolled disaster service workers for the purposes of insurance coverage and liability immunity while serving in their role.
 - Mike K6MAH suggested revising the text to change or remove the "considered as enrolled disaster service worker" text as those decisions are up to the ARC.
 - **Mike KC6MGM has reached out to the ARC to see if they have any designated amateur radio operators in Mendocino or Lake counties. If not, then the section will be rewritten.**
- Update and removal of text to section 6.0 (Activation)
 - The existing text states that McARCS may be activated during a disaster or emergency and if so, the net control station operates under the NC6MC call sign.
 - MACS is now the organization that would be activated by the county Office of Emergency Services during an emergency and would operate under the MACS call sign, KA6EOC.
 - There were no comments by present members.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will remove the second paragraph referring to the net control call sign.**
- Update to section 6.1 (Level 1, Activation by Public Safety Agencies)
 - The proposed changes replace McARCS references with MACS.
 - There were no comments by present members.

- **Mike KC6MGM will implement the proposed changes.**
- Removal of text in section 7.0 (Message Formats)
 - The proposed changes remove references to the McARCS net control call sign for the same reasons as section 6.0.
 - There were no comments by present members.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will implement the proposed changes.**
- Removal of text in sections 7.2 (Written Messages), 7.3 (Formatted Messages), and 7.4 (Radiogram Messages)
 - The proposed changes remove text preferring the use of digital messaging capabilities.
 - Dan W6AAM and Mike K6MAH suggested keeping the text and revising it to say “encouraged if available” and “most efficient”.
 - **Mike KC6MGM will rewrite the text incorporating Dan and Mike K6MAH’s feedback.**

Other Business

WARS update – Rick KK6PZA

WARS is participating in the upcoming VHF/UHF and Field Day contests. Field Day will serve as the regular end-of-month meetup.

The next on-air meeting will be this Thursday at 19:30 on the countywide linked repeater system.

MACS update – Mike KC6MGM

The county Office of Emergency Services will be holding an exercise on June 26th, from 10:00 to 12:00. The primary goal is to train OES staff. The exercise will simulate a fire event in Hopland.

The VHF/UHF radios at the emergency operations center will be used for the event, with Mike KC6MGM participating from his home. Volunteer ham radio operators have already been secured for the event.

Anyone is welcome to listen to the exercise on the countywide linked repeater system but non-emergency traffic is requested to wait until after the exercise is concluded.

Another friendly reminder for prior MACS members to get their IDs updated and reissued, paperwork updated, and disaster service worker swear-in completed if they haven’t done so already.

Emergency communications training – Mike KC6MGM

No classes are currently scheduled. Mike may do another round of classes near the end of summer. Same format as before, emergency radio procedures and emergency radio documentation on separate days.

Discussion on improving local ham radio activity and interest – Mike KC6MGM

The amount of ham radio activity and participation in local nets and events dropped off during COVID and never fully rebounded. The trivia net started out strong (over a dozen participants), but has tapered off to around three. Participation in the swap net has been weak for quite a while, and listings haven’t been posted to the WARS website for a while as well.

Mary Ann KM6STC suggested having the Thursday night nets (swap, trivia, etc.) monthly or quarterly instead of weekly.

Mike K6MAH suggested having rotating nets of varying types – message handling, tech net/demonstration, transmitter hunt, etc.

Melissa KM6SHL suggested having a training event or net that caters to the less-experienced hams in the community (recently-licensed, dormant, primarily participate in healthcare exercises).

Mary Jane WA3VUI suggested issuing awards for net and exercise participation, and tours of served agencies and healthcare facilities.

Mike KC6MGM proposed having a different monthly net be held each Thursday, all at 19:00 to make it easier for people to remember. The proposed rotation would start with the swap net on the first Thursday, followed by the WARS net, trivia net, and basic emergency communications information and training net. There was agreement among present members that Mike's proposed net schedule would be a good place to start.

The following Thursday net schedule was approved by present members, starting in **July**:

- First Thursday, 19:00 – Swap Net, hosted by Nick KI6RIT
 - Updates will continue to be sent to the WARS webmaster for now. If it doesn't work out, the alternative is to post them on the McARCS website.
- Second Thursday, 19:00 – WARS Net, hosted by Rick KK6PZA or other WARS officers
- Third Thursday, 19:00 – Trivia Net, hosted by Mike KC6MGM
- Fourth Thursday, 19:00 – Basic emergency communications information and training net, hosted by Mike KC6MGM
- Fifth Thursday, if there is one – nothing scheduled, either a break or free-for-all

Meeting adjourned at 19:30

The next meeting will be on July 14th @ 18:00