

1/1/2019

Annual New Years Day Fox Hunt by Larry, W1AST

New Years Day 2019 was approaching. Faye (my wife) was working, but I planned to not work. The annual new years day foxhunt in CT was a possibility. I had participated a few times in the past and done horrible. But the desire to improve upon those results were great.

A fox hunt is Radio Direction Finding. It's like the childrens game, Hide and Seek, but with radios. The fox hides and has to transmit one minute out of every 5. The hunters try to find the fox. There is usually a two hour time limit. It is lots of fun and very addictive!

I announced the fox hunt on the HCRA Facebook page and email list to see if more interest was out there. I originally had 2 friends hopefully joining me. That soon became no friends and a call out on Facebook made it one friend joining me. The less than 24 hours before the hunt, I couldn't find my HT go bag with 2 HT's, attenuator and more. No hunting radio. After scouring the house and truck and not finding it, I canceled our participation unhappily. But a few hours later WA1OJN contacted me and said he had 2 HT's and an arrow antenna and WM1B said he had 1 HT and a tape measure beam. We were back on!

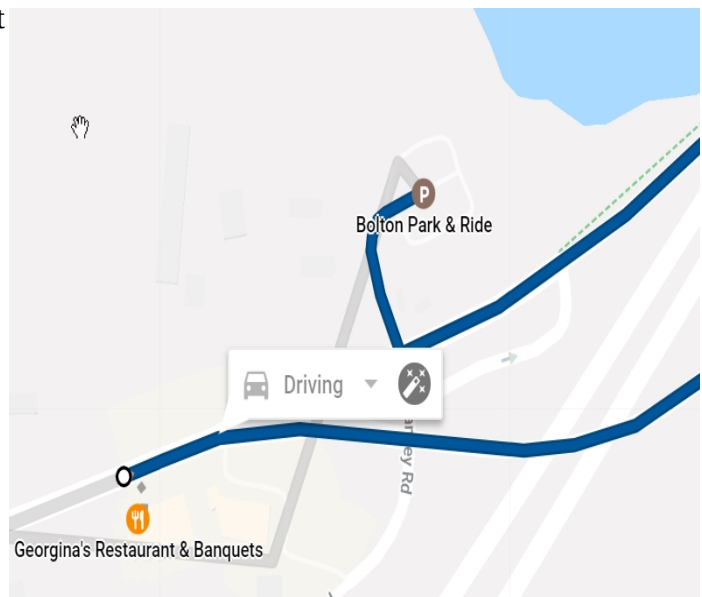
Tuesday morning we met at my house and it was sunny and 55. Beautiful fox hunting wx. We headed to the Wapping School in South Windsor, CT early. This was the starting point. We were the first to arrive but soon another 11 hunting vehicles arrived. There were a number of tape measure beams, a few dopplers, a quad and some other antennas. Also from the HCRA was Jeff, NT1K who was riding by him self.

Everyone checked in just before the 1:00 pm start. The fox gave his transmission, we took a heading, took a compass reading (100degrees) and did a sort of plot on the map and left the parking lot heading east. We were hunting on the input to the W1BRS repeater; 144.51 and also listening to the repeater on 145.110. Besides my dual mobile listening to both the input and output, the other 3 HT's in the vehicle were on the input and output too. You can never have too many radios. And we had a spare and a spare battery too! The hunt was on!

We looked for a high spot for the 3rd transmission and took another easterly reading, did the compass plot and went further east again. We did this a few more times and then lost the signal. So we chose a mountain road and headed south to roughly the area where others had said they heard the fox.

The mountains fooled us as we completely lost the signal. Once we got out and onto the main road, we picked a spot and took another heading. Again it was east of us. We picked another location to take a reading parking near a state cop in the parking lot of Georgina's restaurant.

We took a reading and the fox was full scale! With no attenuator (in the missing HT go bag) the only way we could attenuate the signal enough was to pull off the antenna. And the

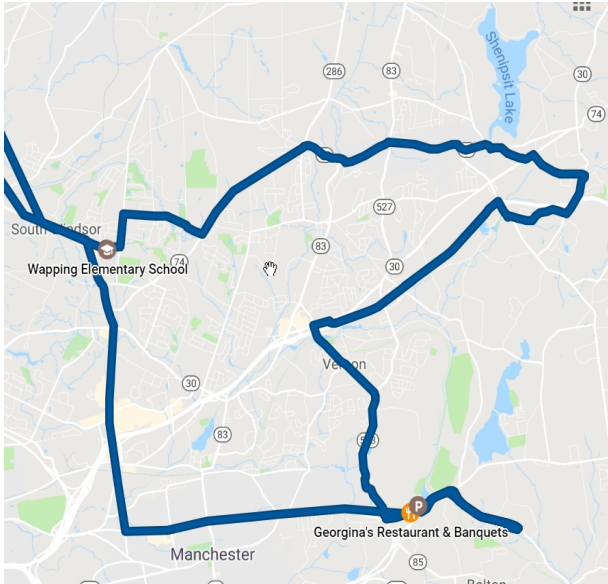


fox was still loud! We were within a mile approx. Another ham came in and we watched him and where his reading went. We thought the signal was behind us. So off we went.

The signal was not behind us. We came back and ended up at a dirt road and parking area beside a lake. The signal was now full scale with the antenna off. We had to be close! We saw there was a park across the lake and off we went again.

Taking the next right and we found the fox! He was parked in a parking lot for a bike trail in Bolton, CT right near where Bolton Park and Ride is located. We weren't last!

I found out we were mid-pack either 5th or 6th out of 11! It took us about 90 minutes. (see map picture)



The left loop map is the trip we took from the school to the right and down, looping back a bit to get in the general area.

The fox, (N1TUP) has a generator running, hot soup in a crock pot, some drinks and some cookies for the hunters when they arrived. We met some other hunters too and they came up from Trumbull, Norwich, Bridgeport, Manchester and other surrounding towns.

The hunt is sponsored by the Bears of Manchester (w1brs.com) and we thank them for letting us participate and join in the fun. It was a great time. There was some talk about them doing a hunt every 3 months instead of once a year and if they do that, I will try to get the info posted to the HCRA too.

It was Dave and Bobs first fox hunt and they are hooked! It was so much fun and something we will discuss doing with the HCRA. The Franklin County club does fox hunts to the north and the Bears to the south. It's only natural that the HCRA in the middle get in the fun too and invite all to participate from other clubs as well!