

Fox Hunting

Aka ARDF

Amateur Radio
Direction Finding



Larry Krainson, W1AST

W1AST@arrrl.net

How did I get started in Foxhunting?

- What is Fox Hunting aka ARDF (Amateur Radio Direction Finding)?
- Read about it and wanted to try it
- Earned my General & bought an HT, getting me on 2m in 1979
- Went on first hunt with Peter - N1AGV and was hooked
- ZL Special - 2 element yagi made with twin lead antenna
- Manual attenuator
- Sniffer radio for close range hunting
- Partnered with Bert, N1AUR. Night hunts in all wx with T-tops removed in cold winter. We hunters were crazy!
- Enjoyed some wild adventures and stories

Fox Hunting in the 80's & 90's

Old fashioned Fox Hunts

- Sunday mornings at 10 am and other chosen days & nights - 1 to 3x a week
- Common starting point chosen by the Fox - parking lots
- 2 hour time limit - Fox could extend if asked by hunters
- Fox hides within 10 miles of the starting point - could be anywhere
- Fox transmits one minute out of every 5 minutes for the 2 hours
- Fox transmits on the repeater & hunters hunt on the repeater input frequency
- Base stations urged to take and report fox headings
- Fox announces order of being found
- Go out for lunch after hunt or Fox supplies munchies upon being found

Fox Hunting Today

- The Fox is a Fox Box - an unattended Fox - hidden by owner on public access property
- Week long Fox Hunt or as long as the battery lasts in the Fox box
- Individuals hunt when they want
- Hunter triggers the ox box as often as needed
- Drive up to a certain point & complete on foot
- Take a pic and post on the group w/comments that you found it

What is a Fox Box?

- Ammo box most common
- 6ah or slightly larger SLA battery
- Fox interface - Byonics
- HT - HCRA uses Baofeng and Yaesu
- Secure in box to prevent movement
- Able to lock top and run cable to lock
- Cable 5 - 7 feet to go around a tree or something secure & secure padlock
- External Antenna
- The whole Fox Box is weather sealed to protect what's inside

What to Hunt With?

- Antenna - the tape measure 3 ele yagi is excellent & inexpensive
 - Small quad
 - Commercial 3 or 4 element beam
 - Others?
- Attenuator
 - KC9ON 4 MHz offset
 - Older switched
 - Change frequency slightly
 - DO NOT TRANSMIT THROUGH! (FRY IT)
- Rigs to hunt with
 - Mobile or HT to key Fox Box with DTMF keypad
 - HT to hunt with - gives most convenience with DTMF keypad

How to Hunt

1

Hint as to where to start

- Drivers attempting to key Fox Box & announce where they can in group
- Or person hiding fox box gives a clue
- Hunter starts there or near there
- Activate by ID'ing, DTMF 1 key for 1 second

2

Take a Heading

1. Where is the signal the strongest?
2. Take a compass heading
3. Plot on map
4. Go to next place to take another reading
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4
6. Do any plotted lines cross?

3

Park Safely & Walk

- 2 HT's one to hunt with & one to key Fox Box with
- Signal Full Scale? Time to use the attenuator
- Offset - go up or down 4 MHz
- Having someone w/you to key Fox Box makes hunting easier

HCRA Fox Box info:

- 2 Fox Boxes
- FB 1 on 147.550 PL 100.0
- Call sign WB1Z
- Using Baofeng HT - must be close to trigger it - radio is deaf
- FB 2 on 147.550 PL 151.4
- Call sign WB1Z
- Using Yaesu HT - can be much further away - good receiver
- ID's in CW after a series of tones (play example)
- Activate: Your Call Sign ID + Fox Hunting + DTMF key 1 for 1 second
- Example: W1AST FoxHunting DTMF key 1 pressed
- Listen and hunt

Suggestions:

- Comfortable clothing - dress in layers
- Suggest hiking shoes - but whatever you are comfortable in
- A real compass or a good compass phone app
- Spare battery for your attenuator
- Paper map and ruler with plastic overlay and oil pencil or similar
- Phone with Google maps or similar to find public access land
- Bring snacks and drinks or lunch
- Flush app on Android to find local public toilets (something similar probably on iphone)
- AllTrails free version can also be very handy
- Learn how to identify poison ivy (Thank you Faye)

Why foxhunt? It's fun, addicting, explorative, enjoyable. Great couples &/or kids or grandkids activity too.

WMAFoxhunting: <https://groups.io/g/WMAFoxHunters>

CT Foxhunters: <https://groups.io/g/ctfoxhunter>

Questions?

Larry - W1AST@arri.net