

ARRL ARDF Committee

Report to the ARRL Board of Directors

January 2021

Committee Purpose

The ARRL ARDF Committee serves to fulfill, in the name of the ARRL, those responsibilities assigned to IARU member societies that participate in Amateur Radio Direction Finding as administered by the IARU regional organizations. Those responsibilities include assigning a society representative to represent the League in an IARU regional ARDF administrative committee or working group, and delegating single competitors or teams to participate in international competitions. When authorized by its corresponding IARU regional organization a member society may organize a World or Regional Championship.

Developments Since July 2020

2021 USA ARDF Championships

Last year's USA ARDF Championships event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic situation remains unpredictable, the recent approvals of vaccines raises hope that it can be brought under control sometime in 2021. In anticipation of safer conditions the ARRL ARDF Committee has tentatively approved USA ARDF Championships for October 14-17, 2021 in North Carolina, to be sponsored by the Backwoods Orienteering Klub (BOK). Practices and training sessions are planned for the days leading up to the Championships.

2021 IARU ARDF World Championships

The bi-annual ARDF World Championships scheduled for August 30 – September 5 in Zlatibor, Serbia were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. IARU Region 1 is currently planning to hold the World Youth ARDF Championships in June 2021 in Slovenia, and the World Championships in September in Serbia. An official announcement about the 2021 events has not yet been made, and plans beyond 2021 are in a state of flux.

Socially-Distanced ARDF

As an individual outdoor navigation sport, ARDF fits in well with public health service guidelines for social distancing and other measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. So ARDF practice sessions with limited social interaction have continued safely at certain venues that remain open for such activities. The Committee received reports of ARDF practices in 2020 in Quantico, Virginia (QOC), Cincinnati, Ohio (OH-KY-IN), Springfield, Illinois (SVRC) and notably in Raleigh/Asheboro, North Carolina (BOK) where practice events were held monthly from April to December.

Notable Accomplishments

Online Training and Promotion

On August 20, Committee member Robert Frey, WA6EZV, presented "[The Sport of Finding Hidden Transmitters On Foot](#)" on the ARRL Learning Network. Over 100 viewers were in attendance, and the recording remains a part of the ARRL's collection of courses. Then on September 11, Robert delivered a very-well-received Zoom presentation to over 100 members of the Ak-Sar-Ben Amateur Radio Club of Omaha, Nebraska.

On October 21, ARDF Coordinator Jerry Boyd, WB8WFK, conducted an online (lunch and learn) ARDF presentation to just over 60 persons at his workplace in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Six persons signed up to try ARDF when competitions resume. Jerry has rechartered a local club in Albuquerque with plans to hold local ARDF events when land managers allow activities to resume.

Committee members Joe Burkhead, KE8MKR, Thomas Chen, and Cameron Haynes are poised to resume radio club presentations in the St. Joseph, Michigan area once the COVID situation allows. They completed three club presentations in 2020 prior to COVID restrictions and compiled a list of 50+ locals with an interest in ARDF.

ARDF Equipment Development

High cost and low availability of ARDF equipment remains a major obstacle for entry into the sport. To help address these issues the ARDF Co-coordinators have used the downtime during the pandemic to develop some potential solutions all based on the Arduino single-board microcontroller platform and open-source software:

Microfox: A stand-alone 80-meter self-contained flea-power ARDF practice transmitter that can handle Classic, Sprint, and Foxing ARDF competition formats.

Arducon: A DTMF decoder and transmitter controller that can turn many standard 2m FM handy-talkies into remotely-controlled ARDF transmitters.

Ardufox: A flexible 80m ARDF transmitter capable of handling all ARDF competition formats at regulation power levels. The controller will also perform all the functions of the *Arducon*. Thus the *Ardufox* will inexpensively turn most 2m FM handy-talkies into remotely-controlled 80m and 2m ARDF fox transmitters. The *Ardufox* is currently in the concept stage, but progress should be swift since it will utilize major elements of the *Microfox* and *Arducon* and will be developed as an open-source Arduino-based project.

ARDF Clothing in eStore

Discussions have been opened between the Committee and Kathleen Callahan, KC1MBY, Marketing Communications Manager at ARRL, regarding the possibility of offering one or more USA ARDF-themed clothing items in the ARRL eStore in 2021. ARDF would be the first third-party clothing agreement for the ARRL eStore, so this will break new ground and may take some time.

USA ARDF Sanctioning Documents

The Sanctioning Subcommittee has created a document set describing in detail a process for holding ARRL-sanctioned ARDF events. The subcommittee will seek full Committee approval of those documents early in 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

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