



ARRL Northwestern Division Report to the ARRL Board 2021 Year in Review

Submitted by: **Mike Ritz, W7VO, Director**
Mark Tharp, KB7HDX, Vice Director

OVERVIEW:

This document contains highlights from administrative activities and associated accomplishments within the ARRL Northwestern (NW) Division for the year 2021. Included also within this document are additional reports from Director Ritz, Vice Director Tharp, the NW Division Section Managers (SM), and the NW Division Tribal Liaison, Steve Aberle, WA7PTM.

SYNOPSIS:

Geographically, the NW Division contains almost a million square miles of territory, with well over 12,000 ARRL members among over 74,000 amateur licensees. ARRL membership numbers within our Division, year-over-year, are flat, and are currently at about 17% of total licensees. (Number specifics are contained in Tharp's report below.) The Northwestern Division is the third largest Division if measured by the number of ARRL members, behind the Southeastern and Atlantic Divisions.

ELECTIONS:

Twenty-twenty one was an election year for Northwestern Division leadership, which occurs every three years. Both Director Ritz and Vice Director Tharp ran for their current positions unopposed, and were declared "elected" in November 2021. Both of us are very proud to be a continuing part of the ARRL leadership team, and thank Division members for their continued support.

DIVISION MEMBER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:

- To continue in our efforts to improve member communications and promote transparency, Vice Director Tharp and I jointly publish a regular monthly NW Division Newsletter e-mail, sent to approximately 8,500 Division members that have opted-in via the ARRL website to receive them. These newsletters are usually sent out near the middle of each month, and are at least four to five pages long. The focus is to not to just duplicate what the ARRL publishes in its bulletins, but provide insight and background on the what we both are doing within the Board, and provide the latest information on other ARRL and ARRL Foundation actions. Feedback received from members regarding our newsletter and its content continues to be overwhelmingly positive.
- As I'm sure it is in every other Division in the ARRL, most of the hamfests and events, including the annual ARRL Northwestern Division Convention at SEA-PAC, were canceled for 2021 due to COVID. The largest hamfest in Montana, the Glacier-Waterton Hamfest went on as planned. As it is the same weekend as the ARRL July Board meeting, NW Assistant Director Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO, represented Division leadership at the event.
- In March of 2020, when it became obvious that COVID 19 pandemic was becoming a real issue, the NW Division obtained a Zoom virtual meeting license to allow our amateur radio ARES groups and clubs to put together virtual meetings for their members. In 2021 we joined the ARRL Zoom corporate account, which raised the seat limit from 100 to 300. The platform has been so popular that in order to accommodate all the clubs that need virtual meetings during the ongoing pandemic, Mark has his own Division Zoom account as well, paid for by the Division.

The total number of virtual meetings held via the two NW Division accounts was close to 150 for 2020, and over 110 just for the primary Division account alone in 2021, (not including those using Tharp's account.) In addition to clubs, the Zoom account was also used by the ARRL Foundation for their meetings and scholarship interviews, the ARRL Programs and Services Committee, and the Clean Signal Initiative working group.

- The Northwestern Division website, www.arrlnwdiv.org has continued to attract registered members; we are over 300 that have joined to website to participate in the forums. Our Facebook page, *Northwestern Division, ARRL*, and our Twitter feed *@NWDIVARRL* are used to re-post our newsletters, and re-distribute select ARRL posts.

NORTHWESTERN DIVISION ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LIST:

Note: There were no new NW Division Assistant Directors appointed in 2021, and unfortunately, one became a SK. Here is the current list for 2021, and their focus area:

- **Daniel Stevens, KL7WM**
 - Education/Training, Seattle, WA Area
- **Delvin Bunton, NS7U**
 - Education/Training, Vancouver, WA / Portland, OR Area
- **Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO**
 - Division Event Calendar Coordinator
- **Phil Kane, K2ASP** (Became a SK in November 2021)
 - FCC Matters
- **Dave Cole, NK7Z**
 - RFI/EMI Technical Resource
- **Steve Aberle, WA7PTM**
 - Tribal Liaison
- **Michael Sterba, KG7HQ**
 - Webmaster / Social Media Admin
- **Bill Balzarini, KL7BB**
 - STEM Outreach, Seattle, WA area

Northwestern Division Director Report - Mike Ritz, W7VO

As in 2020, and due to COVID restraints that acted like a yo-yo as the year progressed, I reduced my travel to the absolute minimum beyond required attendance at the “in-person” July ARRL Board meeting. I did get a chance to visit one Divisional club for an ARRL update talk in SW Washington in between COVID spikes, and also attended PacfiCon, (and Pacific Division Convention), in San Ramon, CA, in October. (At PacfiCon I was a featured guest speaker, and helped man the ARRL booth at the convention.)

Other highlights:

- In place of “in person” meetings, I was an invited throughout the year to be a guest attendee and speaker at many virtual Zoom club meetings and events throughout the Division, and also within other ARRL Divisions, (with the appropriate Director’s permission), where I either presented programs on a variety of technical subjects, on where the ARRL is in relation to its initiatives and FCC matters, or on the ARRL Foundation and its scholarship and grant programs. These virtual meetings numbered

between two to five events per month.

- I participated in the *QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo* in March 2021, presenting a pre-recorded technical talk on “*HF Noise Mitigation*”, and helped out in the ARRL virtual booth at the event.
- In May I worked with ARRL staff in the ARRL Lifelong Learning center, and presented a live seminar version of my “*HF Noise Mitigation*” program for them. (That exposure led to many other presentations for clubs all across the country as the year went on.)
- I participated in the virtual SEA-PAC event in June, and the Pacific Northwest DX Convention in August, where I hosted the ARRL Contest Forum. (The focus of the forum was on the current Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) task list. The panel consisted of myself as moderator, CAC Board Liaison Bill Lippert, ACOW, ARRL Radiosport Manager, Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, and NW Division CAC representative Jim Cassidy, K17Y.)
- It was my pleasure to serve on several ARRL Board committees:
 - *Chair of the Programs and Services Committee*
 - *HF Band Planning Committee*
 - *Chair Pro-Tem for the Working Group for Transmitter Cleanliness*
- I also continue to serve on the *ARRL Foundation* Board of Directors, and was an active member of the Foundation’s *Scholarship Committee*, where the team vetted about 175 applicants for some 130 Foundation scholarships in 2021.

Expected Plans for 2022:

Much of what happens in the Northwestern Division in 2022 will be directly related to what happens with the virulent Omicron strain of COVID-19, still yet to peak after 2021, and perhaps with other strains to follow. On January 15th I will be flying to Billings, MT to be the keynote speaker at the Yellowstone ARC annual dinner, the last NW Division Section I have yet to actually visit in person. (Finally, off my bucket list!) The day after I return from Montana, it’s time to head to Hartford for the Annual ARRL Board meeting, followed by the ARRL National Convention at Hamcation in February. (The very large number of COVID infections currently in Florida may cancel that trip for me though.)

In June will be the SEA-PAC NW Division Convention, where I will be a seminar speaker on *“Meeting FCC RF Exposure Rules”*, and as moderator for the ARRL Forum.

In August will be the Pacific Northwest DX Convention, this year to be held in Spokane, WA, and where I expect to once again moderate an ARRL DX/Contest Forum.

In September I expect to attend the Spokane Hamfest, and Washington State Convention, however there has been no announcement of that event quite yet. I expect that there will be an ARRL Forum at that event hosted by myself and VD Tharp.

Continuing as always between the large events are many Division club meetings. For 2022, I certainly hope more are “live” meetings, and less are “virtual”! I also expect to be conducting quite a few technical and ARRL informational seminars via Zoom, and also as “in-person” activities during the upcoming year.

At this point I have no idea which ARRL committees I will be on for 2022, the fate of that is in the hands of President Roderick.

Northwestern Division Vice Director Report – Mark Tharp, KB7HDX

Below is a summary of events I attended, events canceled I had planned to attend, and division statistics for the period January through November, 2021. Also included are brief reports from the various committees I am serving on.

It is my honor to serve as Vice Director, representing members in the Northwestern Division.

Attended events:

Kamiah Ham Swap, Kamiah Idaho

Tri-City Swap, Kennewick, Washington

Chehalis Swap, Chehalis, Washington

MARA Hamfest, Big Lake, Alaska

SEAPAC virtual convention, ZOOM

PNW DX virtual convention, ZOOM

N7YRC Swap, Union Gap, Washington

Cancelled events I planned to attend however were canceled due to COVID:

River Radio Campout /Swap in Peteros WA.

Washington State Convention, Hamfest, Spokane, WA

Wenatchee Hamfest, Dryden, WA

Digital Summer Gathering, Valley Camp, WA

Mike and Key Swap, Puyallup

Committee activity:

Emergency Management Director search committee / Emergency Communications and Field Services committee:

This committee started the year with finalizing the search for the ARRL Emergency Management director and fulfilled its obligation in the early summer. Unfortunately, our new hire was forced to resign due to health reasons just prior to the July BoD meeting. At that same meeting, the new board committee was formed, and existing members of the search committee were assigned to the new board committee. We started the search over, using the same format as before. At the time of this report, the committee has submitted its recommendations to the CEO who is currently interviewing the top candidates. Other activities of the committee were many, however the most notable was the creation of an online form 4 and form 2 to be used by our ARES leaders for reporting. Other topics were put on hold the last half of the year with the Emcom director search.

ARISS committee: The ARISS committee continues to provide assistance with support to ARISS by way of submitting news reports to HQ and Division staff and looking for ways ARRL can assist with continued funding. The committee worked on revising banner ads for use in QST and other publications as printing space allows. We have also started work on a fundraiser in conjunction with ARRL for "Project STAR". More information on this will be made available as plans come together.

Board of director meeting: I attended the January virtual annual meeting on ZOOM and the July in-person meeting in Connecticut

Administration and Finance committee: I attended, as an observer, the A&F meetings in January and July

Investment management committee:

I participated as an observer during the year long, almost weekly meetings of the committee. I will say I have been extremely impressed with the depth of knowledge within this group.

Committee chair, VD Morine, has managed to keep this group moving forward and I am thankful to have been allowed the privilege to observe over the year.

Executive Committee:

With Covid still being of concern, the EC meetings have been held primarily on ZOOM and I have participated as an observer during most of them.

I continue to assist various groups and clubs with the use of our Division ZOOM account.

Division stats:

For the period ending November 30, 2021, the Northwestern Division had 74,210 licensed Amateur radio operators, that number is down 83 from January. Of that number, 12,679 are ARRL members, approximately 17.0%. We showed a slight decrease in members of .006% since January.

New licenses issued within the Northwestern Division year to date:

January	239	February	152	March	342
April	332	May	237	June	235
July	126	August	193	September	161
October	148	November			

TOTAL: 1064

The COVID situation continues to have an effect on license exam sessions across the country however, the number of new licenses is on a steady rise. New league members in the Division however seem to be stalled with minimal increases.

NW DIVISION SECTION MANAGER REPORTS:

Alaska Section - David Stevens, KL7EB

(No report submitted)

Eastern Washington Section - Jo Whitney, KAJLQ

The Section Manger changed in 2021. Thank you, Jack Tiley, AD7FO, for your service to the ARRL and amateur radio operators in the section. AD7FO continues as a Technical Specialist serving EWA.

The ARRL lists 1082 members located in EWA in December 2021. The previous year showed 1055 ARRL members in the section. There are 20 affiliated clubs. The pandemic continued to hamper in-person in-door gatherings of amateur radio

operators. There were a few outdoor events enjoyed by the attendees looking for a face to face, looking for new gear and or just looking to be out of the house. Club meetings switched to virtual platforms that allowed for continued socialization. Thank you Mike W7VO and Mark KB7HDX for providing the ZOOM linkups.

Six Assistant Section Managers (ASM) offer support to newly licensed hams in the 20 counties of EWA. In 2021 there were 275 new licensed issued in EWA. I thank them for their work to introduce the ARRL and the local amateur community to those just getting started on their journey into the hobby.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in EWA is led by Randy Thomas K7RHT appointed Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) in 2021. He is working to fill open leadership positions in EWA ARES that will carry the mission of ARES of support when needed. For that role to be effective and recognized as an important part of the community, working together with local emergency management leadership is required. This work is evolving and on-going.

I look forward to 2022 and the opportunities it will offer.

Idaho Section - Dan Marler, K7REX

Q: What happened last year of note?

A: Not a lot has happened; the pandemic has pretty much shut things down to a crawl.

Q: How has your Section done in recruiting and retaining members?

A: Not a lot has happened; the pandemic has pretty much shut things down to a crawl.

Q: New clubs?

A: No new clubs to report.

Q: Any club Zoom meetings you've attended representing the ARRL?

A: I have not. I have offered, but many of the clubs are just now starting to warm up to on-line meeting.

Q: How do you feel the overall health of your Section is

A: Surprisingly, it seems to be holding up.

On **Friday, January 07**, I held our first Section wide, Idaho ARRL members Zoom meeting. These are now scheduled for the first Friday of each month. I have also provided the Idaho ARRL members with a groups.io to meet, communicate, share, and just have fun among the members.

Even if the pandemic hadn't come along, getting to ham club meetings throughout Idaho is a challenge, at best. These monthly Zoom sessions allow me to keep in touch with all our ARRL membership regardless of their location and/or club affiliation.

Our first Idaho ARRL Zoom meeting had over forty attendings, and our groups.io is already over 70 and growing fast. Our first meeting included:

- Introduction to Idaho ARRL appointed Staff members.
- Two short ARES-related presentations.
- A couple of ARRL announcements.
- A group discussion among the members.

I am planning for a much larger Zoom attendance in February, and by then, our groups.io should be much more significant. Judging from the feedback I have received so far, this will work great. Considering the lack of activity during 2021, I am looking forward to a much better 2022.

Montana Section - Paul Stiles, KF7SOJ

With Covid for the most part has shut down most Ham club meetings and other in person events.

“The Glacier Waterton International Peace Park Hamfest” held their 87th. Hamfest, keeping their longest continuous running Hamfest in the world Streak alive. Also being the Montana Section Convention.

I have restarted new ham classes and testing sessions in Yellowstone County after the Covid pandemic hit.

Working with the Musselshell ARC to keep it going after 2 members died last summer. (very small club)

Hopefully this year will finally turn around.

Oregon Section - David Kidd, KA7OZO

(No report submitted)

Western Washington Section - Monte Simpson, W7FF

(No report submitted)

NW DIVISION TRIBAL LIAISON REPORT- Steve Aberle, WA7PTM

During 2021, radio amateurs in the Northwestern Division, home to 284 of the 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States, continued to work with individual tribes and with the National Tribal Emergency Management Council (NTEMC).

From January 28th through January 31st, radio amateurs provided communications support for an airlift of emergency food supplies to tribes in Washington State. The hams set up portable VHF communications at Arlington, Bellingham, Darrington, and Omak airports, and at nearby fire departments where firefighters provided ground support. Radio notifications of aircraft arrival times significantly reduced the time that firefighting crews were away from their stations and was much appreciated.

On November 15th, a state of emergency was declared by Washington Governor Jay Inslee following days of heavy winds and rain which the National Weather Service called an "Atmospheric River." The Makah Tribe was isolated by flooding and landslides affecting local highways during this event and the food supply chain to retail outlets was disrupted. Local pilots, along with ham radio communications support, were placed on standby while food supplies were sought. However, a combination of growing darkness, adverse flying weather, and earlier than expected highway reopening led to cancellation of the support mission.

On December 1st, the NTEMC applied for a NTIA grant which will, if granted, fund a complete video-based Technician license class plus a 10-tribe pilot project to build out 21 DMR repeater sites and provide 475 VHF/UHF DMR radios to tribes across Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The license training, presented in a tribal-appropriate manner, will be delivered on-line and via USB drives to all 574 federally recognized tribes. In very remote areas lacking Internet service or access to DVD players, laptop computers will be supplied.

At the close of 2021, hams were making plans to support a Functional Exercise which tribal nations are planning as part of FEMA's "Cascadia Rising 2022" National Level Exercise coming up in June 2022.

Despite adoption of amateur radio as a tribal backup communications platform, tribal nations seem under-represented in the amateur radio community. The ARRL can help rectify this by encouraging clubs and ARES groups located near tribes to be welcoming toward their tribal neighbors. If needed, the NTEMC can provide introductions to the emergency managers in

tribal nations. Holding an occasional licensing class and VE session at a tribal venue, followed by “new ham” workshops, involvement in local radio activities, and communications support for tribal activities, will all help solidify ongoing working relationships.