

# WW8TF/Rover

2018 Ohio ARES VHF Simplex contest

# What is the Ohio ARES VHF Simplex Contest?

- 6 hours
- Ops can be from FIXED, FIXED at an EOC, PORTABLE, or ROVER
- 6 meters and up, all modes
- Object is contact as many stations as possible
- Multipliers for contacting new counties, EOCs, AECs, being a Rover

**Ohio Section ARES**  
**Ohio ARES VHF Simplex Day Contest**

Ohio ARES VHF Simplex Contest  
January 13 - 10AM through 4PM EDT

The purpose of our annual simplex activity is to improve our station and antenna capabilities, and to test our coverage areas on simplex frequencies. These may be very important in times of emergency, when repeaters have failed and simplex is the only method of emergency communication. We are NOT giving any consideration for backup power- this exercise is aimed at testing antennas and determining coverage areas.

**Bands - All bands from 50 MHz up**

We anticipate primary activity to occur on the 2-meter band. We recommend the following frequencies:

- 50 MHz - Standard simplex calling frequencies
- 146.52 - Only after making sure you will not be interfering with existing conversation 146.46 through 146.49
- UHF and above - Standard simplex calling frequencies



Maybe we should do a rover for the contest!

- N8JDM and N8CD decided to run a rover together for the contest
- Weren't sure how much participation there'd be in the VHF contest
- Didn't really know what scale to plan for, so we guessed (wrongly in certain cases!)
- But none of that deterred us



*Serious faces for some serious rover operating...*

# Planning: The Route

- We reviewed the contest rules and got clarification from Stan on a few details
- Every county we visited was a new slate
  - The more counties we hit the better our score
- For VHF – Altitude matters more than anything
  - Topo maps
- Find high places near a quick driving path



# Planning: The Route

Result of:

- Topo maps
- Google map routing
- Scouting before the contest



# Planning: The Call WW8TF

- It's a team – didn't want to use one person's call
- It's wasn't a SARA club event like Field Day – didn't want to use W8WKY
- The Wayne Technical Fanatics is a small "club" with a call to use on repeaters
- Was KE8ABM – Applied for and received WW8TF just before the contest
- Rolls off the tongue nicely



# Planning: The Rigs

- Main rig: Yaesu FT-857D (bottom)
  - Used for most contacts on 6m, 2m, and 70cm
- Also a Yaesu FTM-400D (middle)
  - for a few 2m and 70cm contacts
  - Used for spotting for open frequencies
  - One side of the radio used for APRS
- A Motorola XPR-4550 (top)
  - 70cm





# Planning: The Antennas

- Main antenna Diamond V2000a
  - 6m, 2m, 70cm on 4' fiberglass mast sections about 25' total
- Primary 2m/70cm dual band NMO roof mount
  - APRS & Mobile contacts
- Secondary 2m/70cm dual band NMO roof mount
  - UHF mobile contact



# Planning: The Hitch Mount

- The mount on the hitch was John's brilliant idea!
- Repurpose a cross-bar post style bike mount
  - Remove the bike mounting bar
  - Modify the base hinge so the post would lay parallel to the road
  - Secure the first section of the mast to the post
  - Assemble the mast in section, put the antenna on top, and walk it up vertical.

Ready to  
head out 7:00  
the morning  
of the contest

**Mother**  
**Nature does**  
**have a sense**  
**of humor**



# A Key to Successful Rover Operation



**OLD COUNTRY STORE**

We discovered that in the middle of the largest snowfall of the season, Cracker Barrel is largely empty with no waiting for seats or food!

Seriously though.... need to plan your meals and bathroom breaks on such a tight schedule. Being distracted by these issues can mess up your operational tempo and be a safety concern!

## BREAKFAST!



*A photo representation of Jason's actual breakfast...*

# Our Process

- 7 Locations in 6 hours
- Stop in safe location
- Build mast and antenna on ground
- Stand mast up & connect antenna
- Operate & Log on paper
- Tear down
- Next location



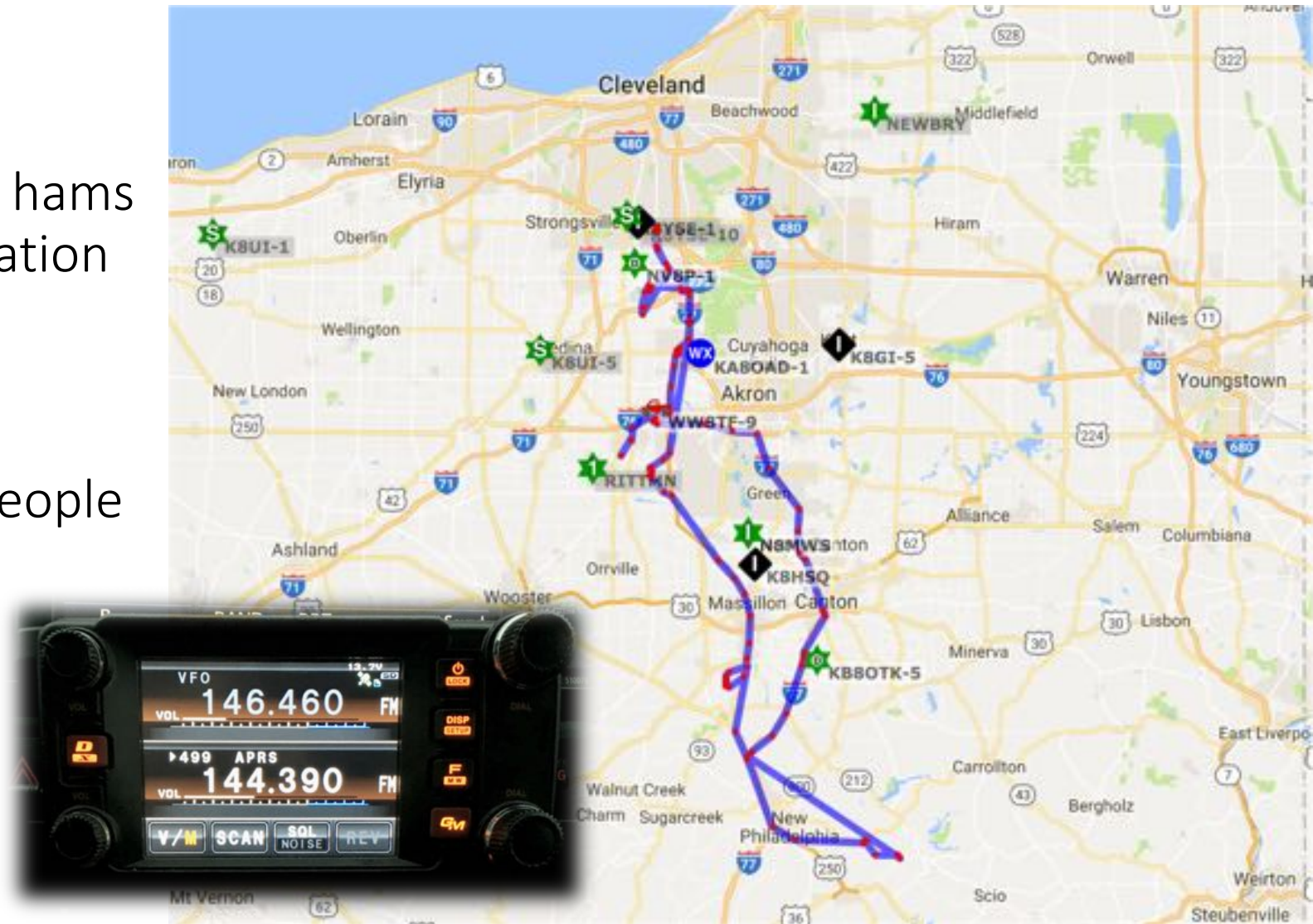


# APRS

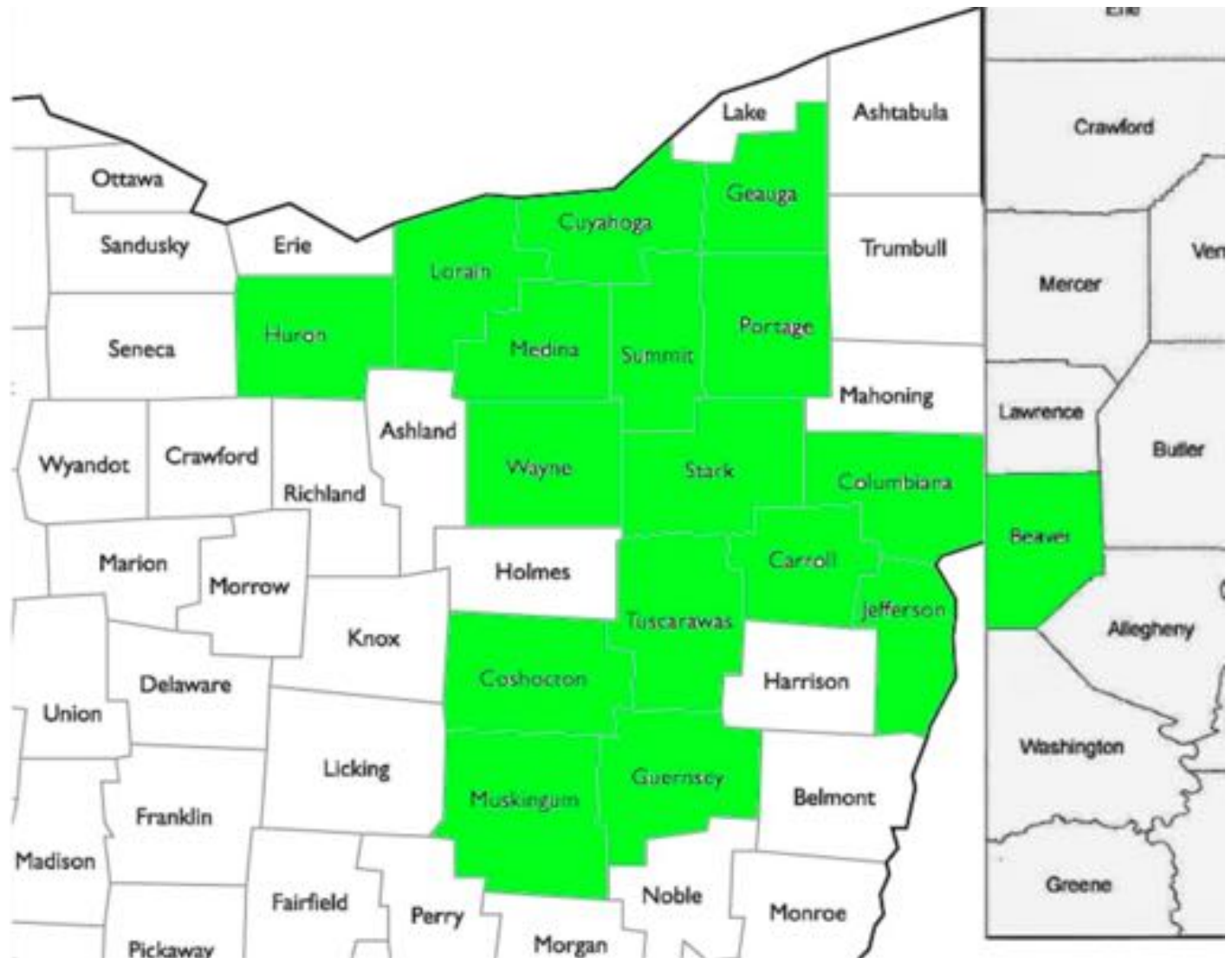
Updated area hams  
about our location

<http://aprs.fi>

Had several people  
following us

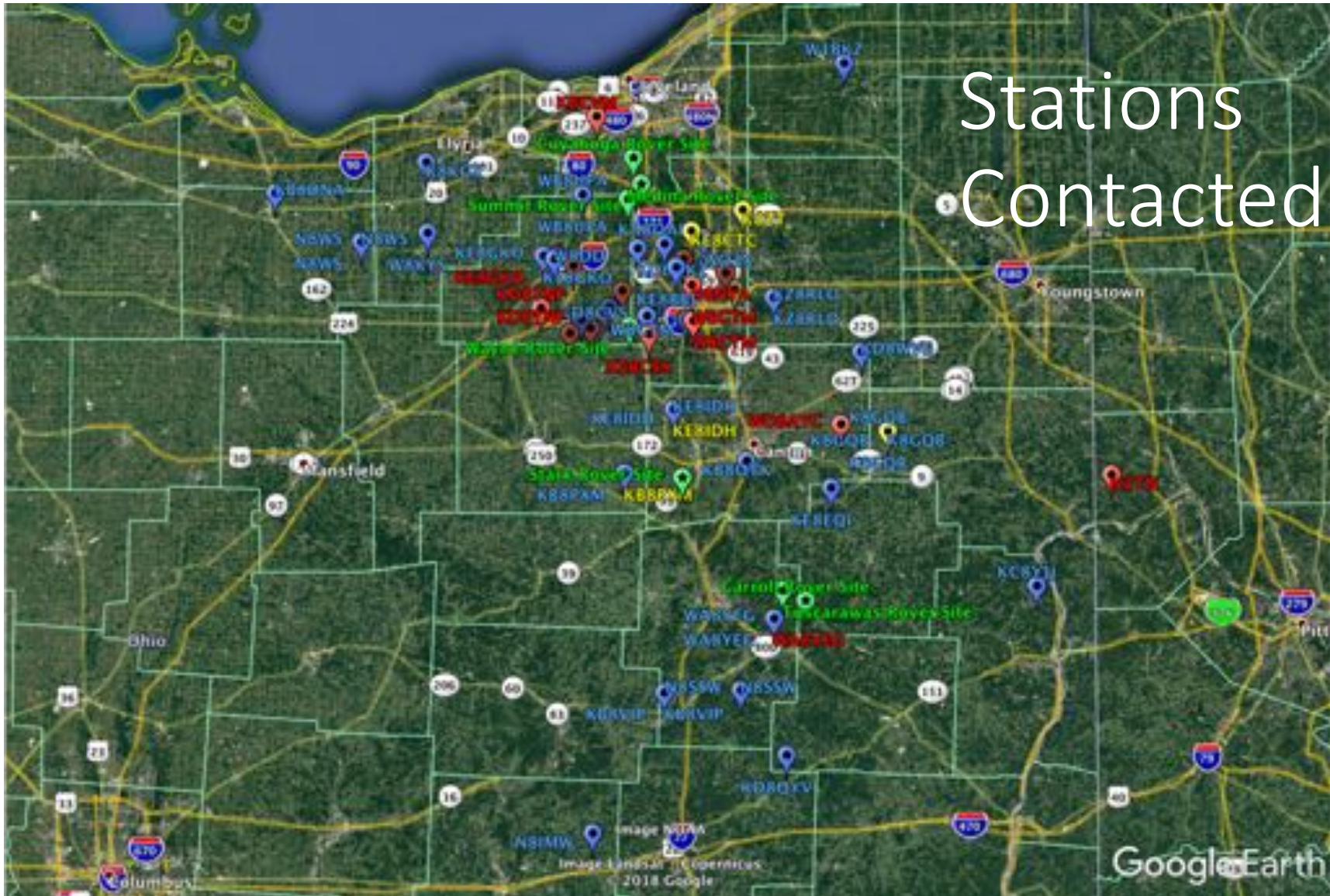


Counties  
we  
contacted





# Stations Contacted



## Some Take-Aways from the Event

- We had some very dedicated “fans” who were diligently tracking us and made many QSOs! The five pages of paper logs we thought would be “way more than enough” were not nearly enough.
- Operating on VHF and UHF FM is usually through repeaters in the US and it’s easy to forget how well you can communicate on simplex given a good antenna over VHF/UHF FM.
- WD40 is very good at removing and keeping ice off moving metal parts.
- This regional contest is a lot of fun and needs more participation. Gets people “back” into FM simplex. Good for emergencies.

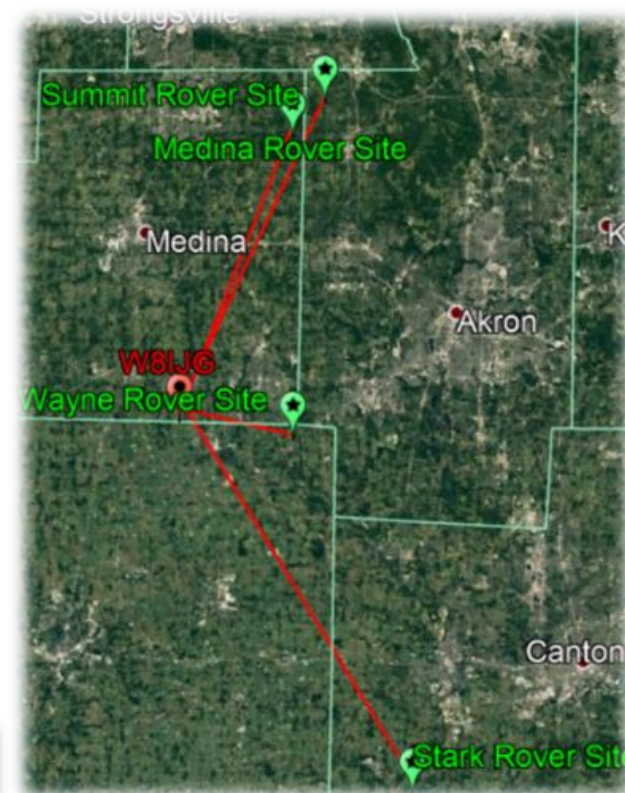
## For those who want to rove...

- Pre-planning really makes a difference
  - Topographical maps
  - Google Earth & Google Maps
  - Drive the route beforehand if you have any questions about the location
- Your setup/teardown has to be quick
- When on location, be very aware of overhead power lines!
  - Don't even get close to them - high voltage lines can arc across free air!
- Take some basic tools. A good pair of pliers saved our mount when one of the quick-release clevis pins came apart.



# Statistics

- Farthest QSO: 57mi to N3TN (Beaver Co. PA!) from the Stark site 6m
  - Made a number of 40-50mi QSOs at various locations
- Most QSOs: W8IJG (10)
  - Honorable mentions: KD8TNF (9), WB8UPA (9)
- Many stations from four different sites:
  - K8GQB, KD8GYS, KD8MEE, KD8TNF, KE8GKO, KE8HEA, KE8IDH, KZ8RLD, W8IJG, WB8UPA



## Our Final Results

<b>Total Contacts:</b>	<b>148</b>
Stations Contacted:	51
Contact Points:	213
Distinct Counties:	17
QSO x Counties:	7242

**We were successful  
because of many of  
you who followed us  
and worked us at each  
stop**

**Thank you!**