2010 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes Results

Cold winter weather throughout most of North America coupled with the usual winter TV sporting event distractions. Yet activity improved from recent years — *a good sign.*

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There is good news to report for the 2010 January VHF Sweepstakes competition, held January 23-25 — the second highest log submission total in six years (761), which followed the lowest reported total (650) for the 2009 January VHF SS. The highest number of log submissions during this period was 793 in 2006. The second highest number of logs submitted in the past six years indicates improving interest in the January VHF SS competition.

As is usually the case, winter weather conditions play a significant part in the January VHF SS competition, particularly in the colder regions of the USA and Canada. Rover enthusiasts are often subjected to difficult weather situations and I find it very encouraging that rover activity continues at a significant pace in spite of the winter obstacles. In cold winter weather, Gerald, K9PY, Midlothian, IL hiked to the top of Wasson Peak at 4687 feet ASL near Tucson, Arizona carrying an FT-817ND with a portable 4 element Yagi for the 2 meter band and a 3 element Yagi on 446 MHz. That takes dedication as well as a serious commitment to Amateur Radio!

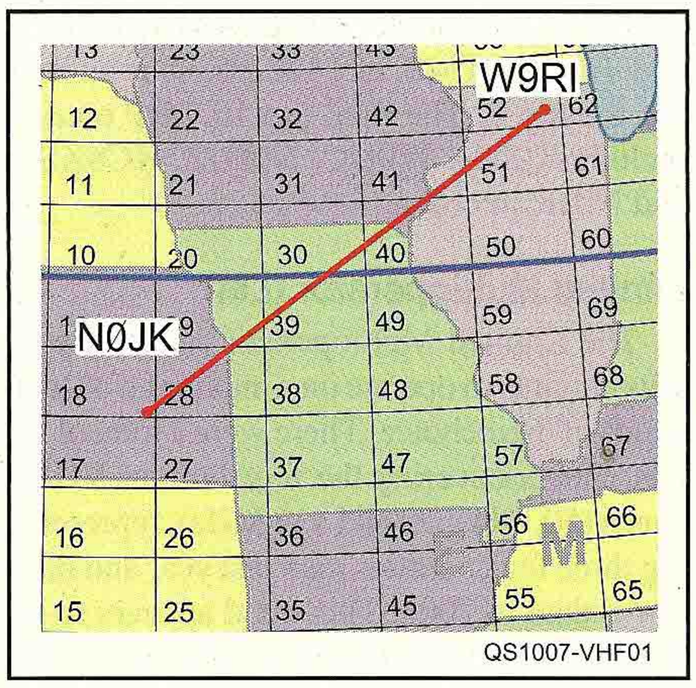
Propagation

Jon, NØJK, of Wichita, KS mentioned that there was no tropo at all on the 144 MHz band and no sporadic E skip on 50 MHz. He set up his portable station early Sunday morning at the "Cattle Pens" in the heart of the Flint Hills. Jon noted that his best DX with 10 W transmitter output on 144 MHz was about 250 miles. Ken, WB2AMU, of Patchogue, NY noted that this was the first time in years in FN30 on Long Island that there was no snowfall or cold weather for his QRP portable operations. Bob, K2DRH, Albany, IL noted that "conditions were flat, flat, flat with no enhanced propagation to speak of" and "nothing like the unusual tropo inversion to the east that we'd had just a weekend before."

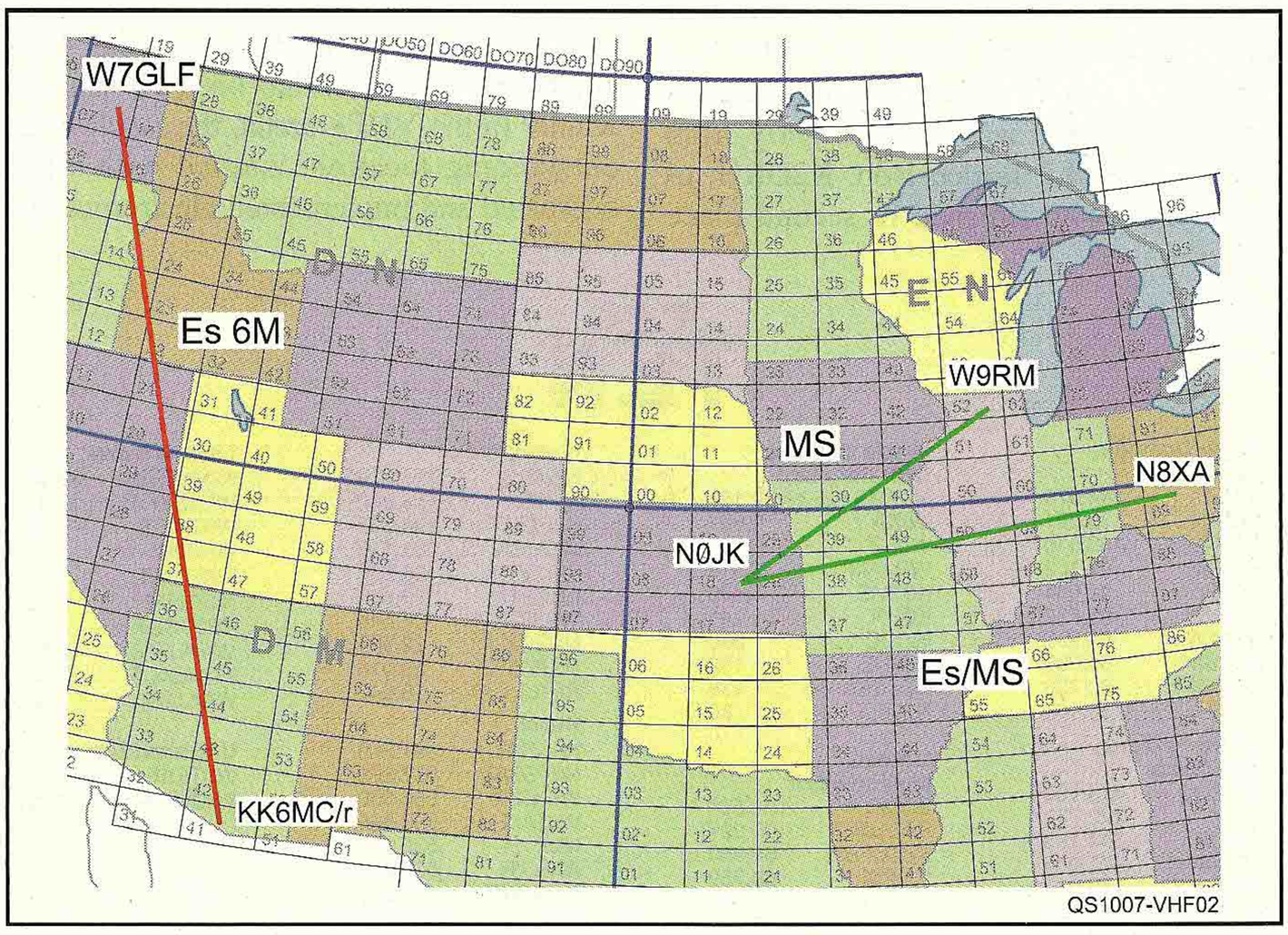
The few reported sporadic E and enhanced tropo contacts reported were few and far between. This was a typical winter event with tropo scatter as the primary propagation mechanism, generally reaching maximum QSO distances out to about the 300- to 400-mile range.

The National Scene

Another interesting observation is the number of HF contesters who have submitted entries in the January VHF SS competition for 2010. As I look through the 'Logs Received Report' of 761 logs, I have found



This map shows the path of the meteor scatter SSB QSO between W9RM in EN52 and NØJK in EM18.



With the exception of a short sporadic-E opening from Arizona to Washington state on Saturday and some meteor scatter between Illinois and Ohio and Kansas Sunday morning, conditions this year were pretty flat.