

Mountain Amateur Radio Club

Minutes of the Meeting

21 January 2026

Our MARC meeting began at 1903, with Dean Buckhouse presiding. Intros around the room. No SK's noted. One new Ham.

November meeting minutes were discussed and accepted.

Website, front page says SO, inside says WP, need to fix.

Treasurer's report was given by Deb. General \$3666.46 VE \$285.43

The next VE session will be March 7 at the Sheriff's office, Divide

Repeaters are all well.

CCARC Dues and Coordinations

Christmas Party at Judges went well..

Programs – OxComm Training, ARES WinLink Training

Winter Field Day at Lake George, Seup Friday at 3p

Meeting Adjourned at 2004.

13 members, Greg on zoom

Submitted by Bill Wallick

Quick recap

The club meeting began with technical discussions about audio settings and speaker issues, followed by introductions and review of November meeting minutes. The group discussed upcoming events, financial updates, repeater system performance, and various amateur radio communication methods including D-Star, Winlink, and packet radio. The conversation ended with discussions about antenna designs, Winter Field Day preparations, and the importance of ongoing training and participation in amateur radio activities.

Next steps

- [Bill: Look into coordinating the repeaters with CCARC and handle payment of dues, ensuring the membership roster is scrubbed of non-paid members before payment.](#)
- [Dean: Touch base with Jason to reschedule his presentation for a future club meeting.](#)
- [Victor and Dean: Arrange to bring the D-Star equipment to Dean's place to attempt setup for internet connectivity, then return it to Tenderfoot if successful.](#)
- [Dean: Coordinate with members who wish to assist in moving the roach and dragonfly equipment from Harold's yard to Dean's place, including arranging vehicles and the air tank from the shop.](#)
- [Tracy: Coordinate with interested MARC members to send out links and schedule CJIS fingerprinting and training for those needing to access dispatch/EOC facilities.](#)
- [All interested members: Send email to Tracy to coordinate CJIS online training and in-person fingerprinting/picture as required for dispatch/EOC access.](#)
- [Dean: Send out \(or re-send\) information about the upcoming Winlink training to interested members who request it.](#)
- [Mike and Derek: Set up Winter Field Day station at Dean's location, including setting up the ice fishing hut Friday afternoon and radio gear Saturday morning, and welcome participants during the event.](#)

Summary

Audio Settings and Speaker Troubleshooting

MARC and Greg discussed audio settings and speaker issues, with MARC mentioning a Spec5 device and exploring Windows 11 settings. They encountered some technical difficulties with audio not showing up as an active speaker, but Greg confirmed he could hear MARC. MARC expressed interest in upgrading but noted some limitations with the current setup.

Club Updates and Upcoming Events

The club held a meeting where members provided introductions and discussed recent activities. They reviewed and approved the November meeting minutes. The group discussed upcoming events, including a VE session scheduled for March 7th and a MARC meeting set for February 18th. They also welcomed a new ham member to the club.

Financial and Radio System Updates

The meeting covered financial updates, including December statements and account balances, and discussed the repeater system's performance, with no major issues reported. Marc mentioned ongoing work with D-Star, which is currently offline and awaiting setup for internet connectivity. The group also touched on the status of various amateur radio links, including All Star and Echo links, and noted challenges with HF conditions due to a large solar storm. No significant decisions or action items were outlined, but Marc noted plans to address the D-Star setup with Victor.

501c3 Status and Radio Operations

The meeting covered several topics, including the status of the 501c3, which is still awaiting final confirmation from the IRS. Marc mentioned that none of the repeaters have been coordinated with CCARC since 2024, and Bill was asked to look into this. The group discussed membership dues and the need to scrub the roster before paying. Marc reported that Western Colorado accepted the offer for the roach and dragonfly, and plans were made to transport them to Marc's place. The meeting also touched on the success of the MARC Christmas party and the sign-ups for TCSO amateur support. Finally, Marc explained the process for obtaining criminal justice background checks for dispatchers who will be operating amateur radio stations, emphasizing the importance of the 30-minute online training and fingerprinting.

Oxcom Training System Challenges

MARC discussed the simplicity and brevity of a training course, and mentioned an Oxcom training session from 2017 where he and Deb were the only attendees. He noted that the Department of Homeland Security developed Oxcom as an alternative communication system, separate from existing government systems. MARC expressed frustration with the system's complexity and lack of practical use, particularly in supporting amateur radio in local communities. The conversation concluded with MARC mentioning a scheduling conflict with Jason, who was running for governor and attending a town hall meeting, and MARC's intention to reschedule their meeting.

Oxcom Revival and WinLink Training

MARC discussed the revival of Oxcom and encouraged participation in Pikes Peak Aries, highlighting its free membership and various volunteer opportunities, including radio communication roles in emergencies. He mentioned that counties still rely on amateur radio for updates on shelter status and that the Salvation Army handles meals during holidays. MARC also shared information about upcoming WinLink training sessions, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and the versatility of the WinLink system for digital communication over HF or 2-meter radio.

Advantages of Packet Radio Communication

MARC discussed various communication methods in amateur radio, focusing on packet radio and its advantages over traditional voice communication. He explained how packet radio can reduce errors by transmitting data in a structured format, similar to email, and described the use of VARA FM and VARA HF for faster communication. MARC also mentioned his personal experience with setting up an RMS gateway at home and demonstrated how packet radio can be used to connect nodes and send messages over long distances.

Amateur Radio Digital Communication Overview

MARC discussed various amateur radio communication modes, including Packet, Winlink, and VARA HF, highlighting their capabilities and limitations. He noted that digital modes often require lower power and can be used for email forwarding without internet reliance, but face challenges with limited frequencies and crowded bands. MARC also mentioned the controversy around certain modes like MPH and the resistance from traditionalists to non-Morse code methods. He concluded by referencing the historical nature of some modes and the presence of pirate stations operating outside amateur bands.

Winlink: RF Email Communication System

MARC discussed the diversity of amateur radio activities and mentioned the upcoming Winlink training scheduled for February 7th. He explained the origins and purpose of Winlink, which was initially developed as a worldwide email system using amateur radio as a backup in case of infrastructure failure. MARC highlighted that Winlink was inspired by Sailmail, used by mariners, and was designed to enable RF-based email communication without internet access. He noted that while the system was still operational, it had not yet achieved its goal of fully independent RF gateway-to-gateway communication.

Winlink System and Training Updates

MARC discussed the functionality of Winlink, explaining its use for message routing and its integration with the Red Cross's mcom-training.org website for tasks like reporting hospital bed availability. He highlighted Winlink's ability to send official documents and its catalog feature for requesting weather reports. MARC also mentioned upcoming programs, including a potential talk on Winlink by John and a soldering session, but noted that the guest for the current meeting, Jason, did not show up.

Simple Amateur Radio Antenna Designs

MARC discussed various amateur radio antennas, focusing on simple and makeshift options. He explained how to build a J-Pole antenna using a half-inch copper pipe and shared other examples, like a quarter-wave antenna made from coat hangers. MARC emphasized the versatility and effectiveness of these antennas, even in emergency situations, and mentioned that they can be easily transported and set up. He also touched on the importance of using reliable information sources when researching antenna designs.

Homemade HF Delta Loop Antenna

MARC discussed his homemade HF antenna, which is a 583-foot long delta loop made from old telephone wire. He explained how he uses ladder line instead of coaxial cable to connect the antenna to his house due to its low loss. MARC also mentioned building a 4-to-1 balun with Mike and Lucy at a club meeting. He noted that the antenna works well for long-distance communication, but recent weather conditions have made it difficult to use.

Winter Field Day Setup Plans

MARC discussed Winter Field Day preparations, including setting up at the Buck House compound on Friday afternoon with HF, VHF, and UHF equipment. The event will run from Saturday 9am to Sunday 3pm, with multiple sources of heat including diesel heaters and an electric heater. MARC invited others to join them, noting that technicians can operate radios with a control operator's license, and provided the exact GPS location on the Winter Field Day website.