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## Amateur radio operators share information about their hobby

Lee Paulet (call sign KK4VNZ) of Crystal River sits near some equipment set up in the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve Education Center to communicate with other amateur radio operators around the world.

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YANKEETOWN – The Friends of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve hosted an event to let amateur radio operators on Saturday (July 21).



Jeffrey W. Norton (KN4KUU) of Inglis tells listeners that ham operators communicate with each other within a certain range of frequencies that are permitted for this use of the airwaves.

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**John J. Bescher (N4DXI) (wearing hat in light brown shirt) of Inglis speaks about amateur radio operators volunteering and helping people without cost to the people who are being helped.**



**This is a birds' eye view of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve Education Center on Saturday (July 21). This shot is from a video made by hobbyist unmanned aerial system operator Jeff M. Hardison.**

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**This is a perspective of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve looking toward the Gulf of Mexico. This shot is from a video made by hobbyist unmanned aerial system operator Jeff M. Hardison.**



**Looking down at the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve's 30-foot high observation tower shows the platform for a beautiful view of some of the area's natural environment. The blue square item is a graphic map so that viewers from that platform can have an idea of what they are viewing from atop the tower. This shot is from a video made by hobbyist unmanned aerial system operator Jeff M. Hardison.**

The term "ham" as a nickname for amateur radio operators originated in a pejorative usage (like "ham actor") by operators in commercial and professional radio communities. The word was subsequently adopted by amateur radio operators, and

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carries with it a positive connotation now.

An amateur radio operator is someone who uses equipment at an amateur radio station to engage in two-way personal communications with other amateur operators on radio frequencies assigned to the amateur radio service.

Amateur radio operators have been granted an amateur radio license by the Federal Communications Commission after passing an examination on applicable regulations, electronics, radio theory, and radio operation.

As a component of their license, amateur radio operators are assigned a call sign that they use to identify themselves during communication. There are about three million amateur radio operators worldwide. They do not just broadcast messages. They communicate with other operators.

This radio equipment is stronger than that used by Citizen's Band (CB) users. Ham operators are also using frequencies with a range of frequencies, where CB users are limited to specific designated channels.

Ham operators can communicate with people anywhere in the world. To reach places on the other side of the globe, the signal can be bounced off of satellites in space.

Before a person can begin communicating with another ham operator, they need to be licensed and know the rules to operate legally. United States licenses are good for 10 years before renewal and anyone may hold one except a representative of a foreign government.

In the United States there are three license classes for ham operators - Technician, General and Extra.

The ham operator who brought this program, which is known as "a special event" in amateur radio operator parlance, for the Friends of the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve is Jules Lee Paulet (call sign KK4VNZ) of Crystal River. Paulet is an extra class operator.

At least two other extra class operators from Crystal River were in the group Saturday. They are Philip C. "Phil" Worth (KZ1V) and Susan L. Reichman (KM4AHA).

Two extra class amateur radio operator from Inglis were among those in the crowd as well -- Jeffrey W. Norton (KN4KUU) and John J. Bescher (N4DXI).

The two men were among those participating in educating the crowd as well as listening to other fellow ham operators speak about the hobby.

Several other operators and audience members enjoyed the program too.

Audience members learned about ham operators and enjoyed an opportunity to have operators at the multi-story Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve Education Center communicate with other operators for them at the site.

World Amateur Radio Day was a few months ago.

As noted on the International Amateur Radio Union's website in regard to World Amateur Radio Day, "Every April 18, radio amateurs worldwide take to the airwaves in celebration of World Amateur Radio Day. It was on this day in 1925 that the International Amateur Radio Union was formed in Paris.

"Amateur Radio experimenters were the first to discover that the shortwave spectrum — far from being a wasteland — could support worldwide propagation. In the rush to use these shorter wavelengths, Amateur Radio was "in grave danger of being pushed

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aside,” the IARU’s history has noted. Amateur Radio pioneers met in Paris in 1925 and created the IARU to support Amateur Radio worldwide.

“Just two years later (in 1927), at the International Radiotelegraph Conference, Amateur Radio gained the allocations still recognized today – 160, 80, 40, 20, and 10 meters.”

Ham radio operators do not accept one single penny for their services. Whenever disasters strike, ham radio operators are the best line of communication because cell towers and other antenna towers may be blown down.

Some people might think of this as a hobby for older Americans, however people of every generation are actively communicating with each other all over the world using the frequencies allocated for this form of radio operations.

As of this minute, there is no World Amateur Radio Day event noted for April 18, 2019 in Levy, Dixie or Gilchrist counties for *HardisonInk.com*.

As noted on the WGP website, the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve is a 413-acre parcel of undeveloped wetlands located in Yankeetown.

It consists of mixed hardwood, pine, and cabbage palm forest, tidal marshes, and several salt ponds. The Preserve has a 30-foot tall observation tower, salt pond boardwalk, Gulf accessible canoe/kayak dock, and a 4,500 square-foot education center.

Individuals who are looking for a great place for nature photography, hiking, paddling or bird watching are invited to come and enjoy the Preserve.

Late Saturday morning, there were horseflies biting a journalist who was walking toward the observation platform. Robert Pitts, a gentleman who enjoys visiting the WGP, mentioned that rubbing wax myrtle leaves – which are in the area near the WGP Education Center -- on the skin will dissuade horseflies from biting.

For those who do not use wax myrtle leaf essence, other visitors to the WGP will want to have mosquito repellent (like DEET) available to apply to their skin, because sometimes biting bugs are out there.

Sunscreen is advised as well for people who use that on sunny days.

The WGP Education Center has scheduled talks, presentations and other hosted events – such as the special event presented by the ham radio operators.

The Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve is located at 1001 Old Rock Road, just off Levy County Road 40 West, in Yankeetown. The Preserve is open daily from dawn to dusk.

The one-lane lime rock road leading into and out of the WGP is narrow with blind curves and the speed limit is 10 m.p.h.